



# JOINT MEETING OF THE MARATHON COUNTY EXTENSION, EDUCATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE AND THE INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

## MINUTES

Thursday, March 7, 2019 – 12:00 p.m.

Courthouse Assembly Room, 500 Forest Street, Wausau WI 54403

Attendance: Infrastructure	Present	Absent	EEEDC	Present	Absent
John Robinson, Chair	X		Sara Guild, Chair	X	
Richard Gumz, Vice-Chair	X		Romey Wagner, Vice-Chair	X	EX
Alan Christensen	X		Gary Beastro	X	
Sandi Cihlar	X		Alison Leahy	X	
Jeff Johnson	X		Ka Lo	X	
Allen Opall	X		Jean Maszk	X	EX
Thomas Seubert	X		Rick Seefeldt	X	

**Also Present:** Lance Leonhard, Jason Hausler, Melinda Osterberg, Gerard Klein, Jim Warsaw

**1. Call Meeting to Order**

John Robinson and Sara Guild called their respective committees to order at 5:30 p.m.

**2. Public Comment (15 minute limit) - None**

**3. Educational Presentations and Committee Discussion**

- A. Review of the work done at the direction of the Extension, Education & Economic Development Committee (EEEDC) relative to the expansion of high-speed internet service throughout Marathon County.

**Discussion:**

Chairs Guild and Robinson recap how the issue of high-speed internet expansion became a priority project for each of their respective committees, explaining that County Board Chair Gibbs had articulated that because high-speed internet access was vital to our educational systems and our economic development efforts and because this service is best understood as crucial infrastructure, he wanted both committees to play lead roles. Specifically, Guild and Robinson indicate that the EEEDC was tasked with developing information relative to why high-speed access was important and what the community's needs were, while Infrastructure would be tasked with developing information relative to how we meet those goals.

Deputy Administrator Leonhard and UW Extension Area Director Hausler provide an overview of the work done by the EEEDC, beginning with undertaking a review of the work done in 2009 (e.g., the Broadband Gap Analysis) and 2015 (e.g., the Connectivity Task Force presentation). Leonhard and Hausler explain that they arranged for a community forum with leaders from across our county, including business, education, and agriculture sectors. Staff also express that they examined successful initiatives from other counties in Wisconsin, counties in Minnesota, and initiatives in several other states.

Leonhard and Hausler summarize the results of the information gathering as follows:

- There is not a one size fits all answer – there are numerous approaches that have proven successful given the varying nature of each project.
- Marathon County did not have the combination of technical skill and capacity to develop a plan without assistance
- Community engagement needs to be a substantial focus in this effort

Leonhard and Hausler explain that in light of what was learned, Marathon County did the following:

- Secured a ½ time UW Extension Educator position to assist in our broadband expansion efforts,

- particularly in the area of community engagement
- Began putting together a Request for Proposal for an Engineering Study and Analysis
    - o This effort included discussions with the EEEDC that identified the following core elements to address in the RFP:
      - Speed – the committee asked that we consider gigabyte service as a standard, but it recognized that scalability was an essential deliverable.
      - Service Targets – ultimately, the EEEDC deemed it important that any solution deliver coverage to all towns/communities.
      - Cell service – to the extent possible, the EEEDC asked that our plan also consider how to expand cell coverage.

Melinda Osterberg, the UW Extension educator hired to work on our high-speed internet expansion efforts explains the process the team is utilizing to build the RFP. Deputy Administrator Leonhard then explains the next steps in the process, including the need for County Administration to identify a funding source for the study.

#### **4. Policy Issues Discussion and Potential Committee Determination**

##### **A. Consideration of next steps relative to expansion of high-speed internet service throughout Marathon County.**

1. **ACTION:** Direct Marathon County Administration to prepare a Request for Proposal for a High-Speed Internet Feasibility Analysis in light of the information from the Extension, Education & Economic Development Committee and identify funding for securing the consultant.

**Infrastructure Committee: MOTION (AS PROVIDED ABOVE) BY JOHNSON, SECOND BY CHRISTENSEN. MOTION CARRIED.**

**Extension, Education & Economic Development: MOTION (AS PROVIDED ABOVE) BY MASZK, SECOND BY BEASTROM. MOTION CARRIED.**

#### **Follow Through:**

County Administration to identify potential funding source for engineering study and analysis.

#### **5. Announcements: None**

#### **6. Adjournment**

**MOTION BY CHRISTENSEN, SECOND BY JOHNSON, TO ADJOURN THE INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING. MOTION CARRIED. MEETING ADJOURNED AT 12:55 P.M.**  
**MOTION BY MASZK, SECOND BY BEASTROM, TO ADJOURN THE EXTENSION, EDUCATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING, MOTION CARRIED. MEETING ADJOURNED AT 12:55 P.M.**

Minutes Prepared  
By Lance Leonhard and Brad Karger  
on March 20, 2019.