



**MARATHON COUNTY
BROADBAND TASK FORCE MEETING**

Minutes

Monday, March 28, 2022, at 3:00 P.M.

Webex/Assembly Room, 500 Forest St, Wausau WI

Members	Present/Web-Phone	Absent
Chair John Robinson	P	
Sandi Cihlar	P	
Jon Euting	P	
Sara Guild	P	
Jacob Langenhahn	P	
Milton Olson	P	
Kurt Schoenrock		x

Also Present: Gerry Klein, Valerie Carrillo, Noor Ali Hassan, Eric Budleski, Valerie Carrillo

VIA Web or Phone: Andy Faust, Scott Nyman, Jean Maszk, Jason Hausler, Mitch Olsen

1. Call Meeting to Order: Chair Robinson called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.
2. Public Comments (15 Minute limit) – none
3. **CIHLAR MAKE A MOTION; SECOND BY BUDLESKI TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 28, 2022, BROADBAND TASK FORCE MEETING MINUTES. MOTION CARRIED.**
4. **Educational Presentations and Committee Discussion:**
 - A. RDOF progress and NTIA Grant Application - Chairman Robinson updated the committee. LTD has submitted their long form but are still waiting for approval. They are hopeful to get word in the next month or two. Marathon County submitted a National Telecommunications and Information Act application with Charter last July. There is still no word regarding the application. If RDOF is not proceeded, we will lose time and potentially funding if we have to wait too long. Charter and LTD will be above ground cabling versus buried lines. Cihlar asked if we could require them to go below ground. Chairman Robinson said we are not the ones to make that decision. He continued with clarifying the RDOF bid process. Budleski asked for further clarification of RDOF dollars and service areas. Chairman Robinson and Gerry Klein added further clarification. Mitch Olsen added that the PSC is trying to prevent the “double dipping” with the RDOF providers.
 - B. GeoPartners Speed Test Data - 1,928 speed tests done in Marathon County as of 3-28-22 with 1,348 separate locations. The test data is weak in the west and southeast sides of the county. The committee will be looking at ways for additional communication to obtain better data. A map was provided with explanations from Chair Robinson and Gerry Klein. Supervisor Langenhahn suggested supervisors go to the annual town meetings coming up in April to help spread word. Eric Budleski suggested putting flyers up at town halls before voting day.
 - C. PSC Broadband Access Grant Partnerships - Noor Ali Hassan gave an update regarding the grant partnerships. The deadline was last week. Bug Tussel, Frontier, and Cirrinity submitted applications. The board passed the resolution regarding \$235 per unit unanimously. The Town of Reid pulled out the matching funds for Cirrinity at the last minute. This does not affect county contribution. Chairman Robinson explained the history of \$235 per unit. The county has supported the three applications. There will still be unserved and underserved areas. There have been a large number of requests through PSC.

- D. Digital Equity Efforts - Gerry Klein attended the Governors Digital Equity and Inclusion task force meeting. This has been a place to share information. Various ISPs have presented their outreach efforts. Chair Robinson described how the PSC is working on their own digital equity efforts.
- E. Update on other Broadband Expansion Efforts - Chair Robinson gave a back history on Bug Tussel in the Marathon County area. Mitch Olsen from Bug Tussel expanded on the given information and updated the task force on their installation plans and what a citizen would see on the roadsides. There was a recommendation for a PSA regarding the work. Bug Tussel will discuss it with their marketing team. It was noted that Noor Ali Hassan meets with Bug Tussel each Monday to touch base, most recently with a focus on outreach. It was suggested to post a list of provider contacts for residents with questions.

Policy Discussion And Possible Action:

- F. Process for determining priorities for future broadband expansion efforts - Chair Robinson opened discussion stating the last round was good to work with the PSCs but frustrating with the number of overlapping areas. He suggested using Bug Tussel data to help direct the needs in the future and create partnerships with the towns sooner to work together to target efforts. It was agreed that targeting the towns' most in need and to not duplicate areas would be the best path forward as well as working with the partners.
- G. Potential Legislative changes that could expand access to internet services - Chair Robinson stated there continues to be a lack of transparency from the ISPs as to where they are covering. There was also discussion about what connections can be made with the Towns Association to help with communications. Previously an individual from the UW discussed what state and local governments can do and it was asked that this conversation be revisited as potential avenues for partnerships.

Chair Robinson informed the task force that it was scheduled to sunset with the new county board. The Rules Review committee is recommending the task force be extended two years.

- 5. Next Meeting Topics
 - 1. Broadband Forward Communities

- 7. Next Meeting: April 25, 2022

- 8. Adjournment

BUDLESKI MOTION TO ADJOURN MEETING, CIHLAR SECOND. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
MEETING ADJOURNED AT 4:43pm.

Respectfully Submitted by,
Kathy Johnson