



Ad Hoc Broadband Committee Minutes November 17, 2022

Members present: Brad Cook, Char Holtan, Steve Balsiger, Tess Carr

Members absent with notice: Mike Weyh

Also in attendance during all or portions of the meeting: Darren Schroeder, Sue Moll, Joe Ruf

Others in attendance: Steven Pate (Town of Pacific), Terry Milfred and Stan Stofflet (Village of Rio), Pat Schnering (Pardeeville citizen), Tim Spath (Marquette Adams Cooperative), Adam Raschka and Chris Crawford (Charter)

The meeting of the Ad Hoc Broadband Committee was called to order by Chair Holtan at 12:30 p.m. The meeting was properly noticed as required by the Wisconsin Open Meetings Law. The meeting was held at the Administration Building, Meeting Room 113-115, 112 E. Edgewater Street, Portage, WI.

Public Input

None.

Approve Agenda

Motion by Balsiger to approve the agenda as published. Second by Cook. Motion carried.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

Motion by Balsiger to approve the minutes of the October 13, 2022 Ad Hoc Broadband Committee meeting. Second by Carr. Motion carried.

Balsiger was named acting secretary in Weyh's absence.

Meet with Municipal Representatives

Representatives from the Town of Pacific and Village of Rio were present and discussed broadband issues within their communities.

Guest Speakers

Adam Raschka and Chris Crawford from Charter gave a presentation outlining their efforts to provide broadband service in Columbia County. Charter was awarded Rural Digital Opportunity Funds (RDOF) to install fiber optic in various locations throughout Columbia County. The locations were based on census blocks with low or no coverage, and Charter is obligated to build connections to every home within the census blocks, estimated to be approximately 4,000 homes.

A Whitespace Analysis determined the estimated cost of infrastructure to cover all the underserved areas in Columbia County would be \$18 million; and the estimated cost of infrastructure to cover areas with 25/3 speeds would be \$25 million. Charter would like to be part of the solution.

Charter is able and willing to partner with municipalities and the county, usually with a 50% cost share, to install fiber optic. This option has immediate results. The other option would be to partner with Charter when additional grants are available. This would include letters of support, monetary support, and right of way support. Grant awards have a year or more delay. Wisconsin is set to get approximately \$100 million in broadband grant funds in 2023, plus additional funds based on mapping coverage, which could total \$1 billion in funds.

Determine Next Steps to Move Forward

Discussion was held with Corporation Counsel Joe Ruf regarding closed session meetings. The Committee was advised to work with his office to determine if agenda items warranted closed session.

Action items discussed were to reach out to other counties to see what they did to get accountability with companies and ideas to get municipalities to partner with the county.

The FCC is expected to release an updated broadband coverage map soon. Committee members will divide the county and contact municipalities within their "area" with low or no broadband coverage and discuss broadband issues and possible options. The goal is to have all residences and businesses in Columbia County have good broadband access, ideally with fiber optic.

Schedule Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Ad Hoc Broadband Committee will be held on December 12, 2022 at 1:00 p.m. at the Administration Building, Meeting Room 115, 112 E. Edgewater Street, Portage, WI.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:11 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Balsiger", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Steve Balsiger
Acting Ad Hoc Broadband Committee Secretary