

MINUTES

Eau Claire County

• Broadband Committee •

Thursday, May 21, 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: Sarah Lipke, Lynn Thompson, Donald Mowry, Scott Hoffman, Tim Laubach, Luke Hanson, Mark Zuber, Collin Pomplun, Joe Alf

Staff: Rodney J. Eslinger – Director of Planning and Development, Frank Draxler – Administrative Operations Manager, Dave Hayden – Director of Information Systems

Others Present: Aaron Midthun, FirstNet and Leah Chitwood, ATT

Press: None

1. Call to order and confirmation of meeting notice
Chairperson Mowry call to order the meeting at 4:00 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 February 20, 2020 – **Discussion/Action**
Mark Zuber motioned to approve the minutes as presented, Luke Hanson seconded the motion; all in favor.
5. Closed Session pursuant to Wisconsin Statutes 19.85 (1)(e) for the purpose of discussing and sharing proprietary information from an outside agency regarding research and potential revenue of that agency.

RE: FirstNet/ATT

Scott Hoffman motioned to go into closed session, Lynn Thompson seconded the motion; all in favor.

Mark Zuber motioned to go out of closed session, Scott Hoffman seconded the motion; all in favor.

6. Update on current and future projects – Discussion

Mark Zuber gave an update of the Town of Drammen broadband project. Mr. Zuber has been in conversation with TriCounty-24/7 and is discussing an advisory survey. The town board would require that a minimum of 75% of the surveys be returned and 60% of those would have to be in support to raise taxes. Mark indicated that it would be \$85 per 100,000 of assessed value. If there's citizen support the Town would actively look for partners for the project. Mr. Zuber anticipates having an answer by the town board meeting in July which would allow time to prepare the grant.

Luke Hanson, Economic Development Association – EDA due to the CARES Recovery Act 1.5-billion-dollar broadband expansion grant is available with a 80/20. Craig Johnson with the West Central Regional office is the lead contact.

Dave Hayden updated the committee regarding work on LTE on several towers in Eau Claire County. This project replaces the WiMAX technology with LTE. He noted that this is a public/private partnership with Astera (formerly Packerland).

Lynn Thompson inquired about Charter Spectrum and what their next steps was considering expanding service to marginal areas of Eau Claire County.

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

Don Mowry updated the committee regarding potential funding sources. April 1st deadline for the FCC 5G fund for rural American 1 billion dollars available. The program focuses on rural areas that lacks mobile service with a second phase available for precision agriculture.

Mr. Draxler noted that the telecommuting health grant just closed which focused on health care.

Taylor County Broadband for profit project that costs 7 million dollars.

Eau Claire County needs to be part of the funding solution but currently funds are not available. The County could assist by securing low interest loans for township.

8. Broadband Telecommuter Resolutions Update – Discussion

Mark Zuber indicated that there are no new updates.

9. Broadband Survey Update – Discussion/Action

Rod Eslinger gave a brief of the broadband survey.

10. Next Steps and future meetings – Discussion/Action

- a. Next Steps: Support the Town of Drammen and other projects – County Board resolution in support. Eau Claire County loan on behalf of the Town of Drammen.
- b. Next meeting is scheduled for 4 p.m., June 25, 2020

11. Adjourn

Action: Meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 5:12 p.m.

Respectively submitted by,

Rodney J. Eslinger
Director of Planning and Development