

MEETING MINUTES
Eau Claire County
Broadband Committee
Thursday, December 15, 2022
4:00 P.M.

Courthouse – Room #3312
721 Oxford Avenue – Eau Claire, WI

*Event link below can be used to connect to meeting and interact (by the chair) from computer or through the WebEx Meeting smartphone app.

Join WebEx Meeting: <https://eauclairecounty.webex.com> Meeting ID: 2590 425 0037

Password: UWsi8wmax96

*Meeting audio can be listened to using this Audio conference dial in information.

Audio conference: 1-415-655-0001 Access Code: 25904250037##

For those wishing to make public comments, you must email Rod Eslinger at rod.eslinger@eauclairecounty.gov at least 60 minutes prior to the meeting to the start of the meeting.

*Please mute personal devices upon entry.

Members Present: Todd Meyer, Lynn Thompson, Don Mowry, Collin Pomplun, Monica Obrycki, Erica Poole, Tom Lange.

Staff Present: Rodney J. Eslinger, Director of Planning and Development, Greg Dachel, Director of Information Systems, Dave Hayden, Broadband Consultant.

Others Present: Amber Scharenbroch, Buck Webb, Celeste Flynn, Mike Hill, Pat Anderson, Travis McFarland, Doug O (online)

1. Call to order and confirmation of meeting notice.

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. and the meeting notice was confirmed.

2. Roll Call – Members present are noted above. A quorum was present.

3. Public Comment (limit to 3 minutes per person) – None

4. Review/Approval of October 20, 2022, Committee Meeting Minutes – **Discussion/Action**

The committee reviewed the meeting minutes of October 20, 2022. Monica Obrycki motioned to approve the minutes: Tom Lange seconded the motion; motion carried on a voice vote with all in favor of the motion.

5. Resolution allowing the Broadband Committee to conduct their meetings by virtual, hybrid, or in person means. Update from Rod Eslinger.

Rod Eslinger updated the committee regarding the ways the committee is allowed to meet going forward, which is in person, hybrid or virtual. He indicated that Corporation Counsel McIlquham confirmed that the committee is allowed to conduct its business in person, hybrid or virtual.

6. Internet Service Provider (ISP) Updates – **Discussion**

Buck Webb of Tri Count Communication (TCC) updated the committee on the Pleasant Valley grant award and indicated that TCC will begin construction in the spring with anticipated completion by the end of 2023. He also said that TCC is working in the Village of Fairchild updating the existing cable there.

Celeste Flynn, Mike Hill, and Pat Anderson with Charter/Spectrum, spoke on Spectrum's Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) project in Eau Claire County. They anticipate that they will have the infrastructure portion of the program completed by the end of 2023. This still leaves white space areas to address with a high-speed internet solution. Mike also updated the committee on the PSC grant projects in the Town of Washington and Town of Pleasant Valley, which those projects are expected to be completed by end of 2023 as well.

Travis McFarland, Bloomer Telephone Company, updated the committee on the Hallie/Seymour fiber project. He said that the grant has signed and they continue to accept sign ups at this time and the engineers will be completing the field work in the coming months. The company will begin installations in 2023.

No other ISP were present.

7. Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Presentation –

Rory Tikalsky from the Wisconsin Public Service Commission (PSC) gave the committee a thorough explanation of the Broadband, Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) program. He indicated that Wisconsin is authorized to spend 5 million dollars in 9 months working with ISPs to further improve internet services in the state. He shared the 5-year action plan with the committee that will be a comprehensive vision that would address shared resources, have regional importance, based on data needs and would contain a need assessment. He encouraged everyone to take the FCC Challenge where households and business owners can confirm their location on the map is accurate. It is important because each site is worth \$1,000 in grant assistance the state could receive to advance grants to ISP's to keep improving the internet service fabric in Wisconsin.

Rory mentioned the PSC Broadband Grant application due date is February 22, 2023. This grant cycle's allocation is 14.1 million dollars. There is also the Capital Funding that will become available mid-year for Infrastructure Developments and the pool is approximately 40 million dollars. BEAD funding will be a large sum of money and will also be available later in 2023.

8. Internet for All: Connecting Wisconsin Kick-Off Conference Update –

Dave Hayden, Don Mowry, Amber Scharenbroch gave a combined update on the conference and noted the following highlights:

Milwaukee's Digital Equity Program
BEAD Program
Economic Development
Big Picture – Governmental task force and stakeholder group
Workforce Development

Recording of the conference is available.

9. United Way Update – Amber Scharenbroch

Amber Scharenbroch shared that a United Way resource guide is available and she talked about the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) that provided \$30 per month to eligible households to assist with the cost of high-speed internet and also provides a one-time \$100 device credit. Amber indicated that she is planning a webinar in January of 2023, that will review the ACP program. Collin asked to share information on the ACP. Tom Lange said there is a need for the ACP across the CVTC as the federal funding is expiring that previously supported “hotspots”.

Amber gave the committee an overview of the Digital Equity property.

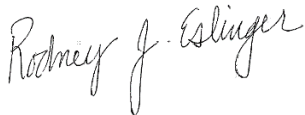
10. Next Steps and future meetings

- a. January 19, 2023
- b. Amending the ARPA Fund Match Resolution
- c. Village of Fairchild /CINC broadband project
- d. TCC project in the Town of Clear Creek

11. Adjourn

Adjourn Action: Meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 5:26 p.m.

Respectively submitted by,



Rodney J. Eslinger
Broadband Committee Clerk
Director of Planning and Development