Members Present: Mark Raymond (Chair); John Vittner; Martin Rose; Bill Vallee; Judy Greiman; Jim Watson; Scott Zak; Nick Caruso; Kathy Giotsas; Dawn Lavalle; Lisa Pellegrini; John Elsesser; Scott Shanley;

Members absent: Russell Feinmark; Catherine Smith; Ken Wiggin; Rich Mavrogeanes; Bart Stanco; Michael Mundrane;

Others Present: Andrea Keilty; James Mindek; Wendy Rego; Jack McCoy; Jennifer March-Wackers

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**Welcome and introduction** – Mark Raymond calls the meeting to open @2:36 and gives a brief introduction & Bio on himself. Mark also recognizes new & existing members to committee as well as CEN staff. Members include: John Vittner, Director of IT Policy at OPM, Marty Rose, Bureau Chief, Bureau of Information Technology with the State Department of Education; Jim Watson, Department of Economic Community Development as designee for Catherine Smith; Scott Taylor UCONN as designee for Michael Mundrane, new CIO of UCONN; Dawn LaValle as designee for Ken Wiggin, Connecticut State Library; Scott Zak, Director IS Applications at Board of Regents; Bill Vallee, State Broadband Policy Coordinator; Judy Greiman, Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges; Nick Caruso, Connecticut Association of Boards of Education; Scott Shanley, City Manager of the Town of Manchester, Connecticut Council of Municipalities; John Elsesser, Town Manager of the Town of Coventry, Connecticut Council of Small Towns; Kathy Giotsas, Connecticut Library Association; Bart Stanco, not present, Governor’s Office; 2nd spot still open, Governor’s Office; Russell Feinmark, not present, Speaker of the House; Rich Mavrogeanes not present, President Pro Tem of the Senate; Lisa Pellegrini, First Selectman of Somers, Minority Leader of the Senate; open appointment for Minority Leader of the House. Connecticut Education Network (CEN) staff- Scott Taylor, Wendy Rego & Jim Mindek.

Mark, thanks you everyone for coming and special thanks to Ken Wiggin for his dedication and leadership and advocacy to the commission since 2007 as well as his continued support to the commission.

**Report of Commission Chair –** Mark Raymond gave a brief description on the Legislative changes made in July 2013. The General Assembly broadened the mission and the membership of the commission; a new responsibility of the CET is, over the next two years, to include municipalities in the CEN which increases access and provides additional learning and collaboration opportunities.

**Review of Mission, Committees and Action Items –** Mark Raymond directed commission members to the CET website [www.ct.gov/ctedtech](http://www.ct.gov/ctedtech) and to statue 480 to review the detailed CET mission and the changes that were recently made. Mark would like to review inactive committees and have a brief discussion about opening up the mission to align with new statutory requirements. A brief summary of the CET mission is 1.) Establishing CEN; 2.) Establishing rigorous standards in technology competency for students, teachers, and administrators; 3.) Establishing the Connecticut Digital Library; 4.) Reporting annually on the progress of educational technology in Connecticut and making recommendations’ to the Connecticut General Assembly on matter relating to educational technology.

**Open to Dialoge –**

John Elsesser - is in agreement that even though exact language, role & responsibilities need to be further defined, there should be a sentence in there to say that the CET is not just the educational institutions but now it’s also the also the towns operational needs.

Nick Caruso – while welcoming municipalities to the conversation doesn’t want to lose sight of the original mission, which was how do we revitalize the classroom and teaching and learning in new ways.

Judy Greiman – Is also in agreement that the Mission statement needs to be revaluated because her interpretation is that it reads more as a mission accomplished. Also there were several components to the commission that haven't been looked or even active in a long time. Judy also states that the notion of linking the municipalities was always assumed once the highways or delivery mechanism was completed but doesn’t want to lose sight of the education component of the commission because there’s a lot going on in the classroom and let’s not miss out that.

Scott Shanley – echo’s those thoughts. His read of the mission statement is that this group has created a network that can actually go into communities where k-12, police/fire departments and emergency management are. That a review of the mission does offer an opportunity about how can we think and do things differently.

Mark Raymond – will be sending out a survey to the commission members to get their ideas and feedback on things related to updating the mission. Mark also suggested, as Judy eluded to, that there are a series of committee’s that exist within the commission and we may want to change the composition or focus of in order to face the new challenges ahead.

 **Legislative/Budget/Rates Update –** Mark Raymond to defer the Budget & Rates update to the discussion during CEN status report; Mark talked about the Legislative updates that implemented several changes this year, i.e. 1.) Appointment of the chairman v. chair elected by the group, 2.) Introduction supplemental funding for the connection of the Municipalities and 3.) Introduction of a grant program run through the OPM for additional funding for Regional Performance Incentive monies to be used for municipalities to connect to the network in a regional sharing manner.

Scott Taylor - adds that the Regional Incentive Grant is NOT new money; its money that was taken from what were other regional efforts and put into the Network.

Mark Raymond - further adds that, the Regional Performance Program, doesn’t usually have enough money to cover everything that is a priority, so it’s not just taking money away from existing regional efforts but it’s taking money away from a historically underfunded area to use it specifically for the network by municipalities.

**Update on Connecticut’s BTOP Grant –** Broadband Technology Opportunity Program (BTOP) was a Federal grant that the State of Connecticut applied for in 2009 and was granted close to $100million of federal money and matched by over $20million of State money. The mission of the BTOP grant was to increase competition and remove access barriers to high speed networking; to refresh and build out the network in new locations. Through BTOP, 8880 new fiber miles were added to the State, upgrading or providing brand new High Speed service to over 940 sites in the form of 20 year IRU’s, which is a leasing structure, bringing it a lot closer to our schools, libraries, emergency personnel, businesses, municipalities and citizens. Mark also mentioned that CEN is hauling the back traffic for six of CPTv’s digital stations, as one of the recipients of the upgrade, helping them to bring new educational content to all of the State’s citizens.

John Vittner – also mentioned that CPTv, was certainly an interesting add on, to the Education Network but also pointed out that there were many underserved libraries and charter schools that as a result of the BTOP grant were also able to improve connectivity to the network.

**CEN Status Report** – Scott Taylor made a reference to the CEN budget for the past five years in the handouts provided. Scott then gave a break out of the $37,000,000.00 CEN portion of the BTOP project,

CEN

* added 152 new sites on the CEN fiber backbone, bringing the number of sites to 350;
* upgraded about a 100 existing sites, using state dollars not stimulus dollars, leaving approximately 100 existing sites to be upgraded to the new network over the course of the next year. In regards to eRate, there are about 99 DSL libraries that are still eRated, however, the 100 sites that were upgraded are no longer eRated;
* has also worked with Mark Raymond on updating the rate structure; Current members fall under Education, State Agency, or Municipality pricing, while newer members, fall under open access member pricing which is extremely competitive in the market place;
* staff has, in the past, relied on full time employees only, however, we’ve started to use some student workers and they’ve been a huge addition to the team;
* had it first daylong member conference in May 2013 at Reinschler Field; there were 300 attendees and due to the success of this conference next year’s conference will be at the Hartford Convention center.

CEN is currently:

* committed to about 12.5g worth of bandwidth across 42 paying participants. Our k-12 usage is approximately 7g of that. CEN typically sees about a 40 – 50% increase in traffic annually and so expects this number to grown substantially by next May;
* looking to procure 1.) A third commercial internet provider; 2.) A forth 10g circuit; 3.) A 100g circuit to the internet2 national research backbone;
* working on a K-12 internet filtering bid to replace our currently filtering product, which expires in December;
* has been working on a strategic plan for Fiscal year 2014 which is still in draft but very close to final.

Mark Raymond **–** adds that on the budget side this is NOT new money; for at least this year we were able to stem the tide and turn around of the year over year reductions associated with monies going into the Connecticut Education Network; that the member pricing for municipalities, education and state agencies is about 32% less than the rate structure last year. We do continue to strive to make this as cost efficient as possible for all involved.

Scott Shanley – asked 1.) Is the 7G Capacity our actual use for k-12? 2.) And are you encouraged by that number or are you disappointed by that number? 3.) Do you think it should be more? 4.) What’s your sense of where it should be?

Scott Taylor – stated, that the numbers are encouraging. There is a yearly growth of 40 – 50% by schools and municipalities due to the work they’re doing on their infrastructure or networks inside their schools to bring in new technology. Scott also stated that, the network could definitely be heavier utilized and we have the ability to easily scale it as needed. There’s definitely there’s a lot of room for growth.

Scott Taylor affirmed John Vittner that the eRates are monthly.

John Elsesser – acknowledged the 911 commission for the matching state funds for the BTOP program which is riding on the public safety data network on a parallel part of the broader Nutmeg Network. He also stated that “it’s an example of how working together we get a better end product”.

Nick Caruso – asks Scott Taylor, 1). Of the 15 staff members, is anybody dedicated to content? 2.) When the state online testing starts begins next year, how close are we being able to handle that?

Scott Taylor affirms 1.) That there is one person who does focus on content; 2.) The new Infrastructure that CEN put in place brings 10g connectivity into the school districts with 1G connection, which is a lot of bandwidth, per school district, to the school equipment. However, Scott is more concerned about the infrastructure in the schools and between the schools themselves or at their border and their firewall that connects to CEN *NOT* CEN itself.

Marty Rose – also affirms that the SDE believes that the CEN will NOT be the problem once State online testing begins; that any problems that occur will be with the intraschool and interschool bandwidth. Also, the Governor recently announced a $10million bond fund for assisting with smarter \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ assessment testing in addition to the 140 competitive grants totaling $40million recently received. Marty also stated the even though wireless seems to be a prevalent way of doing testing, that too is being scrutinized because wireless its own challenges.

Nick Caruso – further stated that if we create an environment where schools must do online testing then we really have to support the schools toward this goal. We have to be vigilant.

Mark Raymond – adds that the strategic planning process that CEN undertook, actually identified connectivity as a key issue; we talked about the goals of providing 1mg connection per student as something that could be driven from the network.

John Vittner – states that the CEN was architected for peak performance, so that when anomalies occur the CEN would NOT be the bottle neck; that the State really needs to put an emphasis and an eye on what’s going on in the schools and how the CET can help.

Scott Shanley – I wonder if we might spend some time on what role can this commission play educating school districts, teachers & municipal leaders? Maybe, part of our mission could be to use the existing paid resources’ throughout the State to obtain content ideas.

Marty Rose in response to Scott Shanley states, that when we look at the new mission, any content ideas need to be aligned to either early childhood, k-12 or higher education and that common Core and Smarter Balance needs to be at the forefront of our discussion.

Mark Raymond adds, that he would like to see our network of people as strong as our network of fiber but it does need to be aligned and to Scott Shanley’s point about tapping those resources that we have and making education technology and collaboration is something he would really love to see the CET bring to the forefront.

**ConnectED –** update by Marty Rose; recently Obama Administration has announced an initiative called ConnectED, which is an enhancement of eRate (a telecommunication fiber reimbursement system). There’s a lot of discussion going on as to what the expansion of eRate would be in ConnectEd. Washington has asked that we provide some feedback from the State/agency perspective as to what the ConnectEd/eRate expansion should be.

 Scott Taylor comments that he believes that President Obama is hoping to change eRate with eRate 2.0 to impact the goals outlined in ConnectEd.

Mark Raymond believes that one of the fundamental concepts of ConnectEd, mirrors that of the CET, which is to access the students regardless of location.

John Elsesser – would like to discuss the digital divide issues that the State seems to be fairly silent on due to the financing aspects of it. It’s wonderful to provide internet and wireless devices to the students during school/library hours, however, if eRate could address the issue on how to provide some mechanisms of internet for educational use beyond school/library hours so that students can succeed regardless of family income, should be something that we talk about.

Dawn Lavalle – states that the State libraries are actively engaged with the eRate issue right now. We’re engaged with Bi&MLs (The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation) and we are currently giving our feedback to the request in relation to, again, the Digital Literacy Divide, which I think we really need to address here. It’s not just the lack of having a tablet or a computer, its ability to use the digital resources. So, Digital Literacy is becoming an increasingly important field in k-12 as well as higher education.

**Meeting Dates for FY 2014 –** Mark Raymond talks about the meeting dates for the upcoming year, noting that the March will be held at 101 East River Drive. There is a handout in everyone’s packets.

**Approval of Minutes:** Mark Raymond called forApproval of the Minutes for the December 2012. Judy Greiman made a motion to approve the minutes seconded by Nick Caruso. The December 2012 were passed with several of the new members abstaining.

**Any other Business/Commission Comments –** **Scott Shanley** – that even though the OPM has redirected the Regional Performance Incentive grant to allow the municipalities to begin the kind of build out that the CET is talking about, there is still a very significant timeframe to the time of dollars being available to the municipalities and the CCM may ask the CET for assistance with the application/approval/disbursement process.

Mark Raymond – Affirms John Elsesser’s question that the CEN conference is currently scheduled for May.

John Elsesser - It’s good to get all of the people in the room at the same time and that’s a good opportunity for some sharing that was talked about; I think CCM or CCST could work with CEN to add some tracks or educational opportunities to help add some quality content if CEN were to let us know the framework of what you need, we could help on that aspect. I know GMIS (Government MIS) has been giving a lot of thought on how to how to best use this.

Scott Taylor – Thanks John. We have a committee that’s pulling the CEN conference together. So far we’ve established quite a bit but we haven’t really gotten down into the tracks yet so we’ll definitely reach out to you for guidance there if you’re willing to help. This year’s theme is, Innovate, Collaborate & Educate; it’s broad enough to include the municipalities and economic development. Also, a request will be going out soon for agenda items as well as a “Save the Date”.

Marty Rose – states that from the K-12 perspective, CEN is definitely adding a lot of value to Connecticut. We definitely have a solid network and there are a lot of districts investing a lot of money and technology \_\_\_\_\_ over at CEN. I think that the Governor’s $10,000,000.00 grant will help a lot. I would love to see with the municipalities, things like job \_\_\_\_ or internships provided to our students through community service.

**Public Comment – Jack McCoy** – The draft letter and attachment, in your packets, represents the thoughts of GMIS Board of Directors and a Sub-Committee. Just to summarize this, 1.) My membership is looking at internet access, through CEN, as being a way that we can redirect our internet expenditures. The CEN rates appear to be the same as marketplace, so we’re not sure there’s a big savings, but we certainly want to get behind an effort like this which would have long term benefits for us all. 2.) are the applications. One of the central features of those applications is collaboration - municipalities, like school districts, can talk to each other over the CEN/Nutmeg Network providing an opportunity for the municipalities to save money through collaboration. 3.) And the last point is that there are 13 or so, cities that would like to participate in the sharing projects which have become enabled by this new Nutmeg Network. The sharing projects can be models for a lot of cities that don’t have IT resources. I think that single principal of a model would be what we’d like to see as one of the leveraging factors in this whole technology. I think, we can align these with the business interests inside the communities so that the benefits become obvious to those communities using this new resource. 4.) the “Connecticut Nutmeg Statewide Fiber Net” picture at the very end is a model of how police, fire, emergency services departments, libraries, schools and municipalities can connect within the municipalities and then be interconnected over the CEN/Nutmeg Network fiber in the middle. There are a lot of details to work out on that, but once again the model for doing it, is of critical importance. There’s a way to release a lot energy out there. And I think that that’s what I’m hearing from you too. So, that’s why my group submitted this and I thank you for the opportunity. 5.) Lastly, I’ve been empowered by a committee of towns to offer that committee of towns to be a staffing element to this commission. So however you want to bring that in as a resource; we’re thinking that might be a way to get some things really accomplished in that modeling area. Thanks.

**John Elsesser** asks Jack McCoy - the State just passed a law that’s requiring towns and Boards of Educations to do uniform chart of accounts, how would this help in meeting that State mandate?

**Jack McCoy** – If several towns or the State were to use a common chart of account it becomes somewhat more achievable to have a common software package that could be delivered over the Nutmeg Network.

At 3:51pm it was moved and seconded to adjourn; and passed unanimously.