



**MARATHON COUNTY
BROADBAND TASK FORCE MEETING
Minutes**

**Monday, June 27, 2022, at 3:00 P.M.
Webex/Assembly Room, 500 Forest St, Wausau WI**

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

Also Present: Valerie Carrillo, Lance Leonhard, Kristin Lambrecht

VIA Web or Phone: Steve Schneider, Celeste Flynn, Randy Wolfram, Michael Puerner, Scott Nyman, Noor Hassan

1. **Call Meeting to Order:** Chair Robinson called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.
2. **Public Comments** (15 Minute limit) – none
3. **Minutes – to be approved at the next meeting**
4. **Educational Presentations and Committee Discussion:**
 - A. Public Service Commission Grant Awards - \$124+ million in grants awarded. Marathon County had 2 of 3 proposals funded. Frontier was awarded \$ 4 million plus, and it will serve approximately 9884 residents and 812 business throughout the county. Bug Tussel was awarded \$3 million, and it will serve approximately 636 residents and 16 businesses in the Knowlton/Gunther area. Cirrinity was not funded. This marks the end of the biennial funding.
 - B. Funding Sources: County, State and Federal
 1. NTIA Middle Mile Grant [MIDDLE MILE NOFO.pdf \(doc.gov\)](#)
This has a September due date. There is significant funding available with this grant. It was suggested to reach out the ISPs to see if there is interest.
 2. **Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program**
This program has \$42.45 billion available but will need to partner with other qualified entities. Work will be done to get a better understanding of grants. The deadline is this fall.
 3. American Rescue Plan Act
Marathon County board committed funds from the ARPA last year and broadband is one of the eligible activities. There will need to be further clarification of loans as they need to be repaid by 2026. Potential funding for additional efforts.

- C. Update on Rural Digital Opportunity Fund
Charter moving ahead with their award. LTD did not get response yet from their long form application to the FCC.
- D. Digital Equity and Inclusion Efforts in Wisconsin
The State Public Service Commission is working on a digital equity and inclusion plan. The task force will need to decide what their role should look like. It was suggested that the county should not be financially responsible but maybe help coordinate the education. There are programs available for affordability and subsidies between the federal government and ISPs. Many ISPs participate in programs and offer affordability programs for their customers. Charter gave an update on where they are currently at with their installation.
- E. Update on Bug Tussel's Project
They discussed their education and curriculum availability. They will be sending updates monthly for the task force meetings.

5. **Policy Discussion and Possible Action:**

- A. Process for determining priorities for future broadband expansion efforts
It was suggested to review the survey results and see what overlaps with current installation. Using the results, then determine where the need continues to be and focus on those areas. The western side of the county lacks survey results. The maps used by the FCC and PSC are outdated and inaccurate. Bug Tussel remains up to date with their mapping. This will help the task force to support future grant applications.
- B. Outreach and Public Engagement activities: Website; Speed Test; Other – The county will work on press releases for the grants awarded. The task of outreach will continue through attempting to connect with towns and other community events, possibly including school districts, county fair, and church picnics. Representatives from the task force handed out information at the Marathon County June Dairy Breakfast.

6. **Next Meeting Topics**

1. NTIA Middle Mile Grant
2. Outreach and Public Engagement
3. Frontier Update
4. Public Service Commission

7. **Next Meeting:** July 25, 2022

8. **Adjournment**

AARESTAD MOTION TO ADJOURN MEETING, OLSON SECOND. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. MEETING ADJOURNED AT 3:54 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by,
Kathy Johnson