



AD HOC BROADBAND COMMITTEE

Minutes – February 15, 2022

Call to Order. Chair Bostwick called the (virtual hybrid) meeting of the Ad Hoc Broadband Committee to order at 4:0 P.M. in Conference Room N1/N2, 5th Floor, Courthouse East, 51 S, Main St., Janesville, WI.

Committee Members Present: Supervisors Mawhinney, Davis, Beaver, Wilson, Richard Bostwick, Homan, and Sweeney.

Committee Members Absent: None.

Staff Members Present via Phone: Randy Terronez, Assistant to County Administrator; James Otterstein, Economic Development Manager; Kathleen Holford, Computer Network Engineer/Information Technology Department.

Others Present: Russell Berg, Nokomis Networking; Gordy LaChance, City of Janesville Information Technology Manager; Ray Gorsline, City of Beloit Information Technology Manager, and Mitch Olson, Bug Tussel Wireless.

Approval of Agenda. Supervisor Homan moved approval of the agenda as presented, second by Supervisor Sweeney. ADOPTED.

Citizen Participation, Communications and Announcements

Supervisor Davis congratulated James Otterstein on his recent WI. Economic Development Agency award - Distinguished Practitioner.

Approval of Minutes – January 19, 2022

Supervisor Beaver moved approval of the January 19, 2022 minutes as presented, second by Supervisor Homan. ADOPTED.

Review, Discussion and Possible Action

Guiding Principles Position Paper

Supervisor Sweeney moved approval of the Guiding Principles Position Paper as presented, second by Supervisor Homan. ADOPTED.

Randy Terronez reviewed enclosure noting that the content is a result of the learning curve the Committee has undertaken in the recent meetings.

Broadband Financing Sources Position Paper

Supervisor Sweeney moved approval Financing Sources Position Paper as presented, second by Supervisor Wilson. ADOPTED.

Submission of PSC Grant Application

Russ Berg reviewed several issues with the Committee.

Mitch Olson, Bug Tussel Wireless summarized the project, including the fixed wireless component (non-PSC eligible) and the middle mile fiber ring (PSC eligible).

The grant application is due March 17 and the grant award notification is projected in July.

Committee members expressed support for expanding the fixed wireless component and increase the number of towers serving the county. A preliminary estimate would increase the fixed wireless portion from approximately \$2.5 million to \$5.0 million. Total project cost would be approximately \$13.0 million.

Russ Berg indicated that staff would work on finalizing the PSC grant application for submission by the March 17 deadline.

Current Market Assessment

Promoting Regional Economic Development (MadREP) Assessment/Inventory Study

James Otterstein reviewed county maps for households, businesses, and square miles. It was estimated that 25,471 households would be affected impacted by broadband out of a total of 62,000 Rock County households. The balance would be households located within the city/village boundaries already served by broadband providers.

The Assessment Survey map was reviewed by James Otterstein showing 533 separate locations have been tagged. We still need to get the word out.

County Needs/Wants

No updates.

Technology Options – Current/Future

No updates.

Partnerships

No updates.

Funding Options

Draft resolution reviewed. Committee members commented on the \$6 million ARPA amount and the language involving unused ARPA dollars from other ARAP funded projects.

Discussion given on deadline for ARPA authorization vs. deadline for spending ARPA. Randy Terronez to investigate further.

Supervisor Sweeney moved approval the \$6 million ARPA funding for the Broadband Bug Tussel Wireless Project, second by Supervisor Wilson. ADOPTED.

Intergovernmental Activities

Towns Association Update

It was noted that the new ARPA rule allowing \$10 million of ARAP for “loss revenue has resulted in the towns directing town ARPA dollars toward road projects.

Other

No updates.

Discussion on next steps

None.

Set Next Meeting Time and Place

The Committee agreed to meet on February 24 at 4:30 p.m. in Jury Deliberation Room. Russ Berg will be available on conference call. This meeting would be a joint Broadband Committee-P & D Committee & Finance Committee meeting.

Adjournment.

Supervisor Mawhinney moved adjournment at 5:48 P.M., second by Supervisor Homan. ADOPTED.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Terronez
Assistant to the County Administrator

NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVED BY COMMITTEE.