



## BROADBAND TASK FORCE MINUTES

Monday, October 5, 2020  
212 River Drive, Room 5, Wausau WI 54403

**Attendance:**

**Present**

Melinda Osterberg

**Absent**

Katrina Becker  
Emmet McBride  
Kent Olson

**Also Present:**

**VIA Web or Phone:**

Nancy Anderson  
Eric Budleski  
Sandi Cihlar  
Andy Faust  
Randy Ffrick  
Kurt Gibbs  
Sara Guild  
Nathan Hard  
Gerard Klein  
Jacob Langenhahn  
Lance Leonhard  
Amanda Ley  
Melinda Osterberg  
Vicki Resech  
John Robinson, Chair  
Damien Sweeney

### AGENDA ITEMS

1. **Call Meeting to Order**

Meeting was called to order by Chair J. Robinson at 4:00 pm. All participants welcomed.

2. **Public Comments**

No public comments

3. **Approval of the Minutes of the September 14, 2020 Meeting.**

Motion to approve by E. Budleski

Second by: S.Cihlar

### EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATIONS AND COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

4. **WEDC Broadband Pilot Program Application**

Grant application is a google form and due mid-October. J. Robinson would like to have a preliminary meeting with County Administration and County Board to discuss putting together a workgroup to outline who has responsibilities should we be the successful applicant.

5. **Potential Partnership with MCDEVCO**

V. Resech presented on behalf of MCDEVCO sharing their beliefs and mission and how they can be the leading entity on this project. Discussion was held on our relationship with MCDEVCO and how we can define strategies to lead and expand this initiative.

## **POLICY DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION**

### **6. Determine evaluation criteria and process for Marathon County Broadband Projects**

Discussion was held on finalizing criteria language and roles. Also, per S. Cihlar recommendation, require a summary for each project.

J. Robinson asked for a motion to approve this "proposed criteria in concept." E. Budleski made a motion, seconded by S. Guild with point of clarification to make sure to obtain the Task Force's feedback and complete a final review.

#### **A. Fiber Projects**

G. Klein and N. Harder reported on several fiber projects. The Fiber projects will provide broadband access for the new city water facility to the Wausau Community Area Network connection at Northcentral Technical College, as well as, expand access to the Rothschild Elementary School, Riverside School, Rothschild Fire Station, Rothschild Police Department and the Marathon County Library at Rothschild.

#### **B. Tower Infrastructure Projects**

N. Harder researched and reported on equipment costs for two (2) different tower models, with a cost of \$36,000 and \$32,000 respectively. These are 20, 40 and 60 foot towers. He is waiting for installation cost estimates.

### **7. Routes to Recovery Fund Use**

#### **A. Existing Tower Use**

The County's west wayside tower can accommodate wireless internet service providers but not cellular services.

#### **B. Update on Libraries and Polling Locations as Wi-Fi hotspots**

G. Klein reported that the access points at Hatley and Athens libraries are being evaluated for moving them outside to support free Wi-Fi in the parking areas.

#### **C. Other Potential Projects**

G. Klein reported that he is researching the possibility of partnering with a cellular provider to improve services in the Little Chicago area.

### **8. Public Service Commission Grant Opportunity**

The PSC grant program is currently accepting applications. Marathon County continues to look for opportunities to pursue partnerships and is open to new ideas. Northwoods Connect had indicated that they are a willing partner. J. Robinson stated that the task force has about a month to decide how to move forward.

### **9. Next meeting logistics and topics**

#### **10. Next Steps**

- Refine relationship with MCDEVCO
- Refine evaluation criteria and process for Marathon County Broadband Projects
- Reach out to internet service providers interested in PSC grants
- Updates on Routes to Recovery Funded Projects

### **11. Adjourn**

There was no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 5:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Nancy Anderson