



## MINUTES

QLife Regular Board Meeting  
Thursday, June 24, 2021  
Via Google Hangouts

**Call to Order** President Hege calls the meeting to order at 12:02 PM.

**Roll Call** Scott Hege, Dale Lepper, Lee Weinstein, John Amery, Carrie Pipinich, Joseph Franell, Kristen Campbell, Stephanie Krell, Matthew Klebes, and Mike Middleton.

### **Changes to the Agenda**

There are no changes.

*[[President Hege moves to approve the agenda. Mr. Runyon seconds the motion, which passes unanimously.]]*

### **Approval of the Consent Agenda**

*[[Mr. Weinstein moves to approve the consent agenda. Mr. Runyon seconds the motion, which passes unanimously.]]*

## **Finance**

### **Financial Report, Analysis and Reconciliation**

Mr. Middleton presents the May financial report to the Board included in the packet and notes that accounts receivable is current with no outstanding payments. Interest is still less than this time last year because of the LGIP rates, but that is to be expected. We are still well under execution for the fiscal year.

The Capital fund is moving along well and right on budget.

The Maupin fund shows revenue at 227% executed because the Gorge Net and LS Networks franchise fees were received for a total of about \$22,000. Going forward, these should come in annually.

Mr. Middleton asks the Board if there are any questions but there are none.

## **Action Items**

### **Business Oregon/NTIA Project Submission**

Mr. Klebes informs the Board that a funding opportunity presented itself. Business Oregon requested agencies to participate in a state application for the funding source but the turnaround time is extremely short so Mr. Klebes already submitted a letter of interest.

Ms. Pipinich adds that the opportunity required an ISP partnership so she, Mr. Franell and Mr. Klebes put together the Maupin to Tygh Valley to Pine Hollow run and submitted the project with Blue Mountain Networks.

Mr. Klebes remarks that the total project cost is \$6.6M and he received word this morning that the project was selected by Business Oregon but only approved for \$3.3M. He will need to respond if we are interested in moving forward and adds that it will involve a lot of work to scale down the project. He is looking for approval from the Board and an alternative is to move forward as an individual agency instead of applying with Business Oregon. Mr. Franell says that participating in the state application is the best route because NTIA is only selecting one project per state. NTIA wants government to take the lead on the agency/ISP partnership.

***[[Mr. Weinstein moves to approve staff to proceed scaling down the fiber project to \$3.3M and express interest in applying for NTIA funding with Business Oregon. Mr. Lepper seconds the motion, which passes unanimously.]]***

President Hege wonders how we plan to scale the project back and Mr. Klebes explains that it is a daisy chain of projects so we will begin by reducing the extension from Sportsman's Park and potentially Pine Hollow. Mr. Klebes plans to discuss this with Mr. Franell and adds that matching funds are required so we could always increase our match to complete more of the project.

President Hege asks if there are additional funding opportunities available for this kind of project and Mr. Franell notes that federal funding is moving forward but there are not a lot of details yet. Mr. Franell also stresses that we should stay on top of the potential for funding because when details are released, it is likely going to be a quick turnaround time to submit applications. Mr. Klebes adds that we have OPCs developed, which will allow us to move quickly when funding opportunities happen.

President Hege wonders if there are enough connections in Mosier to partner with Blue Mountain Networks and Mr. Klebes explains that there has not been a conversation about that yet and Mosier is not included in this grant request.

### **QLife Vision Task Force Draft**

Mr. Klebes reminds the Board that last month, we reviewed the strategic plan included in the packet, which proposes QLife's vision, mission and goals. He populated the 2021-2022 strategies and is looking to the Board to execute and explore these goals over the next year with the plan to review and/or update goals next Spring. Mr. Weinstein adds that having these strategies in place allows us to move quickly on opportunities as they arise.

***[[Mr. Weinstein moves to approve the 2021-2022 QLife Strategic Plan. Mr. Lepper seconds the motion, which passes unanimously.]]***

### **Discussion Items**

#### **Water's Edge Fiber Funding Update**

Mr. Lepper received an email informing him that USAC funding for the Water's Edge project has been approved for about \$229,000. MCMC's USAC advisor will reach out to Ms. Krell about next steps.

#### **Oregon Telecommunications Conference**

Ms. Krell informs the Board that she has signed up QLife to be a sponsor at the \$500 level and Mr. Klebes plans to attend. She reminds the Board to let her know if they would also like to attend.

#### **QLife Service Order Tracker**

Ms. Krell reviews the service order tracker in the packet and explains the process through which she, Mr. Klebes, Mr. Amery and Commstructure use it to monitor service requests from start to finish.

#### **Gantt Chart**

Mr. Amery explains that the Gantt chart allows us to break down processes into segments and in return, provides metrics to review. The structure gives us insight into what is coming next and we are finding improvements as we move along. Mr. Klebes adds that this process will give us some benchmarking to work from.

#### **RISI – Scope of Work**

Mr. Klebes informs the Board that Google has expressed interest in supporting economic develop and broadband in Wasco County. Two scopes of work have been drafted that Google is offering to hire a consultant to complete; RISI (Rural Innovation Strategies, Inc.) and CORI (Center on Rural Innovation). Before the Board today is the RISI Scope of Work focused on broadband/fiber.

Ms. Pipinich explains that CORI is working with communities across the county and partners with ports and colleges to assess the digital economy. The plan is to develop strategies throughout the summer and we will update the Board as

we move through the process. The RISI scope of work is focused on broadband/fiber and will assist QLife in developing fiber connections to areas that need them, FTTH solutions and rate structure, and provide assistance with grants.

President Hege wonders what the end result will be and Ms. Pipinich responds that it will give us an assessment of gaps in access and allow for grant development and funding opportunities. President Hege asks who will pay for the assessment and Ms. Pipinich confirms that Google will be covering the cost but that we drive the project.

Mr. Weinstein asks if there are entities that have experience with surveying which we could utilize and Ms. Pipinich responds that surveying is potential activity for the BAT.

***[[The Board is in consensus for staff to move forward working with RISI.]]***

#### **Aristo Technical Management Report**

Mr. Amery informs the Board that there are no current damages to report but that he has frustration with the Curtis Homes project. It is complete and usable but the contractor is extremely slow finishing the last of the punch list items. The St. Mary's switch has received new fans and Mr. Amery should be able to complete the repair soon but reminds the Board that this is only a short-term fix.

President Hege asks who the provider will be at Curtis Homes and Mr. Amery responds that he hopes Gorge Net will service the area. President Hege asks if any of the homes are already connected and Mr. Amery responds that there are none connected to QLife. President Hege wonders what is stopping those connections and Mr. Klebes explains that we do not have a FTTH pricing structure yet which we hope to resolve working with RISI. Mr. Amery also adds that we did not build fiber all the way to the homes. We just put conduit in the area and jointly with an ISP, we can come to a solution.

President Hege asks Mr. Franell his thoughts on development and he responds that they hoped to be the first provider in the area but Charter is already there. Mr. Franell had a conversation with the Blue Mountain Network chairman about it and will look at development again.

President Hege asks if the situation is similar at the Liberty Street project and Mr. Franell confirms that it is but that Gorge Net will be the first provider.

#### **End of Life Report**

Mr. Amery reviews the end of life report in the packet and informs the Board how he broke down our inventory into categories. Mr. Klebes adds that this report give us a full picture of our equipment and more detailed view into our everyday functions.

#### **St. Mary's Cabinet Photos**

Mr. Amery explains to the Board how he made changes in the cabinets and the challenges that have arose given the surrounding environment and other entities in the area.

President Hege asks the other Board members if they want to continue virtual meetings or move to in person or hybrid options. Mr. Weinstein expresses that he prefers meeting in person but likes the option of a hybrid model. Mr. Lepper and Mr. Runyon concur.

The meeting is adjourned at 1:29 PM

The next regularly scheduled board meeting is set for July 22, 2021.

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These minutes were approved by the QLife Board on June 22, 2021.



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Lee Weinstein, Secretary