



MARATHON COUNTY BROADBAND TASK FORCE MEETING

Minutes

Monday, January 23, 2023, at 3:00 P.M.
Webex/Assembly Room, 500 Forest St, Wausau WI

Members	Present/Web-Phone	Absent
Chair John Robinson	x	
Jacob Langenhahn		x
Gary Gisselman	x	
Mike Ritter		x
Jennifer Aarestad	x	
Tony Sherfinski		x
Eric Budleski		x
Milton Olson		x
Wade Carroll	x	
Kurt Schoenrock	x	
Jon Euting		x

Also Present: Valerie Carrillo, Gerry Klein, Kristin Lambrecht

VIA Web or Phone: Jean Maszk, Kurt Gibbs, Bill Floyd, Alison Ellis, Scott Nyman, Todd Kruse

1. **Call Meeting to Order:** Chair Robinson called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.
2. **Public Comments** (15 Minute limit) – None
3. **BROADBAND TASK FORCE MINUTES FROM DECEMBER TO BE APPROVED AT THE FEBRUARY MEETING.**
4. **Educational Presentations and Committee Discussion:**
 - A. Presentation on Telehealth – Wade Carrol – Shared a presentation on the Aspirus Telehealth Program. He gave an overview of how Aspirus video visits work. Aspirus uses Starlink business for some of their more outlying locations for internet service. They have issues with other ISPs and the bandwidth required for staff working remotely when on call at home.
 - B. Update on Grant Funded Broadband Projects
 1. Frontier (PSC 2022) – They were awarded their contract in December 2022. The County has pledged approximately \$944,000 which would serve approximately 10,600 units. They have two years to complete the project.
 2. Bug Tussel (PSC 2022) – Ashley noted there is a delay in construction of fiber due to work permit delays.
 3. Charter (RDOF) – There is a draft PowerPoint presentation in the pack that Chair Robinson is presenting to the county board. It includes the update for the project.
 - C. Status Report on Bug Tussel's Project – The reports will be turning to quarterly.
 - D. FCC Fabric Map Challenges – There is new mapping as of November. The feedback is set up for individuals to challenge the service provided. Gerry is working on getting the licenses to do a bulk challenge however it has been very cumbersome. The challenge website is not user friendly. There has been a request from the county to delay the initial application of the map as it will be used to allocate \$42.5 billion on the federal level.
5. **Policy Discussion and Possible Action:**
 - A. Approach to Funding Sources: County, State and Federal
 1. PSC Grant - \$14 million available for the next round of grants. There is information in the packets.
 2. Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program – \$42.5 billion available over the next 5 years. The state is in the planning process on how to distribute it. There is more information in the packet.

3. American Rescue Plan Act – The county has marked over \$3 million for broadband expansion. This money cannot be used as a loan to Bug Tussel. There is a potential to reallocate the funds.
 4. Affordable Connectivity Program – Federal Communications Commission (fcc.gov) – Providers are offering subsidies to individuals in need to make internet more affordable.
- B. Process for determining priorities for future broadband expansion efforts – There is a need to identify gaps in service. Gaps could include population, geology, topography.

6. **Next Meeting Topics**

1. Rural school district broadband presentation

7. **Next Meeting:** February 27, 2023

8. **Adjournment – No motion due to lack of quorum. Meeting ended at 4:20pm.**

Respectfully Submitted by,
Kathy Johnson