Department of Administrative Services – Bureau of Enterprise Systems and Technology
55 Farmington Avenue, Hartford, Connecticut   Conference Room 1008
Meeting Minutes: March 7, 2016

Commission Members in Attendance:

Raymond, Mark – Commission Chair, CT DAS-BEST, Chief Information Officer
Bailie, Colleen - West Haven Library – Connecticut Library Association
Dillon, Thomas – Founder of Flagship Networks – Speaker of the House
Elsesser, John – Coventry Town Manager – Connecticut Council of Small Towns
Feinmark, Russell – Speaker of the House
Kitching, Jeffrey – Plainville Public Schools Superintendent – Office of the Governor
Mindek, James – Manager, Bureau of Information Technology – State Department of Education
Mundrane, Michael –Chief Information Officer – University of Connecticut
Shanley, Scott – Manchester General Manager – Connecticut Conference on Municipalities
Stanco, Bart – Chief Information Officer, Gartner Group – Office of the Governor
Vallee, William – State Broadband Policy Coordinator – Office of Consumer Counsel
Zak, Scott –Director of IS Applications – Board of Regents

Commission Members and Alternates Not in Attendance:

Caruso, Nicholas – Senior Staff Associate – CT Association of Boards of Education
Hughes, Kristy – Alternate – University of Connecticut
Mavrogeanes, Rich – President of Discover Video – Pro Tempore of the Senate
Pellegrini, Lisa – Somers First Selectman – Minority Leader of the Senate
Shellard, Susan – CT Department of Economic & Community Development – Alternate
Smith, Catherine – Commissioner – CT Department of Economic & Community Development
Vittner, John – Director – Office of Policy and Management
Widness, Jennifer – President – CT Conference of Independent Colleges
Wiggin, Kendall – State Librarian – CT State Library

Guests, Presenters and Others in Attendance:

Casey, Doug – CT Commission for Educational Technology, Executive Director
Deprey, Brynn – CT Education Network
Taylor, Scott – CT Education Network, University of Connecticut Alternate

March-Wackers, Jennifer - Director of Municipal Services, CRCOG
Salazar, Dan - Director of IT Services, Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology (CCAT)
Wray, Lyle - Executive Director, Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG)

- **Welcome**

  Commission Chair Mark Raymond called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. and thanked everyone for taking the time to attend to the duties of this Commission.

- **Approval of Meeting Minutes, December 7, 2015**

  A motion to accept the minutes as written was made by William Vallee and seconded by John Elsesser. The motion was unanimously accepted with no discussion or abstentions.

- **Report of Commissioner Chair**

  Mark Raymond shared that Executive Director Doug Casey has been very busy during his first three months in this role.

- Funding: the proposed budget suggests the movement of CEN to an entirely self-funded model. This means that schools and libraries, whose costs have been covered via a general fund appropriation in the past, could be asked to pay for their utilization of the network starting in State FY17. We have begun a communications process to this community to help them understand the possibility of this change.

  The rest of the legislative process will unfold over the next few months. We are preparing for as many potential scenarios as possible.

  One option to consider is sponsorship or advertising on the network. The Commission has explicitly rejected this notion in the past, preferring to provide a network free from advertising; however, in this new "economic reality" it may be required that we revisit this topic. A robust dialog on this topic will be entertained at the next Commission meeting when much more of the budget situation has been clarified. At this time, Chair Raymond asked that members think creatively about the network and prepare accordingly for this future dialog.

  Scott Shanley requested that revenue projections be shared prior to that discussion.

  In response to an inquiry by Tom Dillon, Mark shared that the funding decision for the CEN network is the responsibility of the Appropriations Committee with Chairpersons Beth Bye and Toni Walker. The Education Committee is not actively involved at this time; however, that may change as the session progresses. Tom shared that he has also reached out to his local legislators and members of the Bridgeport Regional Business Council.

  Mark confirmed that mock bills and other supporting materials are being sent to CEN members to show district and library current service usage and projected costs in the event that Connecticut General Fund appropriations are not reinstated. John Elsesser

explained that many of the libraries are very far along in their budgeting process, and the proposed changes will impact them.

Colleen Bailie explained that their budgeting processes are well underway and the magnitude of the change will be significant. John Elsesser asked who serves as the committee of cognizance for libraries; a subsequent conversation with State Librarian Ken Wiggin indicated that the Education Committee has oversight of most state library programs.

- John Elsesser explained that participants would be more easily engaged and energized to get involved if a town-by-town impact analysis was available. Mark shared that the information contained in today's handouts is helpful, as are other reference materials on CEN's Web site.

- Bart Stanco asked that the mock bills include comparison costs to those of providers on the open market. Mark will look to make sure that is clarified.

- Jim Mindek recommended that a forum on funding models be initiated to discuss creative options for subsidizing the network. Mark recommended that any and all ideas be shared as soon as possible. Since this Commission will not meet again until June, it will be too late in the legislative session to introduce new ideas. Jim suggested that a mock bill be created to show what each school district would be paying in a self-funding model. Mark clarified that the cost of both the schools and libraries is $3 million. Mark offered to publish this district- and town-level information to make it available to all.

- Scott Shanley stated that it is not unreasonable to ask people to pay for the service; however, timing of these proposed funding changes makes absorbing costs on the local level difficult, if not impossible. We need to be able to show what this is really costing per student and create a negotiated timeframe to ease out of the $3 million General Fund appropriation. We need to recognize that the time is coming for CEN to generate revenue outside of the State appropriations. When you look at the status of the budget at this time, we will have to compete with the private sector and show that we are more cost-effective. Mark stated that we do provide cost-effective services and the network is built to support expanding broadband and service demands. We upgrade technology ahead of needs so as not to restrict our members' growth. We proactively upgrade the network before it becomes necessary, which distinguishes CEN from a regular utility.

- Michael Mundrane explained it is difficult to absorb on such short notice a new cost. He emphasized the importance of libraries as the center of technology for much of the populous. If we pull Internet from libraries, the effects will be devastating. Mark shared that mailings to and conversations with CEN members have helped remind them of the importance and value of broadband, filtering, and other CEN services.

Colleen explained that losing the Internet is not an option, regardless of what other drastic measures may be required to maintain it.

- Tom Dillon noted past budget challenges and how this year is different. Mark responded that it will be difficult to predict the final outcomes from legislative budgeting process, which should conclude in May.

- John Elsesser stated that the magnitude of the State's current fiscal problem is so large that the relatively small programs, like CEN, will simply disappear if we do not raise awareness of their value. He shared that 65% of the people in his town have library cards, with the library as top use of public funds in his town. Even the schools do not service 65% of the population. We need to engage the attention of the libraries and their users. Data is required to engage people in the argument.

- Jeff Kitching considered the worst case scenario. Loss of CEN will be a direct pass back to tax payers, and he is trying to get the message out to legislators and energize his colleagues to do the same. He encourages everyone to look at their own picture and open the door to these discussions, arguing against the use of private cable providers that cannot meet school needs. When tens of thousands of students are simultaneously taking the SAT, commercial providers will have difficulty meeting the broadband needs without the use of CEN or paying exorbitant costs to other providers. Testing mandates will also be threatened.

- Jim Mindek stated that 90% of SDE's $3 billion budget goes to schools and should be allocated to pay for CEN as opposed to paying – indirectly through the school districts – an unreliable provider. Phasing this in over a period of time might be a realistic expectation.

- Tom Dillon suggested integrating these concerns into the marketing for the CEN event. Mark said it is not currently tied to the event, but there is other outreach taking place.

  John Elsesser requested clarification on the audience that this affects, if it included charter schools, universities, etc. Mark explained that the General Fund appropriation pays 100% for libraries and public K – 12 schools. Michael Mundrane explained that this is just a budget cut, because the bill will not be eliminated.

- **Report of Executive Director**

  Executive Director Doug Casey thanked the members for their time and thoughts during his *listening tour* meetings with the CET members. Over the past quarter he has gathered input on educational technology priorities and opportunities and assembled a document which was shared in advance of this meeting, posted to CET Web site, and made printed copies available during the meeting. He shared highlights via a brief

presentation, with the following insights and recommendations from members, aligned with the Commission's four focus areas.

Digest of Priorities and Opportunities

Focus Area: Infrastructure (CEN)
- Increase variety and depth of content (video, TV)
- Expand colocation and hosting services
- Increase overall traffic
- Underscore network benefits and capacity
- Offer more proactive communications to members and the general public

Focus Area: Infrastructure (General)
- Equity of access to broadband networks and low-cost devices
- Explore the innovative use of school and library space for technology-related activities (e.g., centers for entrepreneurship, "maker spaces," etc.)
- Identify areas of efficiency and cost savings (e.g., shared services and personnel across schools and libraries)

Focus Area: Practices
- Establish standards and models of training for teacher, student, professor, and parent (guardian) technology proficiency (literacy)
- Consider workforce development initiatives such as high school, college, or adult-learner internships

Focus Area: Digital Learning
- Encourage the adoption and training in the use of free, low-cost, and open educational resources
- Explore ways and platforms through which to share research and content (K – 12 and higher education)
- Expand the use of distance learning as well as free and low-cost online courses for credit recovery and enrichment
- Expand the reach of electronic books (eBooks) and raise awareness of these resources

Focus Area: Data and Privacy
- Increase efficiencies and accuracy in state reporting through shared resources
- Connect systems (e.g., student information and health management) for faster, more secure reporting
- Explore cost savings through shared or regionalized software and data hosting and cooperative purchasing

Focus Areas and Advisory Councils

Doug Casey explained that Advisory Councils are working groups that champion and prioritize strategic planning and subject-matter expert concerns. Doug is looking to create councils that will meet on a monthly basis, and report to the Commission at the quarterly meetings. A Commission Member would serve as the Chair each of these Councils. The Councils would be comprised of individuals recommended by Commission members. Doug would attend all meetings along with a Council Chair. These councils would move ideas to action plans.

Based on the Commission's statute and member input, Doug Casey shared four Focus Areas that encompass existing and new areas of opportunity for the Commission: Infrastructure, Digital Learning, Data & Privacy, and Practice. These also align with the organizational frameworks of major national and international educational technology organizations (e.g., U.S., ED, ISTE, CoSN, SETDA, etc.). He highlighted how the directives articulated in the CET's statute as well as new areas of concern map to one of the four Focus Areas. As "horizontal" supports, Doug Casey highlighted how Communications and Advocacy as well as Funding efforts would inform and help advance efforts in each of the four Focus Areas.

On the basis of this new framework and following motions from previous meetings, Doug suggested that we reconvene the Advisory Councils around each of the four Focus Areas. He offered this overview of the Advisory Councils:

- Definition: Working groups that prioritize and develop initiatives, co-author strategic plans, and address subject-matter concerns
- Commitment: Monthly meetings, in-between work, and quarterly reports back to the Commission members
- Participation: Council Chair (CET Member) and Council Members (CET Members or subject-matter experts)

- Bill Vallee recommended consideration of creating a Funding Council as well. Doug is open to this and all suggestions, though he underscored that funding will remain a thread that runs through all Advisory Councils. John Elsesser stressed the need to communicate.

- Bart Stanco questioned sustainability for upgrades and future chargebacks. Mark Raymond explained, specifically related to the CEN, that the current cost structure accounts for operational capital in the form or incremental – but not complete – equipment replacement. Mark referenced the Blum Shapiro report, which explained the capital infusions that came from a variety of areas to address upgrades to the infrastructure; however, there is no plan for a total hardware replacement. Mark explained that accruing a fund over time would not guarantee that it would be

available when it is needed, especially during these difficult financial times. Michael Mundrane stated that we should keep an eye on our capital requirements and future obligations to know what those costs would be.

- John Elsesser explained that monies accrued under CEN might be a logical source of subsidies and we should look to this as a future source of funding. He is in favor of creating these Councils as they will allow the Commission to take more timely action on issues that arise. He emphasized that the Councils should not be limited to those mentioned.

- Bill Vallee explained that an allocation of funds for cable and telephone are set aside annually despite the declining industry. Getting past the public utilities discussions, we can explore the monies set aside for education. These monies have not been touched because the rules governing them are very difficult to navigate. We should look to shift some of these funds to CEN. Availability of these resources should be included as potential revenue resource considerations.

Doug will look to staff each of those Councils within the next month, with the intent of having Council meetings before the next quarterly Commission meeting (June 6).

A motion to approve the Advisory Councils was made by John Elsesser and seconded by Michael Mundrane. The motion was unanimously approved without opposition, discussion, or abstentions.

Doug Casey encouraged members to consider chairing, participating, and nominating non-member subject-matter experts to participate. Member commitments or nominations would be due Friday, March 18.

Doug Casey then shared the Commission calendar of events and activities through the calendar year, including meeting dates and strategic planning timeframes.

- **CEN Status Report, Scott Taylor**

  Scott Taylor reviewed the information contained in the CEN Update handout and invited questions regarding the content.

  o CEN Member conference – May 13, 2016: Scott shared that registration is still open and fees are waived for Commission members.

  o DDoS attacks on K – 12 schools are disrupting service anywhere from 10 minutes to all day. CEN is seeking professional services for mitigation. In response to Scott Shanley's inquiry, Scott Taylor confirmed that these disruptions are intentional, targeted, and easy to initiate. They take place daily, and CEN staff are attempting to educate schools on how to diagnose and identify the sources

of the attacks. Schools are being encouraged to engage federal and local law authorities and share the implications of these actions with students, staff, and communities. There are filtering services on a local (district or school) level available for certain applications, but they are costly. Mitigation of DDoS services represents another value that CEN can provide. Scott Taylor does not expect these attacks to stop until the academic school year concludes. Tom Dillon emphasized the financial impact of attacks on school districts, with many of his clients prepared to pay premium service fees for assistance. CEN offers a much richer safety net than that of commercial providers.

- o Managed Wi-Fi Service: CEN is looking for a small library to pilot wireless access points. Colleen Bailie will solicit volunteers at the next Connecticut Library Associations meeting.

- o Scott reviewed the Value and Benefit handout that explains the value of CEN. Districts and schools receive this document with their mock bills.

- **State Library Report**

   In the absence of Ken Wiggin, this item was removed from the agenda.

- **CRCOG Nutmeg Network Demonstration Projects**

   Lyle Wray, Jennifer March-Wackers, and Dan Salazar presented for the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG).

   Lyle Wray reviewed the Nutmeg Network Demonstration Projects, which provide resilient disaster recovery, operational efficiencies, and cost savings. Having no current baseline on which to gauge success, savings are based on current costs vs. improved costs.

   Lyle referenced an infographic to showcase the value of Nutmeg Network and highlighted the features of the primary and backup data centers.

   Dan Salazar of the Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology (CCAT) explained that their non-profit has shifted to using CEN. Disaster recovery is not possible with most private carriers. What CEN offers is not available anywhere else, providing an open architecture available at half the cost of commercial services. The CEN provides a platform to achieve goals that come with new technology such as body cameras. CROCG believes that the Nutmeg Network is a tremendous asset with benefits that cannot be duplicated. Jennifer March-Wackers, CRCOG's Director of Municipal Services, challenged the Commission to think of ways to use this service to greatest advantage. They will advocate at the Capital to support funding the CEN as a platform for service and content delivery.

Scott Shanley asked about the reference to 50% savings. Dan explained that these are startup costs. Scott stated that many people feel the State should get out of areas in which private sector business operates. He believes that there is a role for government in this area, but the cost data needs to be provided. Dan referenced Scott Taylor's report of attacks on K – 12 schools and explained how easy it is to manage these issues on the Nutmeg Network versus through a private carrier.

CRCOG is coming to the Commission to ask for their support.

Scott Shanley explained that the tertiary benefits of these services are also valuable. A discussion ensued on the topic of hosted educational software, such as the PowerSchool student information system, and the possibility of cooperative hosting and licensing. He elaborated that any town in Connecticut can benefit from these services. There is scalability to meet the needs of all towns. Enterprise planning is also available to small towns.

Michael Mundrane referenced public record accessibility and stated that there is a huge gain to doing something once rather than having to repeat it over and over. Scott Shanley explained that the public is expecting both face-to-face interactions and online accessibility; both systems will be required for a long time, and the disincentive of additional fees for use electronic systems needs to be removed. There is a learning curve for towns to understand, implement, and support electronic government systems. The economics are much more in towns' favor than they used to be.

Mark thanked CRCOG for being friends and drivers of the Network.

- **Public Comment:** No public comments

- **Future 2016 Meeting Dates:**

    o   June 6, 2016   Legislative Office Building, Hearing Room 1C
    o   September 12, 2016   Location to be announced
    o   December 5, 2016   Location to be announced

- **Adjournment:** At 3:00 p.m., a motion to adjourn was made by Scott Shanley and seconded by Jim Mindek; it was unanimously accepted by the Commission with no further discussion.

            Respectfully submitted,

            Aleshia M. Hall
            Executive Secretary to Chief Information Officer Mark Raymond