

## **BROADBAND COMMITTEE**

COMMITTEE: BROADBAND  
DATE: JANUARY 23, 2024  
TIME: 4:30 P.M.  
PLACE: FOREST COUNTY BOARDROOM

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Lukas called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. and read the agenda.

### **ROLL CALL**

Members Present: Black, Gretzinger (phone), Lukas, Skallerud

Absent:

Other Members: Stephanie Montgomery (E.M. Director) (Teams), Chris Shafer (FCEDP), Amber Rehberg (UW-Extension Director), Kayla Littleton (LCC)

Others Present: Nora Matuszewski, Representative from Bug Tussel (Mitch Olson), Steve Watson, Heather Ostrowski, Nathan Sandwick (RPN), Ed Mullaney, Jason Neilitz, Chris Crawford, Mark O., Mitch Olsen (Teams)

### **APPROVE AGENDA**

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

### **APPROVE MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 26, 2023 MEETING**

Motion by Shafer to approve the minutes from the September 26, 2023 meeting, second by Black. All present voting (AYE). Motion carried.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Ed Mullaney told the committee he has been here for a decade and there has always been a promise for increased broadband. He lives on Lake Lucerne and he had concerns that a lot of money has been given out through the government and not much done; service is not very good for cellphone or internet. He said there was a Verizon tower going to be put up and he was told it was canceled because of there not being enough people.

He was told by the committee to stay and listen to the meeting and updates would be shared on the progress.

### **DIGITAL NAVIGATOR UPDATE**

Watson told the committee he has serviced 100 clients and has had 205 sessions, with some of them being multiple sessions with one client. He is getting new clients by referrals from the clients he is serving and has given out 10 laptops and 8 tablets to date. He explained to new comers to the meeting who he is and how he is funded. The program is doing well and growing.

### **PROJECT UPDATES WITH BUG TUSSEL (Mitch Olsen)**

The projects are moving forward as planned and right now a little slower because of the winter months. The Cavour tower is in construction phase and the Alvin tower is underway. The fiber side is good on the engineering end, they are just waiting for winter to be over to start the ground work. Tower on 52/W is up and running and the integration station is imminent to be turned on.

### **UPDATES – CHARTER/SPECTRUM**

Two representatives were present to discuss the project they are doing that is underway in Forest County. They are putting in fiber through RDOF, a federally funded program. They went to bid with the IRS for the project they were awarded which runs from 2021-2026. He is estimating to be done at the end of 2025. Right now, they are doing some work in Hiles. They have a map that Shafer will share with everyone which was based on a

census report, which may or may not be accurate according to who actually answered the census. They will be coming from the Rhinelander area and will be working heavy in Forest County in 2025. In order to satisfy RDOF they have to get fiber to the homes. It was asked of them their cost for their service and what they are providing. They told everyone that a bundle package of 300 megs with internet, tv and telephone would be \$112.00 a month. If someone wants to go up in upload/download speed the price goes up. They also explained they would install internet to all houses that are up to 1500 feet in from the line for \$59.00, after that it would be a case- by-case basis and based on how many feet away the house is.

It was also asked if there was special pricing for low income, he told the committee they do have that. Watson explained that some of that funding for low income is phasing out because the program is almost out of money and there is no assurance it will continue.

Concerns arose from Neilitz as to Forest County always being last for anything and he asked for collaboration with Charter/Spectrum and if they would be allowing Bug Tussel or others to feed off of their lines. The response was “no” to allowing other companies to feed off their lines. He asked if they would be willing to collaborate to get the “unserved” “underserved” in Forest County as many may not be on the RDOF map they are following. They seemed willing to at least talk with the County but, explained they are locked in to where they are supposed to serve according to the map from RDOF. Shafer asked the committee to come back to the next meeting with ideas to discuss. He would like ideas brought to him and then he could bring them to Charter/Spectrum for discussion to try to fill the “gaps.”

#### UPDATE – FCEDP COORDINATOR

No Action

#### FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS/SETTING NEXT MEETING

- Bug Tussel Update
- Digital Navigator Update
- FCEDP Director Update
- Collaboration discussion -Charter/Spectrum

#### ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Shafer to adjourn, second by Skallerud. All present voting AYE. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:38 p.m.

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