

BEFORE THE NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of the Nebraska) Application No. NUSF-92.43
Public Service Commission, on)
its own motion, seeking to)
administer the Nebraska)
Universal Service Fund's) GRANTED
Broadband Program; application)
to the Nebraska Broadband)
Program Received from Pinpoint)
Communications/Adoption)
Program.) Entered: May 27, 2015

APPEARANCES:

For Pinpoint Communications:

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For the Commission:

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BY THE COMMISSION:

On December 10, 2013, the Nebraska Public Service Commission (Commission) opened NUSF-92 to serve as the vehicle for the Nebraska Universal Service Fund Broadband Program (NEBP). The Commission allocated \$500,000 for broadband adoption projects in calendar year 2015. On September 3, 2014, the Commission solicited applications for broadband adoption projects. The deadline for filing an application was November 26, 2014.

On November 26, 2014, Pinpoint Communications Inc. ("Pinpoint") filed a request for broadband adoption funding.¹ Notice of the application appeared in the Daily Record,

¹The Pinpoint application was offered and received into the record as Exhibit No. 12.

Omaha, Nebraska on December 15, 2014. On December 23, 2014, Charter Communications filed a Petition for Formal Intervention which was granted on December 31, 2014. On December 29, 2014, N.E. Colorado Cellular, Inc. d/b/a Viaero Wireless ("Viaero") filed a Petition of Formal Intervention which was granted on January 9, 2015. Subsequently, Viaero and Charter both withdrew their Interventions.

On March 13, 2015, a procedural order was entered determining the schedule for processing adoption applications. Pre-filed testimony was submitted on March 27, 2015. A hearing was held in Lincoln, Nebraska on April 27, 2015 with appearances as shown above.² Mr. Thomas Shoemaker, Executive Vice President of Pinpoint Communications, testified in support of the application.³

Pinpoint, in partnership with the Gothenburg Housing Authority, proposes to increase the access and connectivity to underserved populations, such as low-income families and the elderly, living in residential housing units in Gothenburg which are managed by the Gothenburg Housing Authority. The objective of the proposal is to improve the accessibility and connectivity in the commons area in two of the Housing Authority's low income facilities. The proposed project will provide 100 Mbps to both locations with a carrier-grade WiFi solution for residents of the two facilities. The connections will be impacting nearly 75 residents and guests visiting these residents.

The existing facilities and capacity have begun to show strain with demand and thus they cannot meet the needs of the residents for the functionality they require. Currently, the facilities have only one computer station that residents can use. Pinpoint proposes to expand the number of stations to 5 stations. Pinpoint also proposes to expand the broadband facilities coming into the commons area as well. Currently the facilities are on a slow DSL platform. Pinpoint will be

² The hearing was consolidated with other broadband adoption applications for administrative efficiency.

³ The pre-filed Direct Testimony of Mr. Thomas Shoemaker was offered and received into evidence as Exhibit No. 18.

increasing the speeds such that video-conferencing and Tele-health options may become a reality.

Pinpoint also plans to install a WiFi system. The system will provide residents with the ability to connect their personal devices in the commons areas to wireless Internet service. This will be a cost-effective solution so that many people can be connected to the Internet at the same time.

Ms. Vanicek, Director of the Nebraska Telecommunications Infrastructure and Public Safety Department of the Commission, testified in support of the staff recommendation.⁴ She stated the projects recommended for funding will represent a diverse test bed for the Commission to analyze which broadband adoption projects are most successful. Ms. Vanicek further testified all projects recommended for funding by the staff benefit low-income consumers and are aimed at increasing broadband adoption.

The total cost of the project to cover a five-year period will be \$52,794.00. This covers the costs of the faster service, the installation costs, the WiFi costs, and the computer equipment.

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

The Commission set aside \$500,000 for broadband adoption projects to increase broadband adoption and usage in Nebraska. Because it is a pilot program, the Commission found it would address these applications on an ad hoc basis rather than utilizing a specific methodology for choosing projects. Ten projects were proposed. In total, the amount of broadband adoption support initially sought was \$1,225,276; more than twice the amount of available funding.

The Commission staff filed a recommendation on February 12, 2015. In its filing, the Commission staff recommended Pinpoint's application be funded in the amount of \$52,794. No one opposed the Pinpoint application for broadband adoption support.

⁴The pre-filed Direct and Reply Testimony of Ms. Sue Vanicek were offered and received into evidence as Exhibit Nos. 13 and 14 respectively.

Based upon the application and the staff recommendation, the Commission finds the application should be granted. The Commission approves support for the proposed project up to an amount of **\$52,794 or the actual cost** of the project whichever amount is lower.

The Commission will hold a workshop to discuss reporting requirements for this grant on **July 22, 2015 at 1:30 p.m.** in the Commission Hearing Room, 300 The Atrium Building, 1200 N Street, Lincoln, Nebraska. A telephone bridge will be made available for this workshop.

O R D E R

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED by the Nebraska Public Service Commission that the above-captioned application be, and it is hereby, approved as provided herein.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that a workshop to discuss reporting requirements for this grant will be held on **July 22, 2015 at 1:30 p.m.** in the Commission Hearing Room, 300 The Atrium Building, 1200 N Street, Lincoln, Nebraska.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Applicant shall submit detailed and accurate invoices and other documentation required by the Department prior to reimbursement for the supported project(s).

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Applicant shall use Nebraska Broadband Program support only for the purposes described in its application and authorized by the Commission.

MADE AND ENTERED at Lincoln, Nebraska this 27th day of May, 2015.

NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

COMMISSIONERS CONCURRING:

Cystal Woodles

Vice-Chairman

Frank E. Landis

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

ATTEST:

Irene Meradith

Executive Director