



**MARATHON COUNTY
BROADBAND TASK FORCE MEETING**

Minutes

Monday, December 14, 2021 at 3:00 P.M.

WebEx/Room 5, 212 River Dr, Wausau WI

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

Also Present: Gerry Klein, Valerie Carrillo

VIA Web or Phone: Corey Hauer, Celeste Flynn, Gregg Wavrunek, Andy Faust, Randy Wolfram, Haley Tollefson, Paul Deming, Jason Hausler, Phil Flood, Glenn Fishbine, Randy Fifer, Eric Budleski, Lance Leonard, Scott Nyman, 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. **Minute’s approval delayed to next meeting.**
4. **Educational Presentations and Committee Discussion:**
 - A. Update on RDOF progress (Charter Communications, LTD)

Discussion:

Charter Communications – Celeste Flynn and Randy Wofgram presented a company overview. They will be serving 67 counties in Wisconsin after RDOF. Nationwide, they have \$5 billion in total capital investment and have added 115, 000 miles of new infrastructure. Currently, Spectrum Internet speeds are at least 200 Mbps in almost 85% of the footprint and 100 Mbps to the remainder. Charter’s RDOF will allow fiber to the home speeds of up to 1000 Mbps. In Wisconsin, there will be \$668 million in capital investment and approximately 15,524 miles of infrastructure will be built. A map was shown of the current areas they serve in Marathon County as well as where Charter was awarded an RDOF area. They will be primarily focusing on the western half of Marathon County in 2022 (447 miles of fiber, about 3100 customers). The Hamburg area will be 2023, the north east side of the county is scheduled for 2024, and the remaining southern portion of the county in 2027, although Randy is hoping to move these up to 2024. They will extend service to areas that they have to build through. They have developed a different variety of affordability options using programs and services to help others get connected to broadband. They have a process in place to notify residents when broadband is available in their area. They will not be doing any fixed wireless. It will all be fiber to the home.

LTD – The company has been focused on rural areas for 11 years. Corey Hauer stated they are still working back and forth with the FCC for the engineering long for changes. They expect to collaborate with a number of carriers as they move through Marathon County. They expect to use several egresses in order to get back to their digital centers. They offer plans that allow low income consumers to use their network. They are hoping the county will be able to increase the responsiveness on permitting to help the process move faster. There was additional discussion on infrastructure and other county agreements. They are doing whatever they can to shorten up the construction process as well. In regards to pricing, they expect it to start at \$130 but intend to include whole home Wi-Fi as well as an app to monitor connections. They would like to be done within Marathon County in 3 years from when they start but cannot give a start date until the monies are actually awarded.

- B. GeoPartners Presentation on Survey Tool

Discussion:

They recently completed getting the entire state of Wisconsin’s economic development organizations under a contract and have already begun testing. Glenn showed what they currently have mapped for Brown

County and demonstrated how they are able to determine how many households are not served and what the cost would be to implement broadband using crowd source data. This can be useful in applying for grants. They also have some of the infrastructure content already available. They are able to use public domain data to see what other companies have for speed test results within a certain area range. For Marathon County, Synergy is the contact to gain access to this tool. North Central Planning is also taking the training and willing to help the county.

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

A. Survey of unmet needs

1. Discussion that the information that GeoPartners tool can provide would be very beneficial. A question posed was what will the marketing plan look like? It was also pointed out that survey results may be based on personal knowledge and not necessarily the availability of service in the area. There was general consensus on connecting with Synergy and North Central Planning for further information.

B. Update on Grant Timelines and process for the Wisconsin PSC's Broadband Access Grant

1. Discussion of if there should be a meeting scheduled with internet service providers to see if there is someone to partner with for unserved areas. It was also suggested to use available tools to see who will not be served with the other funds. Current carry-over funds as well as funds and grants possibly available elsewhere were also discussed.

6. Next Meeting Topics

1. Follow up with GeoPartners
2. Regional Planning Commission capabilities
3. Look into County resource funding with grants
4. Look at map information
5. Wisconsin Counties Association information

7. Next Meeting: A doodle poll will be sent out regarding moving the next meeting date to within the first couple weeks of January.

8. Adjournment

LANGENHAHN MOTION TO ADJOURN MEETING, OLSEN SECOND. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 3:45pm.

Respectfully Submitted by,
Kathy Johnson