

## **BROADBAND COMMITTEE**

COMMITTEE: BROADBAND  
DATE: DECEMBER 2, 2024  
TIME: 4:30P.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: Chaney, Lukas, Skallerud

Absent: Wirtz

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

Others Present: Nora Matuszewski, Heather Ostrowski, Herbert Hoover (Alvin), Lynne Black (Lincoln), Sherry Pethers (Blackwell), Lisa York, Rick Huber (T. Crandon), Suzanne Hupf (Ross), Diane Pendergast (Freedom), Robert Smith Jr. (Sokaogon), Jerry Graves (Blackwell), Jason Headson (Lincoln), Robert Vanzile (Sokaogon), John Harter (Wabeno) and Jason Neilitz (Crandon)

### **APPROVE AGENDA**

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

Motion by Skallerud to allow the Chairman to move items around as he/she sees fit, second by Chaney. All present voting (AYE). Motion carried.

### **APPROVE MINUTES FROM MAY 28, 2024 MEETING**

Motion by Shafer to approve the minutes from the May 28, 2024 meeting, second by Chaney. All present voting (AYE). Motion carried.

### **DISCUSSION/REVIEW PROJECT 1 & 2 – UPDATE FROM JASON NEILITZ– SOKAOGON CHIPPEWA**

Mitch Olson (Bug Tussel) – Project 1 they are working on and moving forward. They have had software issues and a few of the towers are not up yet. The entire project will be completed by the end of 2025. There is an ongoing BEAD project being worked on with the Sokaogon Chippewa.

Chaney asked about the 300-foot tower on Little Rice Lake and he was informed that there is a back and forth with the landowner. There will be a replacement tower that will hold AT&T equipment, with an end date of 2025. Olson told the committee they are not happy with the software in the Freedom and Cavour towers.

Black asked about the internet for the Town of Lincoln(town hall) and a discussion evolved around building the fiber over there.

Pendergast asked about the status of the Harter tower on the corner of W and 52 and the target date to go online. In Blackwell there has been a problem with the National Forest, but, Fiber is a priority in that area. They are looking at the BEAD funding, which could be a long wait. If the Federal money does not go they will look for funding in other areas.

Hoover asked about Alvin and said there is nothing in Alvin yet. In Cavour, Augustin said they went to Starlink. In Newald they were promised for three years for internet and nothing.

Headson from Lincoln questioned the payments they are making to the County and not getting any internet, which was supposed to be done with Phase I.

Shafer asked everyone to be patient because Bug Tussel inherited a mess from the former contractor. He said with ARDOF Charter pulled out after the bids went through and they were awarded the contracts to get fiber in for Forest County residents.

Chairman Vanzile (SCC) said they applied for 17.2 million in grant funding and have made it past the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase. They are looking for partnership because Forest County is underserved. The BEAD funding is not available until 2025 and Charter never showed up to talk to them until too late.

Jason Neilitz told the committee this process started almost 2 years ago and expressed the Human problem it is not to have broadband in Forest County. He spoke with the Governor last month he said Charter pulling out of ARDOF hurt the County for any grants during the times they received the funding and then pulled out.

#### DISCUSSION/REVIEW OF PROJECT TIED TO GENERAL OBLIGATION DEBT

As the money tied to the general obligation debt is drawn down the County needs to be notified of all being drawn down from the \$11 million with invoices, etc. The Chair will review all draws on a bi-weekly or monthly basis. The same will go for the ARPA funding on the second project.

#### UPDATE FROM VISIT FOREST COUNTY CEO – CHRIS SHAFER

Nothing that has not already been discussed.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

None

#### FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS/SETTING NEXT MEETING

Nothing at this time

#### ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Shafer to adjourn, second by Chaney. All present voting AYE. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:09 p.m.

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