



MARATHON COUNTY BROADBAND TASK FORCE

MEETING AGENDA

Date & Time of Meeting: **Monday, October 26, 2020 at 4:00 P.M.**

Meeting Location: **Conference Room 5, 212 River Drive, Wausau, WI**

Task Force Purpose: *Develop recommendations identifying the potential role of Marathon County in facilitating the expansion of Broadband access in Marathon County. Review the Report: Broadband for Marathon County Broadband Assessment and Plan prepared by Design Nine and develop broad policies and partnership recommendations relating to the expansion of broadband/internet services throughout Marathon County.*

Task Force Members: Katrina Becker, Eric Budleski Sandi Cihlar, Sara Guild, Jacob Langenhahn, Emmett McBride, Kent Olson, and John Robinson

The meeting site identified above will be open to the public. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated public health directives, Marathon County encourages Task Force members and the public to attend this meeting remotely. Instead of attendance in person, Task Force members and the public may attend this meeting by **telephone conference**. If Task Force members or members of the public cannot attend remotely, Marathon County requests that appropriate safety measures, including adequate social distancing, be utilized by all in-person attendees.

Persons wishing to attend the meeting by phone may call into the **telephone conference beginning five (5) minutes prior** to the start time indicated above using the following number: 1-408-418-9388 Access Code: 146 951 0762 Password: BroadbandTF. If you are prompted to provide an "Attendee Identification Number," enter the "#" sign. No other number is required to participate in the telephone conference. When you enter the telephone conference, **PLEASE PUT YOUR PHONE ON MUTE!**

AGENDA ITEMS:

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. PUBLIC COMMENTS (15 minute limit)
3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 2, 2020 BROADBAND TASK FORCE MEETING
- EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATIONS AND COMMITTEE DISCUSSION
4. MCDEVCO'S ROLE IN FACILITATING BROADBAND ACCESS EFFORTS (SHORT AND LONG TERM)
5. UPDATE ON ROUTES TO RECOVERY EFFORTS
- POLICY DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION:
6. REFINE EVALUATION CRITERIA AND PROCESS FOR USE OF MARATHON COUNTY FUNDS FOR BROADBAND PROJECTS
7. IDENTIFY POTENTIAL PARTNERS FOR FUNDING AND SUPPORTING FUTURE BROADBAND EXPANSION EFFORTS
8. EXPLORE POTENTIAL ROLE IN RURAL DIGITAL OPPORTUNITY FUND AUCTION
9. ESTABLISH A BROADBAND PROPOSAL REVIEW COMMITTEE
10. NEXT MEETING LOGISTICS AND TOPICS
11. NEXT STEPS
12. ADJOURN

"Any person planning to attend this meeting who needs some type of special accommodation in order to participate should call the County Clerk's Office at 715-261-1500 or e-mail infomarathon@mail.co.marathon.wi.us one business day before the meeting.

SIGNED /s/ John Robinson
Presiding Officer or Designee

FAXED TO:
News Dept.at Daily Herald (715-848-9361), City Pages (715-848-5887)
Midwest Radio Group (715-848-3158), Marshfield News (877-943-0443)
TPP Printing (715-223-3505)
FAXED BY: NA
FAXED DATE: 10/23/2020
FAXED TIME: 12:00 PM

NOTICE POSTED AT COURTHOUSE

BY:
DATE:
TIME:



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 Fifrick
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



Melinda Osterberg
Community Development Educator
Cell: 715-252-9459
Melinda.osterberg@wisc.edu

October 26, 2020 Broadband Task Force Meeting

It may be beneficial to review the following resources and documents prior to the Broadband Task Force meeting on October 26th.

Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Auction

As Scott Nyman shared at the September 14th Broadband Task Force meeting, the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Auction has the potential to substantially expand broadband access in the western portion of the County. The auction begins on October 29th. The following resources may be helpful in understanding the reverse auction process and the role Marathon County can play in supporting internet service providers bidding in the auction:

- A very good summary of the auction process and the local governments role in supporting internet service providers bidding in the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund auction.
<https://ruralbroadband.nebraska.gov/resources/LancasterCo-RDOF.pdf>
- A recorded webinar on the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8r7PiQTG-E0&feature=emb_logo
- The main website for the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Auction:
<https://www.fcc.gov/auction/904>
- Qualified Bidders for the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Auction:
<https://www.govconwire.com/2020/10/fcc-announces-386-qualified-bidders-for-potential-16b-rural-broadband-fund-auction/>

PROPOSED CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING BROADBAND PROJECTS IN MARATHON COUNTY

(October 22, 2020)

Definitions:

“Broadband service” means a communications service providing to end users, at a minimum, two-way data transmission with speeds of at least 50 mbps for download transmission and 10 mbps for upload transmission, but does not include a commercial mobile radio service or a broadband service in which a stand-alone satellite provider connects directly to the end user with a satellite connection.

“Scalable” means, with respect to a project for a broadband network, that the broadband network has the ability to maintain the quality of its service while increasing parameters relating to the size of the network, such as the number of users, the number of network nodes, the number of services provided, or the network's geographic spread.

“Underserved” means served by fewer than 2 broadband service providers.

“Unserved area” means an area of this state that is not served by an Internet service provider offering Internet service that is all of the following:

1. Fixed wireless service or wired service.
2. Provided at actual speeds of at least 20 percent of the upload and download speeds for advanced telecommunications capability as designated by the federal communications commission in its inquiries regarding advanced telecommunications capability under [47 USC 1302 \(b\)](#).

The intent of this program is to expand broadband access to areas that are not currently served by at least two providers meeting the service delivery speeds outlined above. Projects must demonstrate a clear and achievable plan to improve broadband communications services in one or more unserved or underserved areas in the county.

The criteria shall give priority to projects that:

- include matching funds,
- that involve public-private partnerships,
- that affect unserved or underserved areas,
- that are scalable,
- that promote economic development,
- that will not result in delaying the provision of broadband service to areas neighboring areas to be served by the proposed project, or that affect a large geographic area or a large number of unserved or underserved individuals or communities,
- projects which address unserved or underserved areas in the towns north of Hwy 29 will be given priority when allocating county funds

The criteria shall prohibit grants that have the effect of subsidizing the expenses of a provider of telecommunications service, or the monthly bills of customers of those providers

When evaluating grant applications under this section, the county shall consider:

- the degree to which the proposed projects would not duplicate existing broadband infrastructure, information about the presence of which is provided by the applicant or another person within a time period designated by the county;
- the impacts of the proposed projects on the ability of individuals to access health care services from home and the cost of those services; and
- the impacts of the proposed projects on the ability of students to access educational opportunities from home; and
- the impacts of the proposed projects on the ability of individuals and businesses to access telework opportunities from home.

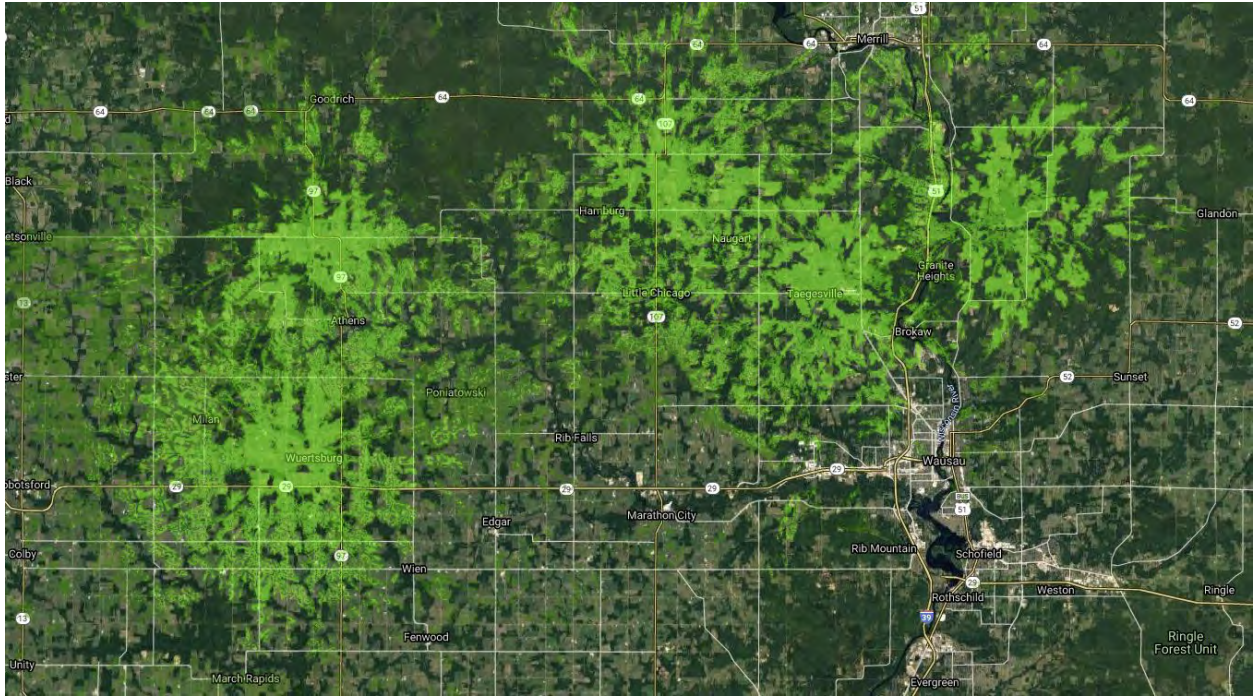
An explanation of how the proposed project will increase broadband access. Include information about the:

Potential and expected number of households served, including number of unserved and underserved locations.

- Potential and expected number of businesses served, including number of unserved and underserved locations.
- Expected number of seasonal residents and tourists served.
- Estimated download and upload speed of the broadband service packages available for purchase.
- A statement whether the proposed project is targeting the “last mile,” “middle mile,” or backbone portion of the broadband infrastructure.
- A description of the broadband service to be provided, including estimated download and upload speeds, whether the speed is based on dedicated or shared bandwidth, and the technology that will be used. This description may be illustrated by a map or schematic diagram, as appropriate.
- A description the area of the county that will be affected by the proposed project
- A schedule by which the applicant intends to complete the components of the proposed project. The project period is up to 24 months.
- A proposed budget for the proposed project, including the capital costs of the project and the expected revenue sources including contributions from partners.

Internet Service Provider Interest in PSC Grants

Please see the following correspondence and maps from Northwoods Connect and Cirrinity in response to Marathon County's inquiry if they were interested in partnering on a Public Service Commission Grant for the 2020 grant cycle.



Matt Osterman <matt@northwoodsconnect.com>

Thu 10/15/2020 5:17 PM

To: Melinda Osterberg <melinda.osterberg@wisc.edu>

Cc: john.robinson <john.robinson@co.marathon.wi.us>; sara.guild@co.marathon.wi.us <sara.guild@co.marathon.wi.us>; vresech@mcdevco.org <vresech@mcdevco.org>; lance.leonhard@co.marathon.wi.us <lance.leonhard@co.marathon.wi.us>; gerard.klein@co.marathon.wi.us <gerard.klein@co.marathon.wi.us>

📎 1 attachments (3 MB)

Marathon5TowerExample.png;

Hey All,

Thanks again for the great conversation on Tuesday. As promised, we wanted to see what the coverage looked like for the areas that you identified, so we put a map together (attached) that should be a great kickoff to the deeper discussion. The actual tower locations are obviously TBD, but consider this a place to start. We've historically had the best luck finding sites owned by the county or a town as they understand the collaborative goal a bit better.

Anyway, as you'll see, the maps look decently impressive. We find they're about 75% accurate given any particular rooftop, but I went conservative in our approach so we aren't making unobtainable promises. These towers are all simulated at 300' and would require FAA approval. Most towers under 200' wouldn't have this hurdle, but coverage wouldn't be quite as ubiquitous (but probably still pretty good given the amount of open spaces in that region).

In a vacuum, we believe this is worth chasing. The obvious challenge is how do we make the numbers work. And given that we'd be expanding our footprint a county over, it wouldn't be worthwhile for us as a company to do this for 1 or 2 towers. Five towers would be ideal to hit the coverage you need, but the budget and matching funds might be a little tight in that scenario. It might come down to finding additional partners for matching funds, removing a tower, or dropping heights to below 200'. Either way, Northwoods Connect would be happy to add in a significant amount of our internal engineering and labor costs as matching funds to help make it happen.

We're all super sensitive to the amount of time we have left to get this done, so I'm happy to answer any questions to keep the ball rolling.

Thank you!!!!

Matt

THU 10/22/2020 10:01 AM

To: Melinda Osterberg <melinda.osterberg@wisc.edu>

1 attachments (2 KB)

Marathon County Grant.kmz

Melinda,

I don't have John's email so please pass this on to whomever you need to.

Attached is a .KMZ file of the plan we came up with. No sooner did I hang up the phone with you and John, my engineer got me the info and we changed paths slightly. We'll come South from Hatley down County Y to Townline road and also pick up down County Q to the south so we can get to the subdivision at Joe's road. All this can be seen on the map.

Our initial review is this:

Build is 7.35 miles

83 homes are passed with Gigabit capable Fiber to the Home

Initial full cost of the project \$360,150

If we grant at 52%/48% which the PSC likes to see: \$187,278 funding needed / Grant money to apply for = \$172,872

With our plate getting full for next year we'd have to see what portion of the \$187,278 the County would be willing to supply before we go ahead with the grant.

As I noted on the call, this will be engineered and built to set us up for future builds to the North on Q as well as to the South towards Plover River Rd and County J.

I hope this helps and as always let me know what questions you have for me.

Scott Nyman

General Manager/CEO Wittenberg Telephone Company/Cirrinity

snyman@cirrinity.net

7152532114

▼ Search

Search

ex: Computer repair near Boston

Get Directions History

▼ Places

- My Places
 - Sightseeing Tour
 - Make sure 3D Buildings layer is checked
 - Muir Park
- Temporary Places
 - Marathon County Grant.kmz

▼ Layers

- Primary Database
 - Announcements
 - Borders and Labels
 - Places
 - Photos
 - Roads
 - 3D Buildings
 - Weather
 - Gallery
 - More
- Terrain

