

MINUTES
MONDAY, JANUARY 9, 2025 – 11:00 A.M.
BROADBAND TASKFORCE FOR BEAD PLANNING GRANT
COUNTY BOARD ROOM #3041 COURTHOUSE BUILDING “A”
301 WASHINGTON STREET, OCONTO, WI 54153-1699
www.co.oconto.wi.us
(*Draft minutes, not approved by Committee*)

COMMITTEE PRESENT: David Behrend, County Board Supervisor; Dennis Kroll, Town of Chase; Jayme Sellen, TEDCOR Executive Director; Mike Beyer, Town of Maple Valley; and Peter Wills, Oconto Falls Administrator

COMMITTEE ABSENT: Brandon Dhuey, County Board Supervisor and David Van Zeeland, County Board Supervisor

OTHERS PRESENT: Rich Heath, County Administrator; Al Sleeter, County Board Chair; and Dale Mohr, UW-Extension Community Educator

1. Call to Order

Chair Behrend called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

2. Statement of Vision: *All residents and businesses in Oconto County will have equitable access to affordable internet with a minimum of 100 Mbps down / 20 Mbps up speeds.*

3. Oconto County Mission and Vision

4. Approval of Agenda

4.1. **Change of Sequence** – None.

4.2. **Removal of Items** – None.

Motion by Sellen/Beyer to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was voted on and carried.

5. Approval of Minutes of December 16, 2024 Meeting

Motion by Wills/Kroll to approve the minutes from December 16, 2024 as presented. The motion was voted on and carried.

6. Communications

- Rich Heath distributed copies of the four ISP endorsement resolutions, a map of the five Project Units, and a table listing the number of unserved and underserved within these five Project Units. Jayme Sellen provided the committee members with a copy of sample county approval letter to be signed by Chair Sleeter and provided to the ISPs once the County Board approves the four ISP endorsement resolutions.

7. Update on Project Units and Grant Funding

Sellen stated that the county's five Project Units have not been changed by the Public Service Corporation (PSC) and will likely not be changed. Sellen added that the PSC wants to make sure there are projects in each county regardless of where each county is at this point in the process. Oconto County is in a good position now that the County Board has approved local funding. The PSC will award projects/grants to ISPs based on costs to serve each Project Unit.

8. Update on Local Letters of Support

Sellen sent draft letters of support to the towns of Little Suamico and Chase for Nsight. Nsight is planning to extend fiber in that area and is not requesting any state or local grant funding. Kroll stated that the Town of Chase has Nsight's letter of support on its upcoming Town Board agenda. Once other ISPs have indicated their intentions to serve areas, Sellen will also provide the local municipality with letters of support. The local municipalities send the ISP the minutes noting approval and the letter of support.

9. Discuss and Action on ISP Applications and Endorsement Resolutions

Sellen explained that most of the ISPs have been approved by the PSC with conditions. The PSC is monitoring multiple grant programs already so there is a delay in the ISP approval process. There is a collusion clause in the grant application process that prohibits ISPs from negotiating among themselves for the areas in which they intend to serve. Sellen added that two ISPs are unsure if they will participate since it may not be economically feasible to provide internet services, and another ISP shared a tentative map with her indicating areas they have interest in extending broadband services.

Some SPs already have affordability packages that they offer customers and other do not. Behrends stated that regardless of the program, the ISP needs to meet the upload and download speeds outlined in the grant program. Spectrum is already a provider for the RDOF program, so they may have interest in some of the areas. Sellen added that she has not heard from Bug Tussel and their interest in serving any of the Project Units.

Motion by Kroll/Beyer to approve Endorsement Resolutions for Nsight, Spectrum, Brightspeed, and AT & T and send them to the Administration Committee for action. The motion was voted on and carried.

10. Update on Current Broadband Expansion Projects

Sellen stated that the Lakewood broadband project is expanding under Nsight. Betram has completed their build out. The United States Forest Service was very slow in their approval process which caused some delays. The PSC will verify that the service areas have been completed before payment is issued. TEDCOR as the fiduciary agent for both projects.

11. Identify Future Agenda Items

- ISP Application and Agreements
- Financial review process for county funds

12. Announcements/General Information (No action to be taken)

There was discussion on future meeting dates now the project is in the action stage.

13. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting date is February 11, 2025 at 10:00 am. in the County Board room.

14. Adjournment

Motion by Kroll/Sellen to adjourn the meeting at 11:42 a.m. The motion was voted on and carried.

rh/Date Posted: 01/17/25