

SCRPS Status Update

FCC Form 5640

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File No. SC-SU0001185

Applicant Information

Applicant FRN 0031827553 Applicant Address 3120 Frederick Road
Applicant Name Point Broadband Fiber Holdin Applicant City Opelika
Applicant Email chad.wachter@point-broadba Applicant State AL
Applicant Phone 7067732663 Applicant ZIP Code 36801

Contact Information

Is the contact the same as the contact listed on the Application Request for Funding Allocation? If not, please list below.

Contact Name Summit Ridge Group, LLC Contact Address 49 West 38th Street 12th Floor
Contact Email PointRR@SummitRidgeGroup Contact City New York
Contact Phone 2124334800 Contact State NY
Contact ZIP Code 10018

*Indicate which deadline you are meeting with this filing.

2022-10-13

Explanation of Effort and Availability of Commercial Equipment

*Provide an explanation of efforts undertaken, and challenges encountered, in permanently removing, replacing, and disposing of covered communications equipment or service.

In Sep. 2020, Point Broadband purchased the assets of Casair in Michigan. Point recognized that there were significant amounts of Covered Equipment throughout the Casair Michigan network. Point began to assess the magnitude of work required to remove all the Covered Equipment from the network while maintaining customer continuity and not inducing a burden on the Michigan division to a point that would cripple the ongoing services provided by now Point in the Michigan market to including our CAF2 areas. In Sep. 2021 Point engaged the services of Summit Ridge Group for the Rip and Replace program. In Jan. 2021 Point and the Michigan Engineering team started internal meetings to identify all Covered Equipment in the Michigan network. In addition, Point found that the equipment was on the list of equipment to be eventually removed from US markets due to security issues. Point began identifying the replacement considerations required to fully remove all from the network. The first reviewed was the data network identifying 100+ core routers and switches. Next, we began reviewing the fixed wireless network identifying 57 sites with 171 sectors (Distribution Radio) with license in the 2.5 gig spectrum. Approximately 2,000 customer premise devices attached to the 2.5 fixed wireless network. We reviewed the fiber to the home product where we identified 52 sites and approximately 5,000 customer premise devices attached to the FTTH GPON distribution network. Last we reviewed the Covered Equipment power systems that were providing DC plant in 50 of our network locations. We reviewed the 23 paths of 11G licensed MV's that would have to be replaced. Given the daunting task and the impending amount of time to perform such a huge total change out while maintaining our customers, we sought out vendors that could provide not only replacement equipment but adequate speeds and services for our existing customers and services that we will provide under our network. In addition, we would have to have considerable contract labor to accomplish the task of removing the Covered Equipment. Point realized that there would be thousands of hours of time required for the removal and replacement of the Covered Equipment. There would be a minimum 7,000 truck rolls to replace all of the customer premise equipment for the fixed wireless and the fiber to the home GPON system while coordinating contact with the customers through our customer care center. In addition, there would be considerable planning and engineering to replace any one piece core equipment at a time. Include informing the customer base behind each core equipment and then the amount of downtime that they would have to endure while their equipment was being replaced, the Michigan division was in no way equipped to handle such an enormous feat. We considered the amount of contract labor that would be adequate for such a large undertaking. Even with a large contract labor presence, there would be many hours of development and integration to the new types of replacement equipment. All new systems would have to be integrated into our billing and provisioning fabric. Internal Point resources would have to be hired or allocated to the various different equipment disciplines. In Feb. 2021 point began negotiations with vendors. Point identified Ericsson as a vendor that could supply the necessary equipment to replace the fixed wireless 2.5 gig radio system, Ericsson also had a robust router and data portfolio and DC plant portfolio. Nov. of 2021 we narrowed our search for a GPON replacement of Covered Equipment GPON network and chose Ciena Networks as our partner, we then began weekly engineering meetings to review our complex Covered Equipment GPON network and started down the path of getting accurate quotes. With a large number of GPON customers we realized how much time and manpower would be required to change out of the network similar to the same problem that we have on the fixed wireless discipline.

*Explain whether you are finding commercially available equipment in the marketplace. If not, then explain efforts taken to obtain replacement equipment.

One of the first obstacles that we identified with Ericsson was the enormous amount of manpower and hours required to replace so much equipment while mitigating interruptions of customer's service. We also identified that Ericsson did not provide a customer premise radio device in the 2.5 frequency. We began a search for a company that could provide the premise radio equipment that would talk directly to the Ericsson tower radio equipment. We identified several vendors and narrowed it down to one which we then asked for interop testing with Ericsson. In the following months we discovered that the Ericsson 2.5 equipment needed for replacement of the Huawei 2.5 gig radio equipment would require a special core operating system to allow us to provide 5G service to cover the speed requirements of the CAF2 areas Point would be covering. Point settled on a separate core that would work directly with the Ericsson radio equipment. The dilemma that we would face would be the software to interact with the Ericsson radio equipment would not be available until March of 2023, but we are moving forward.

On July 15th, 2022, we were awarded 1/3 of the applied for Rip and Replace funds. At this point we had to start making tough decisions on how we would go forward with only a fraction of what would be required to complete the entire project and stay within the parameters and timelines set forward by the FCC. We have continued to move forward with our engineering process and hope to start the first GPON deployments in late December or early January provided the weather is permitting. We will not be able to start the installation of the Ericsson equipment until March of 2023, which could result in Point needing a build deadline extension.

* If there is additional information relevant to the preceding questions or that you believe the Commission should be aware of, please include the information below.

Due to the complexity of changing out such a large scale of network equipment Point, and Ericsson began weekly meetings to discuss engineering obstacles and pricing of their product lines. Quotes were provided and accepted by Point on the first phase of router replacement at Covered Equipment sites. Point provided POs to Ericsson for 40 core routers in March of 2021. Point had to increase the capacity of the existing network to maintain network reliability and customer network increases. The router placements were alongside existing Covered Equipment with our plan to migrate at a later date the traffic from the older Covered Equipment ring on to our new Ericsson system.

As we continued engineering meetings with Ericsson on the 2.5 radio swap-out plan, we realized how much interaction it would require of internal resources and how many contract resources would be required just for the integration and change out of the radio network. We began to formulate a plan on how to takedown a Covered Equipment 2.5 site as quickly as possible and replace it with Ericsson 2.5 radio equipment while impacting the customers the least. We came up with at least three days of coordinated communications two customers that they would be out of service during the upgrade. To make it more complicated we would have to identify those customers by tower and have a crew of contractors ready to go out and change out the customer premise equipment. We calculated a minimum of 2,000 truck rolls just for changing out the customer radio equipment if everything went perfect. The aggressive schedules that we would have to adhere to also had to include downtime due to the Michigan winters, which could result in Point needing a build deadline extension.

One concern that we have at this time is the availability of climbing crews for the change out of all of the 2.5 radio equipment. We have recently experienced difficulty finding tower crews for installs not related to rip and replace in the Michigan market. Now with all the devastation and rebuild focus on Florida after hurricane Ian, the availability of experience climbing crews is exacerbated. We anticipate a great deal of difficulty over the next year in getting experienced contract labor for the Rip and Replace projects, which could require Point to request a build deadline extension.

Program Compliance

*Indicate whether recipient has fully complied with (or is in the process of complying with) all requirements of the Reimbursement Program.

Yes No

*Indicate whether recipient has permanently removed from its communications network, replaced, and disposed of (or is in the process of permanently removing, replacing, and disposing of) all covered communications equipment or services that were in the recipient's network as of the date of submission of the recipient's application requesting funding.

Yes No

If you have not yet completed the removal, replacement, and/or disposal process, what estimated percentage of the removal, replacement, and/or disposal process have you completed?

*Indicate whether recipient has fully complied with (or is in the process of complying with) the timeline submitted by the recipient. If not, provide explanation for deviation.

Yes No

*The filer has indicated no to a question in this section, please provide additional information.

Certifications

*By checking the box and providing the electronic signature where indicated below, the Certifying Official on behalf of the filer certifies under penalty of perjury that:

(1) The Certifying Official is authorized to submit this status report on behalf of the above-named filer and, based on information known to me or provided to me by employees responsible for the information being submitted, the information set forth in this status report has been examined and is true, accurate, and complete, and the expenditures, disbursements and cash receipts are for the purposes and objectives set forth in the terms and conditions of the Federal award. The Certifying Official acknowledges that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent information or statement, or the omission of any material fact on this status report or on any other document submitted by the filer may subject the filer and the undersigned to punishment by fine or forfeiture under the Communications Act (47 U.S.C. §§ 502, 503(b), 1606), or fine or imprisonment under Title 18 of the United States Code (18 U.S.C. § 1001, §§ 286-287, and § 1343), or can lead to liability under the False Claims Act (31 U.S.C. §§ 3729-3733, and §§ 3801-3812). (2) The filer is in compliance with the statute, rules, and orders governing the Reimbursement Program, including but not limited to allocations, draw downs, payments, obligations and expenditures of money, and the Certifying Official acknowledges that failure to be in compliance and remain in compliance with those statutes, rules, and orders may result in the denial of funding, cancellation of funding commitments, and/or recoupment of past disbursements. The Certifying Official acknowledges that the filer will maintain detailed records, including receipts, of all costs eligible for reimbursement actually incurred for a period of 10 years; and will file all required documentation for its expenses. The Certifying Official acknowledges that failure to comply with the statute, rules, and orders governing the Reimbursement Program could result in civil or criminal prosecution by law enforcement authorities.

Certifier Information

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Date Signed	2022-10-12		