



Minutes - February 22, 2023

Call to Order: Chair Bostwick called the hybrid Ad Hoc Broadband Committee meeting to order at 3:30 P.M. in Conference N1.

Committee Members Present: Supervisor Bostwick, Sutterlin, Sweeney, Mawhinney, Wilson, Beaver, Winter

Committee Members Absent: None.

Staff Members Present: Randy Terronez, Assistant to the Administrator; Andrew Baker, Director of Land Conservation, Planning and Development; Rich Greenlee, Corporation Counsel; Josh Smith, County Administrator; James Otterstein, Economic Development Manager.

Others Present: Russell Berg, Nokomis Networking; Mitch Olson, Bug Tussel; Bryan Langer, City of Janesville IT Director; Supervisor Herrmann.

Approve Agenda: Supervisor Mawhinney moved to approve the agenda as presented, second by Supervisor Wilson. ADOPTED.

Citizen Participation, Communications and Announcements: Comment submitted by Supervisor Mike Zoril (attached).

Approval of Minutes:

September 14, 2022 Minutes: Supervisor Wilson moved approval of September 14, 2022 minutes, second by Supervisor Winter. ADOPTED.

Review, Discussion and Possible Action:

Bug Tussel Wireless (BTW) ARPA Repayment Agreement: Randy Terronez provided an updated on the ARPA repayment agreement. The attorneys are still working on this item.

Approving Broadband ARPA Repayment Agreement: Item skipped.

FDL Bond Guarantee Fee Schedule: Randy provided background on the fee schedule.

Establishing Broadband Program Budget and Amending the 2022 Budget: Randy stated that this will be considered by Planning & Development Committee and County Board tomorrow. This

resolution establishes a broadband budget to pay for attorney fees encored so far.

Supervisor Sweeney moved approval of the above resolution, second by Supervisor Mawhinney.
ADOPTED.

Federal Infrastructure Broadband Programs (BEAD, Digital Equity, Affordable Connectivity):

Program Summaries/Allocations/Timeline/Eligible WI. Pop. Groups: This will be the largest amount of money from federal government for broadband expansion. There are various broadband programs. The State of Wisconsin will be receiving \$1.5 million for BEAD implementation. This is estimated to be available in 2024. The Digital Equity program is focusing on areas that have lacked access to broadband.

FCC Map Accuracy & Challenge Process: Late last year, the FCC released a broadband map in response to the lack of prior broadband information. The map allows residents to log in and see which providers are available and the speeds they provide. Residents can then verify the accuracy of this information. This will help determine the state's funding allocation.

PSC Letter of Intent for BEAD Planning Grant: Counties have until March 7 to submit a letter of intent for the BEAD planning grant. Counties can submit individually or with their local economic development group. It is Randy's opinion that Rock County should apply individually.

Supervisor Sweeney moved to accept the proposal to individually submit a letter of intent for BEAD planning grant, second by Supervisor Wilson.

Director/Staff Reports:

BTW - Rock County Project Status: Mitch Olson provided an update to the committee from Bug Tussel. They are still looking for a site for a few of the towers. Bug Tussel will be providing quarterly updates.

Bonding Drawdown Status: The committee reviewed the list of the broadband drawdown requests from Bug Tussel.

Nokomis Networking - Russ Berg:

Current Market Assessment: A number of school districts declared virtual learning days for the winter storms coming up. There are still pockets of people without broadband access, so he unsure how local schools are dealing with this. It has been in the news that some companies are brining back their work from home policies.

County Needs/Wants: No updates.

Technology Options: No updates.

Funding Options: Today was the deadline for some small PSC grants. There should be a summary available early next week showing grant recipients.

Partnerships: Russ encouraged the committee to continue working with Bug Tussel on future grant applications.

Status of Broadband Forward (DPW) and Telecommuter (Planning & Development Dept.)

Activities: The PSC encouraged counties to pass resolutions relating to these items. Permits submitted to the county were summarized. Rock County has been approved as a telecommunicator community.

Intergovernmental Activities: Randy introduced Bryan Langer, the new City of Janesville IT Director. Randy has been in touch with the City of Evansville to encourage them to speak with Bug Tussel about connection opportunities. Town of Turtle requested a ring in part of the town.

Communications & County Webpage: The broadband portion of the website is robust and growing.

Discussion of Next Steps: The committee would need to meet upon receipt of the final repayment agreement. This is to be determined.

Next meeting date and time: To be determined.

Adjournment: Supervisor Sutterlin moved to adjourn at 4:37 P.M., second by Supervisor Beaver.
ADOPTED.

Respectfully submitted,

Haley Thompson
Office Coordinator

NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVED BY COMMITTEE.

Haley Thompson

From: Mike Zoril
Sent: Tuesday, February 21, 2023 6:29 PM
To: COUNTYADMIN
Cc: RICHARD BOSTWICK
Subject: Public Comment - AD HOC BROADBAND COMMITTEE

Dear AD-HOC BROADBAND COMMITTEE:

I am writing to express my concern regarding the repayment terms for the rural broadband project with Bug Tussel. As you may recall, the initial vote to approve this project failed, but we ultimately came together and agreed to an informal non-binding compromise on the repayment terms for the ARPA portion of the revenue to be 20 years instead of 30, which allowed the project to be approved.

However, during the Ad-Hoc Committee's vote on this matter on 9/14/22, the committee disregarded the agreed-upon 20-year repayment plan and opted for a 30-year plan. While I personally favor the 30-year plan due to the higher interest rate and aggregate payments, I recognize that the 20-year repayment plan was a key factor in gaining support for the project. It is important to acknowledge that the board members who initially opposed the project changed their votes based on the informal agreement of a 20-year repayment plan.

As a board, it is vital that we work together and approach this issue with an open mind and a willingness to compromise. We must honor the spirit of compromise and find a repayment plan that satisfies all parties involved. By doing so, we can ensure the success of the project and the satisfaction of our community.



Mike Zoril

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