

SECRETARY'S RECORD, NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

BEFORE THE NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of the Commission,) Application No. C-3206
on its own motion, to administer)
the Nebraska Internet)
Enhancement Fund.) ORDER AWARDING GRANTS
)
)
) Entered: March 21, 2017

BY THE COMMISSION:

O P I N I O N A N D F I N D I N G S

The Nebraska Public Service Commission ("Commission") opened the above-captioned docket, on its own motion, to administer the Nebraska Internet Enhancement Fund ("NIEF") established by the Legislature pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 86-579 through 86-580 (Reissue of 2008). The Commission in an order issued on August 30, 2016, adopted grant forms and established a schedule for the 2016-2017 application process and award under the NIEF Grant Program.

The Commission received three pre-applications. On November 8, 2016, the Commission entered an order inviting the following pre-applicants to submit full applications: Box Butte County and the City of Winnebago.

Only one full application from Box Butte County was received on or before January 31, 2017. The City of Winnebago decided not to move forward with its application at this time. Box Butte County is requesting funds in the amount of \$75,000.

The NIEF Advisory Board (NIEF Board) reviewed the above-mentioned application during its February 24, 2017, meeting. In a letter dated March 8, 2017, the NIEF Board recommended that the application be approved for awarding of a NIEF grant in the amount requested. In the letter, the NIEF Board felt the benefits of the project merited an award amount in excess of the standard \$50,000 grant amount set forth in the guidelines.

The Commission has reviewed the application submitted and finds that the proposed project is consistent with the statutory purpose and goals of the NIEF program. Furthermore, the proposed project will provide financial assistance in the areas in which the provision of the internet and advanced telecommunications services are particularly costly due to factors including population scarcity and location remoteness. Furthermore, the Commission finds that the proposed project is economically viable and sustainable, provides benefits to the areas proposed to be serve in terms of access to the internet and advanced

SECRETARY'S RECORD, NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Application No. C-3206

Page 2

telecommunications services and will enhance rural development, economic development, education and telemedicine.

Although the County of Box Butte has applied for funds in excess of the \$50,000 standard grant amount, the Commission finds that the potential benefits of the proposed project and the fact that the project will fund areas in costly rural areas of Nebraska, warrants the additional funds and constitutes exceptional merit.

The Commission finds that the following application should be approved for the amount requested:

Box Butte County, Nebraska

The Commission further finds that pursuant to NIEF guidelines, the grant recipient shall sign a Grant Agreement containing the terms and conditions of the grant, previously approved by the Commission, prior to receiving any grant funds.

O R D E R

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED by the Nebraska Public Service Commission that the above-captioned application be approved for the requested amount.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the grant recipient shall sign a Grant Agreement, as previously approved by the Commission, containing the terms and conditions of the grant.

ENTERED AND MADE EFFECTIVE at Lincoln, Nebraska, this 21st day of March, 2017.

NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

COMMISSIONERS CONCURRING:

Mary Ridd
Crystal Knodds
Frank E. Landis

Tim Schram
Chairman

ATTEST:

Jeffrey L. Puley
Executive Director

//s//Frank E. Landis
//s//Tim Schram