



## MARATHON COUNTY BROADBAND TASK FORCE MEETING

### Minutes

Monday, July 25, 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     | P                 |        |
| Erick Budleski      | W                 |        |
| Milton Olson        | P                 |        |
| Wade Carroll        |                   | x      |
| Kurt Schoenrock     |                   | x      |
| Jon Euting          | W                 |        |

**Also Present:** Valerie Carrillo, Gerry Klein, Kristin Lambrecht

**VIA Web or Phone:** Alyssa Kenney, Celeste Flynn, Jean Maszk, Scott Nyman, Scott Bohler, Noor Hassan, Lance Leonhard

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. **GISSELMAN MAKE A MOTION; SECOND BY OLSON TO APPROVE THE March 28, 2022, May 23, 2022, and June 25, 2022, BROADBAND TASK FORCE MEETING MINUTES. MOTION CARRIED.**
4. **Educational Presentations and Committee Discussion:**
  - A. Wisconsin Digital Equity and Inclusion Efforts - Alyssa Kenney, State Broadband and Digital Equity Director Wisconsin Public Service Commission – Presentation by Alyssa of the current state broadband goals, funding, and timelines. The state did submit a grant application to NTIA as well as submitted their letter of intent to participate in BEAD. Their plans are designed to address specific groups/demographics which includes 76% of the people in Wisconsin.
  - B. Update on PSC Broadband Access Grants
    1. Frontier – Scott Bohler – PSC did approve their Marathon County project June 23. They have not seen formal written order but will start once they have it. The project be laying fiber optic within their current service area.
    2. Bug Tussel – Kristin Lambrecht – Chairman Robinson defined the project area that includes the Athens and Little Chicago area. Kristin stated there is a 30 mile section close to notification. There has been a slight delay on fiber supplies. They recently received word that that they were awarded \$6 million, with part being a \$3 million match. This will cover 90.7 miles of fiber.
    3. Cirrinity (2021 Grant) – Scott Nyman – This was awarded in APRA round of October 2021. Construction started the beginning of July, and they are about halfway complete along 7 miles. Currently 72 of 102 homes have signed up for service.
  - C. Update on Rural Digital Opportunity Fund
    1. Charter - Celeste Flynn– Charter will be releasing addresses in town of Marathon and town of Rib Mountain in the next couple weeks. The town of Marathon and the town of Cassel will be next. The project will cover approximately 5,400 homes once completed.
    2. LTD – Chairman Robinson reached out to Hailey Tollefson. They have not heard back regarding their longform. There is concern in number of states regarding LTD and if they capable of completing the

work. They are not getting the necessary approvals on a national basis. The task force needs to think about what to do if LTD does not come through so there is not a loss of funding opportunities.

- D. Speed Test Results – This was promoted at the Marathon County Dairy Breakfast. We still have areas where many do not take test. We currently rely on the PSC maps, but they are not really accurate.
- E. Status Report on Bug Tussel's Project – Reported on in the PSC Broadband Access Grants section

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

- A. Approach to Funding Sources: County, State and Federal
  - 1. NTIA Middle Mile Grant [MIDDLE MILE NOFO.pdf \(doc.gov\)](#) – We submitted a grant application through Charter last year and were not successful. Most all awarded grants were regional or statewide, which are a much larger area than Marathon County. The deadline for new round is end of September. We are looking into joining others to create larger service area to enhance chance for grant.
  - 2. [Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment \(BEAD\) Program](#) - RDOF areas not believed to be eligible for BEAD. We will need further clarification to see if we are able to submit a meaningful application. At this time, the county has not made any commitment to purchase any devices for digital equity.
  - 3. American Rescue Plan Act – Chairman Robinson recapped the funds and investments to this date.
- B. Process for determining priorities for future broadband expansion efforts – Chairman Robinson asked how do we reach the unreached parts of the county? Where do we put our priorities? Discussions included getting the underserved government areas more involved in the task force, make it a direct ask or invite to town boards, and to use the current maps to help determine focus areas.
- C. Outreach and Public Engagement activities: Website; Speed Test; Other – Discussions included engaging with the public library system along with the discussion from the expansion efforts. Marathon County will have a booth at the Wisconsin Valley Fair.

6. **Next Meeting Topics**

- 1. Speed Test Results
- 2. Fair Outreach results
- 3. Survey to potentially find another date/time for BTF

7. **Next Meeting:** August 22, 2022

8. **Adjournment**

**AARESTAD MOTION TO ADJOURN MEETING, OLSON SECOND. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. MEETING ADJOURNED AT 4:29 pm.**

Respectfully Submitted by,  
Kathy Johnson