

**Syracuse MetroNet
Board of Directors Meeting
Friday, August 18, 2017
8 AM, Syracuse Technology Garden
235 Harrison Street**

MetroNet Board Members, Visitors and Staff Attendance:

Brian Barboline - Vice-Chair - E	Kevin Sexton - A
Dave Prowak - Treasurer - E	Murali Venkatesh - E
Meg Backus - √	Matt Mahoney - E
Brendan Fear - A	Mike O'Neill - √
Shaun Black - A	Ron Walter - √
Joe Ziemba - √	Larry Page - √
Sam Scozzafava - E	Bill Murray - √
Andrew Cramer - A	
Nader Maroun - √	

() - Individuals listed in parenthesis after Board members indicates a representative who attended in place of that board member

√ - Indicates Board members, visitors or MetroNet staff personal that were present

A - Indicates Board member that was absent

E - Indicates Board member that was excused

Meeting Notes:

1.) Welcome and Introductions

Ron Walter called the meeting to order at 8:10 AM.

2.) Motions

Ron Walter recommended that we invite Bill Murray of M.A. Polce to join the Board of Directors as an at-large member.

Motion: Ron Walter made a motion to elect Bill Murray as an at-large member to the Syracuse MetroNet Board of Directors, and Nader Maroun seconded the motion.

Due to a lack of a quorum, voting was conducted via email following the meeting. The motion was carried.

Ron Walter stated that Mr. Murray has expressed interest in the open position of Syracuse MetroNet Board President. Nader Maroun nominated Mr. Murray to be President of the Board of Syracuse MetroNet and Joe Ziemba seconded the nomination. A vote on the nomination will be held at the next MetroNet Board meeting.

Ron Walter asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the February 17th and April 21st Board meetings as presented.

Motion: Nader Maroun made a motion to approve the Board meeting minutes as presented for the February 17th and April 21st Board meetings, and Bill Murray seconded the motion.

Due to a lack of a quorum, voting was conducted via email following the meeting. The motion was carried.

Ron Walter reviewed the MetroNet Revenue Less Expenses report as of July 31, 2017 and reported revenue for the month of \$3,516.67 versus expenses of \$6,318.92. For the first seven months of the year, revenue exceeded expenses by \$1,462.24.

Cash on hand at the end of the month was \$115,547.93. Accounts Receivable stand at \$26,370.54 including \$4,170.54 from the Marriott Syracuse Downtown. The Hotel is now running three months behind in their payments. The second Baseline Fee payment of \$2,500.00 has been received since the end of the month. Nader Maroun stated that he would follow up with Ed Riley concerning the past due amounts from the Hotel. He also asked the status of the amount due from the Syracuse City School District. Mr. Walter replied that the invoice was just sent out about a month ago and he expects to receive a purchase order shortly.

Ron Walter asked for a motion to approve the MetroNet financials for July 2017 as presented.

Motion: Nader Maroun made a motion to approve MetroNet financials for July 2017 as presented, and Mike O'Neill seconded the motion.

Due to a lack of a quorum, voting was conducted via email following the meeting. The motion was carried.

3.) MetroNet Technology Report

Larry Page reported that he and Ron Walter met with Frank Petrella of Level 3 Communications at the State Tower Building to make sure that we still had access to the Level 3 network operations center on the 7th floor. He stated that Bill Murray needs to stop by the 7th floor to make sure his credentials still work. Given the changes in building ownership and the change in Level 3 ownership, we wanted to make sure that we still have the required access to our equipment.

Mr. Walter added that although the 9th Floor of the State Tower Building is being converted into a residential floor, the Meet-Me Room will continue to operate as before on that floor. What the new owner is doing now is checking all the fiber in the building to make sure that it is still being used. We confirmed that the fiber that we use between the 7th and 9th Floor has been identified as being in use. Additionally, he stated that the UPS owned by Syracuse MetroNet is still in Room 601 and is available for use by anyone who wants to remove it. Nader Maroun suggested that we list the UPS on Craig's List.

3.) MetroNet Project Development

Wireless Connectivity for Non-Profits – Ron Walter reported that all the equipment from the Refugee Computer Lab at First English Lutheran Church has been moved to St. Stephen Lutheran Church on Dewitt Street in Syracuse. Unfortunately, Syracuse MetroNet is no longer able to provide free Internet service to the Lab since we do not have a MetroNet site in close proximity to the Church. Another ESL course for the Karen Community will be offered in the Lab this fall with Internet connectivity using the Church's Spectrum connection. He stated that he has a meeting later in the day with Gail Riina, Lutheran Chaplain at Syracuse University, who has been in charge of the Refugee Computer Lab program, to see how MetroNet can continue to help with the Lab and with the other refugee groups who were once housed at the now closed First English Lutheran Church.

Mr. Walter also reported that he has heard nothing further from the Syracuse City School District regarding our request to use the District's backbone from King Elementary School to provide Internet service to the Somali-Bantu Community Center via a wireless link to the school. We were told by the Universal Service Administrative Company that this use would not jeopardize the District's E-Rate funding. However, the District had heard differently from their consultants and were going to check again with them and get back to us. While this project is not high on the District's priority list, it is unfortunate because with all the District's locations throughout the City, there would definitely be other opportunities to provide connectivity to other non-profit organizations.

Free Wi-Fi Initiative – Bill Murray reported that the County’s access points are up and running around the County building as well as the access points from Le Moyne College in Hanover Square. Ron Walter reported that Dave Prowak has assured him that two access points at City Hall will be up and running by the end of next week. Additionally, Mr. Prowak has been working with NYSERNet to connect an access point that will cover Clinton Square as part of the free Wi-Fi initiative. Meg Backus reported that despite her initial effort to add access points at the Library, she will not be able to do so at the moment because of concerns with the area around the Library building. Ron Walter added that as a next step, we need to identify other organizations in the downtown area who would be willing to put up access points as part of the free Wi-Fi initiative to allow us to expand our reach. One entity that would be ideal to connect would be the access points currently operated by the Syracuse Tech Garden.

Mr. Walter also reported that Rick Clonan of the Tech Garden has scheduled a meeting with us for next week to discuss a mesh networking opportunity. How that would fit into our free W-Fi initiative is yet to be determined.

Tech Alley Initiative – Ron Walter reported that this project has taken a back seat while he has been out of the office. However, he is continuing to work to identify building owners who we should contact and meet with in an effort to get them on board. There are several buildings along South Salina Street that are currently being renovated and that would make ideal candidates for participation in the project. Bob Doucette and Tim Lynn are two key individuals who we should get involved. Mr. Walter agreed to put together a letter to these individuals and asked Nader Maroun to send it out. Additionally, we need to re-connect with Chuck Wallace of VIP Structures and Vince Nicotra of QPK Design as well as Joe Hucko of Washington Street Partners to update them on our progress.

Mr. Walter reported that we already have a rough quote from Eastcom for the cost of installing fiber along the route of the Tech Alley. He recently asked Bill Murray to put together rough costs for equipment to light the fiber. Mr. Murray reviewed a list of equipment that he put together. This included equipment at the State Tower Building which would enable us to purchase Gigabit Ethernet Internet service from any of several possible providers. We could purchase and manage this equipment ourselves or lease the equipment from a provider and have them provide the service. The end users could then contract with the management organization through Syracuse MetroNet for the service. Mr. Walter pointed out that the equipment costs listed are list prices. We have been able to get some very good discounts on this type of equipment in the past.

Mr. Walter stated that there are still many options to consider for building and managing this network. He is trying to reach a point where we can begin to put something on paper as a starting point for consideration. This would include identifying who is involved as well as options for financing, purchasing equipment, managing the network, etc.

Additionally, Mr. Walter reported that Dave Prowak has been working with a local vendor to assess the possibility of building a fiber loop that would connect the Atrium Building and the State Tower Building. This would be a loop built with 144 strand ribbon fiber. This loop could be used by the City for free for municipal purposes and leased at a low cost for other purposes. This loop could form the northern end of the Tech Alley loop that we are trying to build. Mr. Prowak should have more details at the next MetroNet meeting.

Joe Ziemba asked if we know if the buildings on our list already have Internet connectivity. Mr. Walter responded that we do not know the status of all the buildings. Once we get agreement from the building owners to participate, we need to do a detailed analysis of what is currently available in each building. We do know on the basis of initial conversations that some buildings already have some connectivity. Analyzing the requirements of each of these buildings is part of developing a cost for this project.

Mike O’Neil asked if the MetroNet organization has someone who can analyze the building needs and develop a plan for connecting these buildings. Mr. Walter responded that we do not currently have anyone on staff with that capability and that is one of the key decisions that we need to make in moving forward. How do we acquire the necessary resources to plan and build this type of network?

Nader Maroun stated that there are still many pieces up in the air after two years of discussing this project. He asked if this project is still the right thing for Syracuse MetroNet to do and if it is, what kind of resources do we need to bring to the table to get this accomplished? Mr. Walter stated that he still feels that there is a great opportunity for us to build something important for the City of Syracuse but we are still lacking a plan of how we can move forward. Mr. Maroun stated that this project will be of benefit to both the building owners and the tenants of those buildings. He asked if we had a list of tenants and Mr. Walter stated that we do not. Mr. Walter agreed to contact Merike Trier to see if she has a list of tenants of the buildings.

Bill Murray suggested that we get a group of building owners together and ask them if we can have space in their buildings to put in dark fiber and equipment so that we can offer Internet service to the tenants of their buildings. Once we determine whether or not they already have street level access we can determine the cost of connecting each of the buildings. Mr. Walter stated that we did hold a focus group quite some time ago and had a limited number of owners participate and followed that up with one-on-one calls with other owners. If there is no real cost to the building owner, we should be able to get a number of building owners to agree.

Nader Maroun stated that if this is still a valuable idea, we need to find a way of gaining further support from possible funding sources. He stated that Mr. Walter cannot be expected to do this alone and he suggested that Mr. Walter reach out to Board members for assistance in moving this project forward. One of the things that the Downtown Committee is looking for are ways of increasing capacity and finding ways of attracting more people and businesses to the downtown area. We need to define exactly how this project would fit into that objective. We need to develop a case for a business enterprise.

Bill Murray offered to begin to develop a proposal on paper that we could pass around to individuals for input. Mr. Walter agreed that such an effort would be very helpful.

Mike O'Neill suggested that we create a map of the area that we are talking about so that we can help visualize the area and buildings that we are talking about. This could be used as a conversation starter for those who want to know what we are talking about when we refer to a Tech Alley. Mr. Walter stated that such a map would be very helpful. What we are talking about is an area from the Atrium Building across Hanover Square to the State Tower Building, down South Warren Street to Harrison Street, and up South Salina Street back to the Atrium Building. Joe Ziembra stated that he has access to a map of fiber installations in the area about which we are talking which would be helpful in getting a better understanding of what is currently available. Ron Walter agreed to look at creating a map of the streets and buildings within the Tech Alley area.

Educational Opportunities – Nader Maroun referenced a recent article about coding classes. He stated that he has a great interest in giving young people in our community the opportunity to explore other avenues to learning besides the standard learning offered in the schools. There is a lot of talent in our schools and many young people do not have the opportunity to explore other leaning avenues. From all that he has read, there is a great need today for people who can do coding. He asked if there was an opportunity for Syracuse MetroNet to explore offering this type of educational opportunity. Ron Walter stated that there are coding classes being offered by Syracuse University and others but these tend to be quite expensive and out of financial reach of many students.

Meg Backus stated that this is an area that the Onondaga County Public Library is involved in. The new Maker Space at the downtown branch is serving as the headquarters of this effort. The Library has been bringing in instructors to offer training in this type of education. There are libraries throughout the Syracuse community which have the resources to offer this type of learning. This is a ready to go platform. While the library staffs themselves do not always have the required skills in these areas, they have been reaching out to find instructors from the community.

Ron Walter asked if Syracuse MetroNet developed or acquired a curriculum and hired instructors, could they work with the libraries to offer these classes. Ms. Backus stated that the library is already doing this but MetroNet could possibly assist in expanding this effort.

Mike O'Neill stated that while he understands the goal, he knows that it takes more than a basic programming course to make an individual marketable as a software engineer. However, we can begin to expose the local youth to programming at the local libraries to pique their interest and then provide a recognizable path to further education, perhaps at the community college level, and beyond. He believes that MetroNet working with libraries could go a long way toward making kids aware of the opportunities that are out there and showing them a path that would enable them to get the education needed to take advantage of these opportunities. Ron Walter stated that he agrees that we could develop a program which can create interest, show opportunities, and provide a vehicle where kids can learn new skills. He believes that the value of such a program goes beyond just learning basic skills but also encompasses the orderly process of thinking things through. Bill Murray suggested that we look at the possibility of enlisting grad students to teach some of these courses.

Following further discussion, Nader Maroun and Ron Walter agreed to meet with Meg Backus to see how we might move this concept forward.

5.) Next Meeting Dates

The next MetroNet Executive/Planning Committee meeting is scheduled for Friday, September 15, 2017 at 8:00AM.

The next MetroNet Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for Friday, October 20, 2017 at 8:00AM.

6.) Motion to Adjourn

Ron Walter asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion: Mike O'Neill made a motion to adjourn the meeting.