

BROADBAND COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE: BROADBAND
DATE: MARCH 28, 2023
TIME: 4:30 P.M.
PLACE: FOREST COUNTY BOARDROOM

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Lukas called the meeting to order at 4:33 p.m. and read the agenda.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Black, Lukas, Skallerud

Absent: Gretzinger

Other Members: Stephanie Statezny (E.M. Director), Chris Shafer (FCEDP)(phone), Amber Rehberg (UW-Extension Director)

Others Present: Nora Matuszewski, Representatives from Bug Tussel (Mark Dodge, Mitch Olson), Steve Watson, Heather Ostrowski, Mary Belland

APPROVE AGENDA

Motion by Skallerud to approve the agenda, second by Black. All present voting (AYE). Motion carried.

APPROVE MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 28, 2023 MEETING

Motion by Lukas to approve the minutes from the February 28, 2023 meeting, second by Skallerud. All present voting (AYE). Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Steve Watson updated the committee on the Digital Navigator grant. He told the committee everything is going well; he has been getting out to the meal sites and the libraries and he will be attending the Towns Association meeting on April 27th.

DISCUSSION WITH BUG TUSSEL ON PHASE #1 OF PROJECT PROGRESSION AND PSC SUBMISSIONS

Bug Tussel has secured an extension until the end of 2023 to finish phase #1. They have been paying for the project out-of-pocket since they took over because 90% of the submissions were down at that time and until the project is completed the remaining 10% cannot be collected on. The four sites they had been working on are all now under construction.

DISCUSSION/ACTION WITH BUG TUSSEL ON PHASE #2 OF PROJECT – PROJECT SCOPE

Nothing has been started on this project. It was asked if the scope of the project can be decided by the committee where to start. Bug Tussel told the committee the phases are largely driven by what can bring the most people onto the project. They want to make sure the first 17 towers are up to help with the progression of the whole project.

DISCUSSION/ACTION ON PROJECT #3

- Resolution of Intent – Forward to Finance

The resolution of intent will move forward to Finance per the county board instructions, then move to the April, county board for approval.

- Step by step breakdown of re-payments to the County

It was brought up that someone should come up with an explanation of the project as well as the step by step re-payment to the county. It was explained that if the third phase is not done the ARPA funding cannot be paid back to the county, which will be more expensive for the county. Lukas asked if once the projects are complete will Bug Tussel fund reaching more residential; the next phase would have to be subsidized through grants, etc.

- Bug Tussel- Business portfolio

Bug Tussel will put together the financials of the product & cash flow relative to the bond payments; which Landru requested at the county board meeting. Mitch Olson explained he may not be done with the financials by the April County Board meeting. Black asked to have a spokesperson for the next County Board to help explain the project to the other board members who do not know enough about it. Skallerud did a very good job explaining what the project was and how it will benefit the county to the committee. Shafer thought there should be a closed forum at the next County board meeting. He also asked if the County Board could have a special meeting and Lukas explained to him the process for a special meeting.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS/SETTING NEXT MEETING

- April 25th at 4:30 p.m.
- Digital Navigator Update

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Skallerud to adjourn, second by Black. All present voting AYE. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

These minutes are not official and are subject to change. They will be officially approved at the next scheduled Broadband meeting.