



**MARATHON COUNTY
BROADBAND TASK FORCE MEETING**

Minutes

**Monday, August 22, 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		X
Tony Sherfinski	P	
Erick Budleski	P	
Milton Olson	P	
Wade Carroll		X
Kurt Schoenrock		X
Jon Euting	W	

Also Present: Valerie Carrillo, Gerry Klein, Kristin Lambrecht

VIA Web or Phone: Celeste Flynn, Noor Hassan, Kimm Webber, Bill Floyd, Kurt Gibbs

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. **GISSELMAN MAKE A MOTION; SECOND BY SHERFINSKI TO APPROVE THE JULY 25, 2022, BROADBAND TASK FORCE MEETING MINUTES. MOTION CARRIED.**
4. **Educational Presentations and Committee Discussion:**
 - A. Update on Grant Funded Broadband Projects
 1. Frontier (PSC 2022) – They have not received notification from PSC that the long form was approved.
 2. Bug Tussel (PSC 2022) – The current information was handed out with the packet. They continue to work on the installation and completion of fiber to the towers.
 3. Cirrinity (PSC 2021) – Noor reported that project is 90% complete per Scott Nyman and they will notify customers within the next two weeks.
 4. Charter (RDOF) – Celeste Flynn – They have released 78 addresses and they are on track to release 50 more by end of August. Celeste will connect with Randy Wolfgram regarding the schedule for next year. They have 6 years to build out areas in their agreement.
 5. LTD (RDOF) – LTD lost the pre-approval from the PSC. They are no longer eligible for RDOF. The areas that were a part of the LTD proposal are now eligible for other funding.
 - B. Status Report on Bug Tussel's Project – The Little Chicago and Rainbow drive area is complete. They will send updates with the August report for tower connections.
 - C. Speed Test Update – The task force continues to promote the speed test through GeoPartners. The FCC is in the process of updating their maps as well. The download speeds maps were reviewed. There is encouragement to distribute fliers to the town halls with the upcoming elections. We cannot promote in the voting area. The town halls can display outside the voting area. Jon Euting said they will continue to push it out the speed test in the Wausau School District with open houses. Overall, speed test results are still at 3.75% participation. There were suggestions to do social media ads and include information with the tax bills.
5. **Policy Discussion and Possible Action:**
 - A. Approach to Funding Sources: County, State and Federal

1. NTIA Middle Mile Grant – Marathon County needs to partner with an ISP to apply. The county did submit an application with Charter last year, but it was turned down.
 2. Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program – There is approximately \$45 billion available nationwide. Calls have been made to the PSC for better understanding of the funds.
 3. American Rescue Plan Act – Marathon County has \$3.9 million earmarked. There will be conversations with Bug Tussel next year regarding a \$3 million loan.
 4. Other Grants: ReConnect Loan and Grant Program through the USDA. We will be looking into this as a potential funding source. We will need to partner with ISPs.
- B. Process for determining priorities for future broadband expansion efforts – We need to identify underserved and unserved areas, identify the funding sources, and work with ISPs to move forward. Marathon County working on web redesign. We are hoping to get a Broadband page with maps and explanations. In targeting areas based on speed tests, does the task force want to establish higher standards moving forward? Eric Budleski and Tony Sherfinski feel 100 megabytes may be better threshold. Discussion regarding 3G to 5G towers and effect on access. Discussion regarding how the Wausau School District assists families with internet connections. Jon Euting will present at the next meeting.
6. **Next Meeting Topics**
 1. 3G,4G, 5G presentation
 2. Wausau School District access presentation
 3. Report on Broadband grant meeting
 4. Refine strategies to get people to take speed tests
 5. FCC has updated website
 6. Review grants and timing
 7. **Next Meeting:** September 26, 2022
 8. **Adjournment**
- RITTER MOTION TO ADJOURN MEETING, SHERFINSKI SECOND. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. MEETING ADJOURNED AT 4:05 pm.**

Respectfully Submitted by,
Kathy Johnson