

AGENDA
Eau Claire County
Broadband Committee
Thursday, October 22, 2020
4:00 P.M. - (until 5:30 estimate)
Remote Meeting via Webex Events

Those wishing to make public comments must submit their name and address no later than 30 minutes prior to the meeting to rod.eslinger@co.eau-claire.wi.us. Comments are limited to 3 minutes; you will be called on during the public comment section of the meeting. Written comments will also be accepted and should be submitted to the e-mail address listed above.

Public Access: Dial in Number: 1-415-655-0001 Access Code: 145 848 9555
**mute your device upon entry*

1. Call to order and confirmation of meeting notice
2. Roll Call
3. Public Comment (limit to 3 minutes per person)
4. Review/Approval of Committee Minutes – **Discussion/Action**
 - a. June 25, 2020
 - b. September 24, 2020
5. Update on application to the State’s Broadband Connectors Pilot Program – **Discussion**
6. Update from 24/7 and TCC PCS Broadband Grant Applications: Buck Webb and Jim Kusilek – **Discussion**
7. Review letter of support for 24/7 and TCC PCS Broadband Grant Applications – **Discussion/Action**
8. Review the “final” Eau Claire County Broadband Committee vision/mission/goals – **Discussion/Action**
9. Resolution extending the length of the Broadband Committee for two-years – **Discussion**
10. Town of Brunswick 24/7 expansion project – **Discussion**
11. Next Steps and future meetings – Discussion/Action
 - a. Future Meeting: November 19, 2020

12. Adjourn

PLEASE NOTE: Upon reasonable notice, efforts will be made to accommodate the needs of individuals with disabilities through sign language, interpreters or other auxiliary aids. For additional information or to request the service, contact the County ADA Coordinator at 839-4710, (FAX) 839-1669 or 839-4735, TTY: use Relay (711) or by writing to the ADA Coordinator, Human Resources, Eau Claire County Courthouse, 721 Oxford Avenue, Eau Claire, WI 54703.

MINUTES

Eau Claire County

• Broadband Committee •

Thursday, June 25, 2020

4:00 P.M.

Remote Meeting via Webex Events

Those wishing to make public comments must submit their name and address no later than 30 minutes prior to the meeting to frank.draxler@co.eau-claire.wi.us. Comments are limited to 3 minutes, you will be called on during the public comment section of the meeting. Written comments will also be accepted and should be submitted to frank.draxler@co.eau-claire.wi.us.

Public Access:

Dial In Number: 1-415-655-0001

Access Code: 929-468-480

****mute your personal device upon entry***

Members Present: Lynn Thompson, Donald Mowry, Scott Hoffman, Luke Hanson, Mark Zuber, Collin Pomplun, Joe Alf

Staff: Rodney J. Eslinger – Director of Planning and Development, Dave Hayden – Director of Information Systems

Others Present: John LeBrun

Press: None

1. Call to order and confirmation of meeting notice
Chairperson Mowry call to order the meeting at 4:01 p.m. and he confirmed that the meeting was properly noticed.
2. Roll Call – Members present noted above.
3. Public Comment (limit to 3 minutes per person)
None
4. Review/Approval of Committee Minutes from May 21, 2020 – **Discussion/Action**
The committee reviewed the meeting minutes of May 21st. Mark Zuber motioned to approve the minutes as presented, Joe Alf seconded the motion; motion carried on a voice vote with all in favor of the motion.
5. Update on current and future projects – Discussion/Action

Mark Zuber gave the committee an update of the Town of Drammen broadband project. Mr. Zuber indicated that the town advisory survey is complete. The town board set a goal of receiving 75% of surveys from its citizens. At the close of the survey, only 64% of 226 survey were received from the property owners. Of those that submitted surveys 177 supported raising taxes to install fiber in the Town of Drammen. Mark reported that the Town of Drammen Town Board will meet on July 13th to vote on whether to support raising taxes to support the installation of fiber in the or not based on the survey results.

Dave Hayden updated the committee regarding work on LTE on several towers in Eau Claire County. This project replaces the WiMAX technology with LTE technology. He noted that this is a public/private partnership with Astera (formerly Packerland). Mr. Hayden indicated that all by one of the county towers have been equipped with the LTE hardware. The antenna arrays went from a three-antenna array to a four-antenna array, which provides better overall services.

Lynn Thompson inquired about whether there has been more demand for these services living within the Astera's service boundaries. Mr. Hayden indicated that there was a higher demand for services in these areas.

6. Funding sources for project match and any new grant funding opportunities - Discussion

Don Mowry updated the committee regarding potential funding sources. He noted that the PSC received the next round of funding for September 1st with application deadline later in the year.

Mark Zuber indicated that he had connected with the Mondovi School District regarding the possibly of the school district supporting any grant application.

7. Broadband Survey Update – Discussion/Action

Rod Eslinger updated the committee on the broadband survey results that have been received to date. He presented the updated maps and the comments to the committee. Mr. Eslinger noted that since the last committee update; 46 surveys have been submitted via the online broadband survey.

8. Broadband Committee Vision Statement: Don Mowry – Discussion

Chair Mowry reviewed his proposed Broadband Vision Statement for the committee. The committee had a general discussion on statement and recommended definition for high speed internet would be set at 100 mbps for up and download speeds. The committee also wanted to make sure the statement included business and agricultural operations in addition to those that are unserved or underserved. The statement needs to be “forward looking.”

9. Next Steps and future meetings – Discussion/Action

- a. Next meeting is scheduled for 4 p.m., August 20, 2020

10. Adjourn

Action: Meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 5:00 p.m.

Respectively submitted by,

Rodney J. Eslinger
Director of Planning and Development

MINUTES

Eau Claire County

• **Broadband Committee** •

Thursday, September 24, 2020

4:00 P.M.

Remote Meeting via Webex Events

Those wishing to make public comments must submit their name and address no later than 30 minutes prior to the meeting to frank.draxler@co.eau-claire.wi.us. Comments are limited to 3 minutes, you will be called on during the public comment section of the meeting. Written comments will also be accepted and should be submitted to rod.eslinger@co.eau-claire.wi.us

Public Access: Dial In Number: 1-415-655-0001 Access Code: 145 340 5137

****mute your personal device upon entry***

Members Present: Lynn Thompson, Donald Mowry, Scott Hoffman, Luke Hanson, Mark Zuber

Staff: Rodney J. Eslinger – Director of Planning and Development, Dave Hayden – Director of Information Systems

Others Present: Bob Nelson

Press: None

1. Call to order and confirmation of meeting notice

Chairperson Mowry call to order the meeting at 4:07 p.m. and he confirmed that the meeting was properly noticed.

2. Roll Call – Members present noted above.

3. Public Comment (limit to 3 minutes per person)

None

4. Review/Approval of Committee Minutes from June 26, 2020 – **Discussion/Action**

The committee postponed acting on the meeting minutes from June 26, 2020.

5. Update on current and future projects – Discussion/Action

Town of Drammen Update:

Mark Zuber, Town Clerk, gave the committee an update of the Town of Drammen broadband project. Mr. Zuber indicated 24/7 and TCC are moving forward with two separate PSC applications to build out the fiber network in the Town. Mark confirmed that the town board voted to support raising taxes to help the companies pay for the installation of the fiber in the town.

Wireless Towers:

Dave Hayden updated the committee on the LTE project. This project replaces the WiMAX technology with LTE technology.

Fiber to Substations:

Lynn Thompson indicated the Eau Claire Energy Cooperative is working with 24/7 on a possible PSC grant application to provide fiber to their substation in the Town of Brunswick.

6. Funding sources for project match and any new grant funding opportunities - Discussion

Chair Mowry updated the committee regarding potential funding sources.

7. Broadband Survey Update – Discussion/Action

Rod Eslinger updated the committee on the broadband survey results that have been received to date. He presented the updated maps and the comments to the committee.

8. Broadband Committee Vision Statement: Don Mowry – Discussion

Chair Mowry reviewed the updated Broadband Committee Vision Statement. The committee discussed several modifications to the draft and requested the final statement be reviewed at its next meeting for adoption.

9. Opportunity to apply for state level assistance: Don Mowry – Discussion

Chair Mowry shared with the committee that the Public Service Commission (PSC) and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) is offering a new Broadband Connectors Pilot program for Wisconsin communities. The program is to provide guidance and technical assistance to help communities apply for federal, state, and private-sector broadband expansion funds. The committee directed the chair and staff to make application for this opportunity.

10. Next Steps and future meetings – Discussion/Action

- a. Review Resolution in Support of the Drammen/24/7/TCC Broadband Grant
- b. Affirm the extension of the Broadband Committee for another 12 months
- c. Next meeting is scheduled for 4 p.m., October 22, 2020

11. Adjourn

Action: Meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 5:20 p.m.

Respectively submitted by,

Rodney J. Eslinger
Director of Planning and Development



Town of Brunswick

Eau Claire County, Wisconsin

TOWN BOARD MEETING MINUTES

October 13, 2020

7:00 P.M.

Brunswick Fire Station

Present: Supervisor Jaquish, Supervisor Helwig, Clerk Dohms Absent: Chairman Steinhauer, Treasurer Heath

- Call to order at 7:00 p.m. by Supervisor Jaquish, named Chairman in the absence of Chairman Steinhauer
- Pledge of Allegiance was led by Supervisor Jaquish
- Motion to approve September 8, 2020 meeting minutes was made by Supervisor Helwig and 2nd by Supervisor Jaquish. Motion passed. Motion to approve September 22, 2020 special town board meeting minutes was made by Supervisor Helwig and 2nd by Supervisor Jaquish. Motion passed
- Informal public comment time. Clerk Dohms notified that the bulletin board at Pine Edge Park was broken and now taken down. Therefore, was unable to post agenda at this location. She will follow up with the Park that the board will be fixed. If not, we will need to make a decision on another location. LaMoine Dohms spoke in regard to some of the reasons Clerk Dohms will not be running for reelection. **Fire Chief Kevin Nelson spoke of the desperate need for Firefighters. Please consider becoming a volunteer firefighter and/or EMS. Contact Fire Chief Nelson at 715 563-6923 or tfdchief50@gmail.com.**
- **2021 Revenues** – Levy Limit \$322,933.00, Mobile Home taxes \$8800.00, Shared Revenue \$55,453.97, Computer Aid \$44.69, General Transportation Aid \$124,698.60, Licenses and Permits \$10,000.00, Misc Inc (Interest) \$2500.00, Other Fin Sources \$1000.00 **Expenses** – General Government (includes board salaries, legal fees, election costs ,building expenses, Dues and insurance) \$93,000.00, Public Safety \$64,000.00 (includes EC ambulance contract and fire department), Public Works \$362,930.19 (includes all road expenses), Health & Human Services \$3500.00 (includes EC Cty Humane Association), Other Financial Uses \$2000.00. Clerk Dohms explained that the levy limit rose slightly and shared revenue rose slightly. Misc income (interest income) declined drastically due to the drop in interest rates. Clerk Dohms also stated that due to changes in the Route 2 Recovery Grant qualifications, most of the additional expenses due to the Elections and Covid will be potentially reimbursed thru Grants. Final submission for these Grants will be in November.
- 24/7 Telecom, Jim Kusilek, Partnership proposal for expansion of broadband from Schuh Road to Hwy 37 and north on 37 to EC Energy substation. Motion to approve a partnership and \$1000.00 in funding towards this project was made by Supervisor Jaquish and 2nd by Supervisor Helwig. Motion passed.
- Dana Turner, Spehle Road, 38.5 acres rezone from AP to A2 to allow for division of property into 6 single family residential lots. Presentation was made by Jeremy of Real Land Surveying and no opposition was voiced by residents. Motion to recommend approval was made by Supervisor Jaquish and 2nd by Supervisor Helwig. Motion passed.
- Discussion on what to do about trash being deposited on Jopke Road. Clerk Dohms will follow up with EC Cty Sheriffs department regarding signage and Cty ordinance in regard to dumping. Motion to allow up to \$400.00



Town of Brunswick

Eau Claire County, Wisconsin

be spent on signage, cameras etc. was made by Supervisor Jaquish and 2nd by Supervisor Helwig. Motion passed

- Covid update can be found on EC Cty Website. Co.eau-claire.wi.us
- Motion to approve bills was made by Supervisor Jaquish and 2nd by Supervisor Helwig. Motion passed.
- Motion to approve the Treasurer Report was made by Supervisor Jaquish and 2nd by Supervisor Helwig. Motion passed.
- Clerk Dohms announced that Chairman Steinhauer will be resigning his position of Chairman effective Nov. 9, 2020. Therefore, anyone interested in being considered for the appointment of the Chairman position needs to contact Clerk Dohms by November 2, 2020. A special meeting will be on November 10, 2020 to interview and appoint a new Chairman. This special meeting will be held prior to the Public Hearing on the 2021 budget. This will be followed by the Special Town Meeting of the Electors to approve the 2020 Levy to be collected in 2021. This will be followed by the regular Town Board Meeting.
- Non-candidacy forms have been filed for Clerk Julie Dohms. Clerk Dohms spoke to some of her reasons for not running again for the position of Clerk. She also read a text message she received in regard to “Back the Blue and We Back the Badge” signs in her yard. Her response to the text message in part is as follows, 1. Per Wisconsin Election Commission – Back the Blue is NOT a political sign. 2. If I wanted to post political signs on my property, I have every right to. If I were to use my home as a polling place for in person absentee voting, I would then need to remove said sign during that time frame..... 4. If you still have issues after me explaining the State Laws regarding this please feel free to file a complaint with the Wisconsin Election Commission.” If anyone is interested in running for the Clerk Position, please contact Clerk Julie Dohms by January 5, 2021. Caucus date January 12, 2021.
- General Election November 3, 2020.
- Next Town Board Meeting will be on November 10, 2020.
- Motion for Adjournment was made by Supervisor Jaquish and 2nd by Supervisor Helwig. Motion passed. Meeting was adjourned at 8:11 p.m.

Posted October 14, 2020

Julie Dohms – Town of Brunswick Clerk

Town of Brunswick

Chairman – Gordon Steinhauer (715) 577-1791

Supervisor – Don Jaquish (715) 559-6370 Supervisor John Helwig (715) 225-1389

Treasurer – Deb Heath (715) 225-1161 Clerk – Julie Dohms (715) 829-6453



Tony Evers

Office of the Governor | State of Wisconsin

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 15, 2020

Contact: GovPress@wisconsin.gov or 608-219-7443

Gov. Evers, WEDC, PSC Announce Six Communities Selected for Broadband Connectors Pilot Program

MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers today, together with the state Public Service Commission (PSC) and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC), announced six communities were selected for the new Broadband Connectors Pilot program cohort.

“As families, business owners, and communities across the state continue to face the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for affordable, accessible high-speed broadband is perhaps more important now than ever,” said Gov. Evers. “This joint program will provide critical support and resources to help local communities get connected.”

The joint pilot program will help provide technical assistance to help these communities apply for federal, state, and private-sector broadband expansion funds.

“Such a tremendous response demonstrates that there is a strong desire to apply for state and federal broadband funding, but the challenge for many communities is a lack of resources to participate,” said Rebecca Cameron Valcq, Chairperson of the PSC. “This pilot program shows promise to push through that barrier, allowing communities to take steps to connect their residents more quickly.”

The selected communities include:

- Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians
- Ho-Chunk Nation
- School District of Owen-Withee
- Town of Cross
- St Croix County
- Fond du Lac County

“Throughout the listening sessions of the Governor’s Blue Ribbon Commission on Rural Prosperity this

summer, residents came with one consistent message: they need broadband to stay connected for jobs, education, and healthcare,” said WEDC Secretary and CEO Missy Hughes. “This pilot program will provide us with important lessons on how we can better use existing resources to fill in the gaps in coverage and reach more communities.”

WEDC has identified broadband as one of the three key opportunities to help Wisconsin businesses recover from the pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has illuminated significant gaps in broadband coverage in Wisconsin’s rural communities, making e-learning, telecommuting, telehealth and online sales difficult or impossible in many parts of the state. Navigating broadband expansion can be challenging, and local capacity is often stretched thin, especially now as communities grapple with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, a flood of 96 applications were received from local governments from across the state requesting to participate in the pilot.

Applications to participate in the pilot were accepted September 21-30, 2020. Local governments, tribal governments, and school districts were eligible to apply. Pilot program participants were selected based on the following criteria: the community has taken some initial steps toward broadband expansion; diverse community partners have committed to working together on broadband expansion; the community has a clear vision for the technical assistance they are seeking; and the community seeks to expand broadband in an underserved or unserved area.

The pilot program is intended to help WEDC and PSC to better understand what communities’ broadband technical assistance needs are. Drawing on the expertise of both WEDC and PSC staff, the best practices developed from the pilot program will be incorporated into a Wisconsin Broadband Playbook for communities.

Through participation in the pilot cohort, WEDC and PSC intent to increase communities’ readiness to apply for state, federal, or private broadband opportunities, and provide them with a roadmap for continuing its work to expand broadband after the pilot ends.

###

Office of the Governor ♦ 115 East Capitol, Madison, WI 53702

Press Office: (608) 219-7443 ♦ Email: GovPress@wisconsin.gov

<https://evers.wi.gov> ♦ [Unsubscribe](#)

Broadband Connectors Pilot

1. Describe the community's main challenges in accessing effective, reliable, and affordable internet for all;

Many rural areas of Eau Claire County are unserved or are underserved by broadband, which contributes to a higher cost of increasing access to high speed internet. Geography in some parts of the county also limits the use of some technologies that depend on line-of-sight or near line-of-sight. Some areas of the county are served by telecommunications companies that offer poor phone service and have not or are not interested in investing in expanding broadband beyond outdated copper wire-based dialup service. Satellite and cell phone hot spots are not always effective, reliable, and affordable for areas without fiber networks or the ability to take advantage of wireless internet services. The county is served by several telecommunications and cable companies, which complicates collaboration and coordination. The telecommunications companies serving rural areas tend to be smaller cooperatives which are interested in expanding but lack the ability for major expansion of broadband without significant cost sharing from grants and residents.

2. Detail the community's broadband goals.

The overall vision of the Eau Claire Broadband Committee is to establish affordable, reliable, high-speed internet* access/adoption throughout the county by 2030.

Access to high speed internet is a necessity to promote economic development, enhanced healthcare, education for all ages, increased agricultural productivity, and civic engagement. The mission of the Eau Claire County Broadband Team is to serve as a collaboration and connection hub that works with citizens, businesses, industries, agriculture, units of government, and broadband providers to increase the availability, delivery, and utilization of high speed internet* services countywide.

Our Goals/Objectives include the following:

- Identify, promote, facilitate, and accelerate improvements to broadband infrastructure in Eau Claire County
- Collect and maintain comprehensive information on the state of broadband in households, businesses, schools, and public gathering areas in Eau Claire County
- Analyze broadband GIS survey data to identify areas negatively impacted by lack of availability and quality of broadband services in Eau Claire County to identify areas for improvement
- Report to stakeholders on the current status and improvements to broadband services in Eau Claire County
- Facilitate and accelerate improvements by identifying and pursuing public and private funding opportunities to improve infrastructure through partnerships with private and public broadband providers
- Encourage adoption and use of high-speed internet* by identifying barriers and working to facilitate digital inclusion for all residents of the county.

3. Identify any partners that have committed to working on broadband expansion; and

We have worked with our committee members as well as with other entities and companies which are in the business of providing broadband service to the public and private sectors in Eau Claire County, Wisconsin. This includes existing collaborations, such as the Chippewa Valley Internetworking Consortium or CINC, which is a regional Community Area Network (CAN) dedicated to “Broadband Serving the Public Interest.”

Committee Members (current and past)

Donald Mowry	Eau Claire County Board Supervisor, Chairperson
Lynn Thompson	Executive Director, Eau Claire Electric COOP
Joseph Malual	Community Development, UW-Madison Extension (past)
Mark Zuber	Town Clerk, Town of Drammen
Kevin Grokreutz	Hospital Sisters Health System (HSHS) Sacred Heart Hospital (past)
Collin Pomplun	IT Director, Augusta Public School District
Sarah Lipke	CINC & CESA-10
Gerald Bauer	JB Systems and Economic Development Council (past)
Joe Alf	Division Chief, Compliance Officer, Township Fire Departments
Tim Laubach	Information Systems Manager, MEGA COOP
Luke Hansen	Economic Development Association
Scott Hoffman	WIN Technology & CINC Network

Ex-Officio Members (Eau Claire County Employees)

Rod Eslinger	Director of Planning and Development
Dave Hayden	Director of Information Systems
Samantha Kraegenbrink	Secretary to the Broadband Committee
Frank Draxler	Administrative Operations Manager (retired 7-2020)

Partners/Potential Partners

Jim Kusilek	Operations Manager, 24/7 TELCOM
Buck Webb	Chief Operating Officer, TriCounty Communications (TCC)
Steve Mason	ASTREA (Formerly Packerland Broadband)
Aaron Midthun	FirstNet
Leah Chitwood	ATT
Mike Hill	Charter Communication
John Feldman	PSC Technologies
Chris Straight	West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
Terry McHugh	WEAU

Liaison to the City of Eau Claire

Bob Nelson

4. Outline steps the community has already taken to expand broadband.

The Eau Claire County Board of Supervisors on July 16, 2019, passed resolution 19-20/020 created the special committee (Broadband Committee) to review and develop strategies to expand broadband services in Eau Claire County. This one a huge step forward for Eau Claire County to support efforts in the county to expand broadband. At its meeting on August 20, 2019 the county board appointed 11 members to the broadband committee.

Thus far, the committee has endorsed two (2) PSC Broadband Expansion Grant applications are in process of being readied to be submitted to the State of Wisconsin Public Service Commission. This is a unique collaboration between two independent, internet service providers to bring high speed internet to an entire township of Drammen in Eau Claire County.

We have also been replacing outdated (WIMAX) wireless equipment on county-owned towers with newer, more efficient wireless technology (LTE) to expand broadband access to unserved/underserved areas of the county in partnership with a third telecommunications company.

Also, at the county board level, the board passed a **Broadband Forward Resolution** to speed up and simplify the application/permit process for projects. In addition, six out of the 13 towns in the county have adopted the **Telecommuter Forward** resolution.

The County created a [Broadband webpage](#) so the public could access meeting agendas and minutes and have access to the [Broadband Survey](#). The Broadband committee has met eleven times since forming. The committee will continue to meet until a final broadband plan is approved.

The staff of the Planning & Development Office have developed a GIS linked survey (above) that residents can use to both test and input their internet download and upload speed, as well as provide comments to give context to their levels of satisfaction/dissatisfaction with their current internet service. This resource is a tool that could be shared with other units of government if we are selected to be a part of the pilot. Applicants may also include the results of the survey in their PSC Broadband Expansion Grant applications to further show areas that are underserved or underserved with high speed internet.

As a committee, we see the opportunity to take part in this Broadband Connectors Pilot as very critical and timely as it will enable us to develop a much needed long range plan that will help us achieve our goals and objectives.



Eau Claire County
BROADBAND COMMITTEE
Eau Claire County Courthouse - Room 3344
721 Oxford Avenue
Eau Claire, Wisconsin 54703-5212
(715) 839-4741

October 22, 2020

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
Kristy Nieto, Division Administrator
Division of Digital Access, Consumer and Environmental Affairs
Hill Farms State Office Building
4822 Madison Yards Way, North Tower, 6th Floor
Madison, WI 53705

RE: 24/7 and Tri County Communications Broadband Expansion Grant Applications

Dear Ms. Nieto:

The Eau Claire County Broadband Committee is commenting in support of the 24/7 and Tri County Communications Broadband Expansion Grant applications to help the residents in the Town of Drammen, Eau Claire County. The proposed broadband project is a collaborative public-private partnership between two these telecommunication companies, Eau Claire Energy Cooperative, and the town of Drammen to improve the high-speed Internet for the town's residents and businesses.

In our digital age, the poor broadband infrastructure in place leaves a detrimental impact on small, underserved, and rural communities. Residents are unable to reliably use the Internet for basic tasks such as finding job postings, booking business and personal travel arrangements, and managing bank accounts. Working remotely and virtual learning is extremely challenging in the Town of Drammen due to existing infrastructure and geography limitations. Students are placed at a competitive disadvantage as they struggle to access information online with the same ease as their peers.

It also has been reported by town officials, that due to poor access to Internet in the Town of Drammen it has led lower property values because of either the properties are either unserved or underserved with high-speed Internet.

Further, the lack of high-speed Internet access is a major roadblock to economic development. Local businesses are losing opportunities because of poor Internet connections. The fact of the matter is that in our connected economy, access to a broadband Internet connection is an absolute necessity; without it, Eau Claire County will continue to lag in job creation and community development.

As the Chair of the Eau Claire County Broadband Committee, I urge you to approve these grant applications for funds to expand broadband access in the Town of Drammen. Enhanced broadband services will provide critical applications that improve the public health, safety, and economic development opportunities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Donald Mowry, Chair
Eau Claire County Broadband Committee

Eau Claire County Broadband Committee:

Vision, Mission, Objectives

The committee was established and had an initial meeting in August of 2019. Current membership includes representatives from private sector businesses, health, county government, internet service providers, and internet collaboratives,

Vision

Establish access to reliable high-speed internet* throughout the county by 2030.

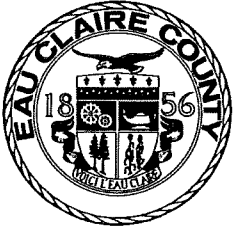
Mission

Access to high speed internet is a necessity to promote economic development, enhanced healthcare, education for all ages, increased agricultural productivity, and civic engagement. The mission of the Eau Claire County Broadband Committee is to serve as a collaboration and connection hub that works with citizens, businesses, industries, agriculture, units of government, and broadband providers to increase the availability, delivery, and utilization of high speed internet* services countywide.

Objectives

- Identify, promote, facilitate, and accelerate improvements to broadband infrastructure in Eau Claire County
- Collect and maintain comprehensive information on the state of broadband in households, businesses, schools and public gathering areas in Eau Claire County
- Analyze broadband survey data to identify areas negatively impacted by lack of availability and quality of broadband services in Eau Claire County to identify areas for improvement
- Report to stakeholders on the current status and improvements to broadband services in Eau Claire County
- Facilitate and accelerate improvements by identifying and pursuing public and private funding opportunities to improve infrastructure through partnerships with private and public broadband providers
- Encourage adoption and use of high speed internet* by identifying barriers and working to facilitate digital inclusion for all residents of the county.

*There is much discussion about what is high speed internet and how increased costs of higher speeds affects adoption rates. Factors influencing speed include the number of devices accessing the internet at one time and the type of online activity being utilized. Although the current Federal Communications Commission (FCC) standard is 25 Mbps download, 3 Mbps upload, there is growing support for higher speeds given projected needs of future applications. This committee settled on a goal of a minimum of 50 Mbps download, 10 Mbps upload as an achievable standard that balances cost, projected future demands for higher speeds, and consumer willingness to adopt and pay for higher speeds.



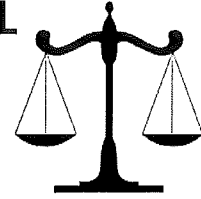
CORPORATION COUNSEL

Timothy J. Sullivan

OFFICE OF CORPORATION COUNSEL

EAU CLAIRE COUNTY
EAU CLAIRE COUNTY COURTHOUSE
721 OXFORD AVE., SUITE 3520
EAU CLAIRE, WI 54703

PH: (715) 839-4836 Fax: (715) 839-6243



**ASSISTANT
CORPORATION COUNSEL**

Sharon G. McIlquham

Richard A. Eaton

Charles R. Ellefsen, III

October 5, 2020

FACT SHEET 20-21/080

This resolution extends the existence of the special committee on rural broadband. The committee was originally formed as the result of resolution 19-20/020. The committee was to be in existence for "up to 12 months or until a final plan was approved."

There is a need to extend the existence of the rural broadband committee so they can complete their work of "identifying under-served rural areas, identify funding resources, identify potential strategies to improve access, and to recommend cooperative ventures to improve rural broadband coverage."

Based on the information provided by Supervisor Mowry: as of this time the broadband special committee has developed a vision, mission, and goals/objectives but not a final plan. They have applied for a pilot program to WEDA and the PSC for the Broadband Connectors Pilot Program and their number one goal is to develop a plan to bring broadband access to all of Eau Claire County.

Timothy J. Sullivan
Corporation Counsel
TJS

2
3
4 EXTENDING THE EXISTENCE OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON RURAL
5 BROADBAND
6

7 WHEREAS, The Eau Claire County Board of Supervisors, pursuant to Resolution No.
8 19-20/020, Enrolled No. R163-013 created a special committee on Rural Broadband; and,
9


10 WHEREAS, the Rural Broadband Special committee was charged with the function of
11 identifying under-served rural areas and gaps in broadband service. Identify potential strategies
12 to improve access, and recommend cooperative ventures to improve rural broadband coverage;
13 and,
14

15 WHEREAS, the Rural Broadband Committee is composed of varied stakeholders who
16 represent educational, technical, Extension, and rural partners; and,
17

18 WHEREAS, the Rural Broadband Committee has made progress in reaching its goals it
19 has yet to approve a final plan to improve access to broadband services in rural areas of Eau
20 Claire County.
21

22 NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Eau Claire County Board of Supervisors
23 extends existence of the special committee on Rural Broadband as created by Resolution No. 19-
24 20/020, Enrolled No. R163-013 until such time as a final plan is approved but not longer than 24
25 months from the date of approval of this resolution.
26

27 I hereby certify that the foregoing
28 correctly represents the action of the
29 Committee on Administration on
30 October 13, 2020, by a vote of 5 for, and 0
31 against.
32

33 
34 Nick Smiar, Chair
35 Committee on Administration
36
37
38

**APPROVED BY
CORPORATION COUNSEL
AS TO FORM**