



BROADBAND TASK FORCE MINUTES

Monday, November 16, 2020
212 River Drive, Room 5, Wausau WI 54403

Attendance:

Present

M. Osterberg

Absent

K. Becker

W. Carroll

Also Present:

VIA Web or Phone:

N. Anderson

B. Beyer, Grow North Regional Economic Development Corp.

E. Budleski

V. Carrillo

S. Cihlar

A. Faust, North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

J. Fisher

K. Gibbs

S. Guild

G. Klein

J. Langenhahn

L. Leonhard

A. Ley

E. McBride

V. Resech, MCDEVCO

J. Robinson, Chair

D. Sweeney, Network Professionals

AGENDA ITEMS

1. **Call Meeting to Order**

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

2. **Public Comments**

There were no public comments

3. **Approval of the Minutes of the October 26, 2020 Meeting.**

Approval of the minutes of the October 26, 2020 meeting was postponed until the next Broadband Task Force meeting.

4. **Update on State of Wisconsin Broadband Task Force**

Brittany Beyer, Director of Grow North Regional Economic Development Corp., the Chair of the Governor's Task Force on Broadband and a Commissioner of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission on Rural Prosperity gave an in-depth view on the current status of work being done by the State of Wisconsin Broadband Task Force. An annual report is expected in June of next year with recommendations for policies and initiatives. J. Robinson thanked Brittany for all her work in presenting to our task force today.

5. **Report from the Broadband Project Evaluation Work Group Subcommittee**

The subcommittee met last Friday, Nov. 13 to talk through the four proposals. The minutes have been posted. Cirrinity is proposing laying fiber in the Hatley area serving 83 residences and 3 businesses. Northwoods Connect, Network Professionals and Bug Tussel are all proposing tower designs for the provision of wireless service in the northern tier of the county. We are advocating for the fiber proposal and

the three wireless proposals. Bug Tussel, Northwoods Connect and Network Professionals will work together to address as much of the county as possible and avoid duplication. All vendors have expressed the capacity to meet our level of service. Based on Friday's meeting with these vendors, we would like to move forward with these proposals. The Marathon County Board has adopted #R-69-20 Authorization to Support Broadband Grant Applications(s) to the Public Service Commission (PSC).

6. **Overview of the Internet Service Provider Proposals**

7. **Recommendation for County Partnership in Funding**

G. Klein gave an overview of where we are at with the four proposals. The Cirrinity proposal is strictly fiber and will not duplicate the service of the wireless proposals. We did recognize that the three wireless proposals overlapped each other. G. Klein met with wireless vendors and together, they mapped out where there were conflicts and this new map was shared today which displayed a new design with no overlap. The three providers have been incredibly gracious in working together and are eager to come up with a solution that is the best thing for Marathon County while being profitable to them. This is a concept map that we can attach to the Letters of Support. Discussion was then held on various financing options. Everyone agreed that this multi faceted approach is a great start to the process, while recognizing that there is a large portion of the county that still needs service. We have a lot of work ahead of us. J. Robinson asked for a motion to support the sub committee's recommendations for a fixed base and partnership. S. Guild made the motion and S. Cihlar seconded it. All were in favor and motion carried.

8. **Community Outreach in Support of Public Service Commission Grant Proposal**

Letters of Support will be generated this week. Members shared their ideas of various businesses and organizations they could contact for a letter of support, i.e., municipalities, local governments, school districts, health institutions, insurance, law enforcement, local and community banks, the Aging Disability Resource Center, the United Way of Marathon County, the American Dairy Coalition, the Land o Lakes Coalition, MCDEVCO, Marathon County Farm Bureau, Wisconsin Farmers Union, Wausau Area Hmong Association, local CPAs and faith communities. M. Osterberg will email members with templates and asked all letters be returned to her.

9. **Next Meeting Logistics and Topics**

10. **Next Steps**

- Complete Letters of Support
- Weekly check-ins until the grant application is complete
- Next meeting is scheduled for December 7, 2020. We will keep the date on the calendar but if there are no action items, we will meet next in January of 2021.

11. **Adjourn**

Motion to adjourn by E. Budleski and seconded by K. Gibbs. All in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by,
Nancy Anderson