

KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
BROADBAND AND ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES

December 7, 2015

Kandiyohi County Health & Human Services Building, Willmar

Present: Mark Boeschen, Travis Bonnema, Dean Bouta, Bruce DeBlieck, Scott Froemming, Larry Handlin, Linda Kacher, Larry Kleindl, Mike Malone, Jean Marthaler, Les Nelson and Donn Winckler

Excused: Donna Boonstra, Kathy Dillon, Wes Hompe, Justin Mattern, David Sisser and Paul Smith

Guests: Ann Treacy, Blandin Foundation and Brian Mort

EDC Staff: Connie Schmoll, Business Development Specialist

Secretarial: Nancy Birkeland, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc. (LAA)

Chairperson Dean Bouta called the meeting to order at approximately 12:08 p.m.

MINUTES—

IT WAS MOVED BY Les Nelson, SECONDED BY Larry Kleindl, to approve the minutes of the November 2, 2015 meeting as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Feasibility study. Chairperson Bouta reported on the presentation given to the Kandiyohi County Board of Commissioners and the request for matching funds to do a feasibility study, which the Board approved at \$25,000. Donn Winckler reported the grant application for a feasibility study was submitted to Blandin Foundation, which included a letter of commitment from Federated Telephone Cooperative (FTC) for \$12,500. Winckler and Les Nelson contacted four providers that have potential to complete the engineering portion of the study and would subcontract for the marketing portion of the study. Bids came in between \$50,000 to \$80,000. The budget included in the application was \$60,000 for the study plus \$2,500 for other costs and overages. Winckler has obtained sample Requests for Proposals (RFPs) from Northfield and Upper Minnesota Valley Regional Development Commission and will also consult with Kevin Beyer of FTC. Connie Schmoll reviewed the application and the commitments for this committee and the county to do certain things (see attached). Schmoll thanked Winckler and Nelson for their work on the application. Monthly reports will be required from the feasibility consultant. Winckler noted a more complete budget and the names of this committee's members were included as attachments to the application. It may be January before this committee is notified if the grant is awarded. Winckler stated that if funding is received, one of the RFPs will be sent to Communications Network and Engineering of Fargo, which has an office in New London. This company is working on the Swift

County study. Chairperson Bouta noted this committee may need to help with the marketing part of the study. Winckler was asked to gather additional RFP samples. Chairperson Bouta, Larry Handlin, Nelson, Schmoll and Winckler will work on the RFP. Beyer of FTC will be asked to review the RFP.

NEW BUSINESS

2015 state broadband grant funding. Schmoll reported on the Border-to-Border Conference at which the attendees were informed of the state grant awards (see attached). Mark Boeschen noted it shows what this committee has experienced in that only local companies and not national telcos applied and received funding. Ann Treacy reported the state conference had more participation this year than in the past; policy makers attended this year as it was held in the Twin Cities. Conference attendees shared information and assisted each other during the conference and many cooperatives also attended. Larry Handlin noted Kandiyohi County had good representation at the conference. Both he and Betsy Bonnema were presenters. It was noted during the conference that Kandiyohi County is working hard to advance its broadband. Scott Froemming reported Rep. Dave Baker attended Kandiyohi Power Cooperative's last board meeting and appeared very motivated on local broadband. Froemming stated Minnesota's cooperatives are interested in advancing broadband. One hundred million dollars is being sought by the governor for broadband in 2016. Discussion was held on federal funds, most of which are loans, not grants. Federal mandates restrict what is done with federal funds, which was part of the discussion held with Senator Klobuchar. Chairperson Bouta reported Frontier Communications and CenturyLink accepted funds from the Connect America Fund (CAF), which is why Frontier did not apply for the state grant funds. The Universal Service Fund is also under discussion. CAF needs to be reworked. It was suggested to invite Mark Erickson of RS Fiber Cooperative to attend this committee's next meeting as to their broadband project.

Star Tribune interview. Schmoll reported Lori Studevart, a reporter with the Star Tribune, visited Kandiyohi County and interviewed local individuals. Studevart's objective was to go back to the legislative session to report how the metro and rural areas can work together when applying for funds. Larry Kleindl stated yesterday, the first of three articles was in the Sunday *Star Tribune*. Kleindl noted Studevart was here for two days covering aging population, educational gaps, housing, jobs, healthcare, the EDC, transportation and other topics that might separate the metro from rural. Yesterday's article did not mention Willmar, but set the groundwork for demographics. Schmoll spoke with Studevart about broadband issues.

Hack₂0. Schmoll reported the yellow bike and aquatic species programs are applying for the \$5,000 remaining to develop apps. Funds for developing the apps will go to an agency not an individual. Handlin noted there are two coders who live locally and will work on the bike program.

Wireless grant. Schmoll reported the wireless routers were ordered and will be installed by the end of December. The schools will be billed under one account for the data service, but United Way and CCT had to be under separate accounts.

Other. A meeting will be held with Rep. Tim Miller Tuesday, December 15 at 9:00 a.m., to give him an overview of what has happened, where this committee is now and to inform him of the need to

have consistent and ongoing funding for broadband. Chairperson Bouta, Kleindl and Linda Kacher will attend the meeting.

Kleindl reported he is meeting with an MVTW Wireless representative this afternoon. MVTW installed eight hotspots in Nobles County through its EDC as a short-term solution to get internet services until it can receive a border-to-border grant. MVTW would like to install 10 hotspots in Kandiyohi County. The hotspots, with 5 Mg speed and approximate range of one mile, would be free to users for two years. MVTW would like Kandiyohi County to pay the cost of \$1,250 per site for the two years and wants to make a presentation to the County Board with this request. After two years MVTW will determine if there is still a need or if the hotspots should be removed. Schmoll noted it supports what this committee is trying to do. Nobles County EDC wants to show it is trying to do everything possible to advance services. The number of users is unknown and it is a short-term amenity. Kleindl stated the county through this committee will determine the sites for the hotspots.

IT WAS MOVED BY Mark Boeschen, SECONDED BY Larry Handlin, that the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission Broadband and Advanced Technology Committee recommends the concept of installing 10 free hotspots by MVTW Wireless and recommends the Kandiyohi County Board of Commissioners approve the installation of 10 hotspots in Kandiyohi County at no cost to the users for two years as the installation would support the committee's goal of broadband advancement. MOTION CARRIED.

Brian Mort suggested doing more to advance the marketing of this committee's broadband efforts and showed a draft website. Chairperson Bouta noted this committee's information is shared with Vision 2040. Efforts to communicate this committee's work to the public and build their support was discussed. Committee members commented any domain name should represent this committee. Chairperson Bouta suggested the name Kandilink may be useful as people knew what that involved. Further discussion was tabled until next month.

IT WAS MOVED BY Mike Malone, SECONDED BY Linda Kacher to add Brian Mort as a member of the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission Broadband and Advanced Technology Committee. MOTION CARRIED.

NEXT MEETING—The next meeting is 12 noon, Monday, January 4, 2016, in the EDC board room, Willmar.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:08 p.m.

Blandin Foundation Application Questions

Organization Name? Kandiyohi County & City of Willmar Economic Development Commission (EDC)
What is your project's name? Kandiyohi County Robust Broadband Network Feasibility Study

Proposal Overview

Start Date? January 2, 2016

End Date? September 30, 2016

Geographic and Project Summary?

The Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission (EDC) in cooperation with Kandiyohi County and the EDC's Broadband and Advanced Technology Committee plan to conduct a Broadband Feasibility study that includes the entire County of Kandiyohi. The goal of the study will be to provide the necessary information needed to install Fiber to the Premise (FTTP) broadband network to all residents and businesses with-in Kandiyohi County through a public/private partnership with area providers. Kandiyohi County, with its challenge of many lakes, topography issues, areas of low density, and funding constraints, may require a phased-in process of broadband deployment. The proposed project for a feasibility study will help in determining how to expand affordable robust high-speed broadband service throughout Kandiyohi County

Budget Summary

Fiscal Year Start? January 1, 2016

Fiscal Year End? December 31, 2015

Total Project Budget? \$62,500

Amount Requested from Blandin Foundation? \$25,000

Proposal Narrative

Organizational Information

Brief summary of organizational history, current mission, activities, and accomplishments

Kandiyohi County and the City of Willmar operate the Economic Development Commission (EDC) through a Joint Powers Agreement. The EDC consists of two boards, the Joint Powers Board and the Joint Operations Board. Kandiyohi County and the city of Willmar each appoint three elected representatives to serve on the Joint Powers Board.

The EDC's Joint Operations Board of Directors consists of seven members appointed by the Joint Powers Board of Commissioners and includes representatives from communities throughout the county, education providers, business owners and consumer groups. The EDC has a number of standing committees, including the Broadband and Advanced Technology Committee.

The mission of the EDC is "to be a catalyst for economic growth of the greater Kandiyohi County area." The EDC helps with technical assistance, business counseling, location, referrals to other business assistance entities and finding appropriate funding avenues for business needs. The EDC also works with the County's local units of government to help provide infrastructure and amenities that are needed to create an environment for businesses to prosper.

Why is your organization best positioned to do this work?

Kandiyohi County and the City of Willmar have created the EDC to be the primary organization to create, recruit, retain and expand businesses within the County. Part of this mission is to help ensure that Kandiyohi County has quality infrastructure and amenities (which includes a robust high speed internet service countywide) needed for our business institutions and residents.

The EDC works with a large number of county partners in working on its various projects and is well situated to work with all providers on a viable broadband network solution within the County. The EDC's Broadband and Advanced

Technology Committee has 18 current members made up of industries, businesses, banks, institutions and government. This committee will assist staff in assuring that a high-quality robust broadband network feasibility study will be conducted.

The EDC has been grateful for the assistance the Blandin Foundation has given to the organization in the past. The EDC has shown it can manage broadband initiatives that have created successful, highly desirable outcomes throughout the county.

What steps does your organization take to include a broad range of perspectives?

In order to achieve maximum connectivity with our constituents the EDC is formatted with two boards and numerous committees:

The Joint Powers Board is the EDC's 'senior' board and is made up of the two elected bodies that created the Joint Powers Agreement. Kandiyohi County and the City of Willmar each have three members on the six-member Joint Powers Board. These members are each elected to their respective board or council by the general public and are accountable for EDC activities as part of their elected position.. The Joint Powers Board determines the 'strategic objectives' of the EDC.

The Joint Operations Board is the board that deals more closely with the daily activities of the EDC. The Joint Operations Board consists of seven individuals appointed by the Joint Powers Board representing all geographic areas of the county. The Joint Operations Board makes the 'tactical' decisions on planning that will achieve the strategic objectives determined by the Joint Powers Board.

The EDC has several standing committees to give specific advice and direction to its goals and objectives:

- Agriculture and Renewable Energy Development (Ag)
- Broadband and Advanced Technology
- Business Retention, Expansion/Recruitment* (BRE/R)
- Finance
- Marketing and Public Relations

The EDC is responsive to appointing 'task forces' that address specific issues for a limited period of time, as well.

*The BRE/R Committee has implemented several business surveys in the county:

- Agriculture producers—EDC staff and Ag Committee volunteers visited at least two Ag producers in each Kandiyohi County Township
- Countywide (other than Spicer and New London)—interviewed 60 service businesses and 22 manufacturing businesses to determine their satisfaction with area business conditions
- Provided financial assistance and physically assisted the cities of Spicer and New London in conducting their own BRE survey
- Currently assisting the city of Atwater with its BRE survey

We have assisted with marketing enhancement programs with a few of our county's cities:

- New London
- Raymond
- Spicer

And have hosted:

- a workshop for Entrepreneurs, Inventors and Innovators;
- a Marketing Your Community seminar for all Kandiyohi County cities

- business Internet seminars, including basic website set-up and marketing, website optimization, E-Commerce, social media and doing business online
- various listening sessions and public meetings to collect public opinion

Identify specific steps your organization takes to improve organizational effectiveness?

The EDC has had three ‘Five-Year Plans. The plans determine the condition of the macro and micro economy combined with the determinants of local companies, production of raw materials and potential access to markets.

The EDC conducts an Annual Planning Session where the Joint Operations Board and Joint Powers Board meet with staff to determine the next year’s strategy to meet the overall EDC objectives. The Annual Planning Session is conducted by a professional facilitator.

The Executive Director is reviewed annually by the two boards with feedback given to the director regarding his/her past year’s performance.

II. Purpose of Gant

Background

Describe how your proposal supports the goals of the Robust Broadband Networks Grant and supports the communities’ technology goals?

1) A recent Business Retention and Expansion Study (November 2014 – December 2014) conducted in Kandiyohi County revealed inadequate broadband access and speed as a critical issue affecting the ability of businesses to compete and be successful. In response to the study, community and business leaders selected projects to move forward. One of the selected projects is to expand broadband availability in Kandiyohi County with specific goals of survey, document specifics, assess utilization, train, and submit grants to improve access and speed.

2) The Willmar Lakes Area Vision 2040 Group has been birthed to develop an actionable plan to help the Willmar Lakes Area become an even better place to live, work, and play by 2040. Goal number one for Vision 2040 is to, “Attract and Retain Newcomers to the Willmar Lakes Area.” The committee members identified access to broadband as a critical infrastructure issue to attract and retain newcomers and have since started a subgroup to work in conjunction of the EDC’s Broadband and Advanced Technology Committee to move this plan forward.

The EDC plans to hire and work with professional consultants to provide the needed information to install an FTTP broadband system that covers the entire county. Hard factual data must be gathered related to technology alternatives, costs and market opportunities that will be provided in this feasibility study to allow us and the providers we work with the needed information to move forward in making the necessary broadband network improvements in Kandiyohi County. Some key questions the broadband feasibility study answer include:

- What is the competitive Telecommunications environment in the County?
- What Telecommunication services and type of infrastructure are currently in place and what is needed?
- What is the market demand?
- What are the preferred technology options?
- Who are our likely private sector partners and how can we best proceed with needed partnerships?
- Which financial components will show how investments will cash flow?
- How can we best combine private and public sector efforts to have successful collaborations to achieve our goals?

How will this project include a broad range of perspectives in decision making?

The RFP for the market study portion of the feasibility study will be written to ensure that a broad range of perspectives will be gathered. This will include data and information from telecommunication providers, businesses, farmers,

institutions such as education and health care, government entities and residents. The study will be designed to gather data and factual information from as many sources as possible. The EDC's Broadband and Advanced Technology Committee members represent a wide scope of business, institution, government and other interests that will be a strong part of the study's process and decision making.

List key relationships in place/need to be developed to make the project a success

The EDC has formed a partnership with Federated Telephone Cooperative (FTC) to help pay for the match for this broadband network feasibility study. FTC is very interested in expanding its services into the county after it deploys service within Swift County. FTC received a \$4.9 million State Broadband Grant this November to build fiber infrastructure in Swift County. While FTC is a financial partner in the study, it is aware and most agreeable that the study will include discussions with Kandiyohi County's current providers and study results will be open to all to utilize. The EDC will actively work with FTC, while at the same time hold discussions with the County's current providers to discuss the feasibility study findings and encourage their participation in expanding a robust high-speed broadband network.

Federated Telephone Cooperative and Farmers Mutual Telephone Company share the same staff, while being completely separate organizations. The employee group to both, ACIRA, has a great deal of recent experience and a solid track record with deploying passive optical high speed fiber robust broadband networks in rural Minnesota counties.

FTC's CEO, Kevin Beyer, informed us he has had experience working with a couple of "trusted" consulting firms and is confident they would provide the needed technical/engineering portion of the feasibility study. There will be a Request for Proposals (RFP) sent out to a minimum of four consulting engineering firms to do the required feasibility study components. As a couple of the trusted firms do not do marketing studies, the RFP will allow consulting firms to sub-contract for the required market analysis work. The EDC has a list of consulting firms to include in the RFPs and has discussed the project with several of these organizations. The RFPs of previous Broadband Feasibility Study recipients have been secured for ease in creating one for the Kandiyohi County project.

The EDC will also utilize the talents of its Broadband and Advanced Technology Committee members, as well as Kandiyohi County and many other local partners to help out to make sure the study will be successful. There is currently a wide range of support for the need to improve broadband service throughout the county.

B. Implementation

What are the goals of the project?

The overall goal of the project is to conduct a feasibility study which will provide information needed for a broadband provider to install an FTTP broadband system to the entire county. This will assist our businesses and residents in bringing a digitally connected community through a world class, next generation broadband network.

Using informational maps from "Connect Minnesota," and the County's GIS department, we have determined there are 7,653 buildings (housing units and businesses) that are currently under and unserved by the state's definition of high speed broadband. The map data shows there is an additional 13,393 buildings in what is considered served areas, however, we feel there are some areas of the map that could be contested.

The broadband provider will use the feasibility study as a tool to perform due diligence, financial analysis and return on investment scenarios that will fit into the individual business plan of the broadband provider for the build-out of Kandiyohi County.

There are issues that need to be examined in Kandiyohi County, including sparseness and geographic density of population, topographic concerns, including lakes, streams and elevations and financial constraints. The build-out may require a mix of technologies and infrastructure may be performed on a phased-in basis.

What strategies and activities will be employed to achieve these goals?

After a funding stream has been established, the EDC will make available to the general public and to broadband feasibility study 3rd party vendors, a Request for Proposal (RFP). The RFPs will be carefully developed with input from current county broadband providers, possible new providers, the EDC, the EDC Broadband and Advanced Technology Committee, and other interested parties. The RFP will be comprehensive in nature and will provide, at a minimum, the following headings:

- General overview of the study
- Background information, as well as goals of the study
- Qualification requirements of 3rd party vendors
- Scope of Work requirements
 - Identify providers/service offerings
 - Preliminary fiber network designs showing aerial-buried-conduit. The mapping project will include locations of premises with an overlaid fiber route and possible alternative technologies.
 - Define service area/conceptual fiber route
 - Collect analyze/current and potential subdivision growth
 - Map showing current providers, current fiber routes/residents-businesses
 - Capital costs of construction with materials
 - Presentation of results//financial reports/engineering
- A Roles and Responsibilities Section
- Insurance Requirements
- Proposal Response Format including, but not limited to, contact information, firm profile, experience/references, key personnel, Statement of Objectivity, approach, deliverables, timeline, any additional information and contract price.

A Marketing Study/Survey will also have to be authored. The Marketing Study will include, but not be limited to:

- List of current providers and broadband offerings
- Business inventory/employment/industry, etc.
- Map(s) showing general locations of residences and businesses along with possible growth areas
- Utilization of focus group(s) and random sample, unbiased survey of residences, businesses, government, healthcare, and education to determine a likely market penetration rate and to evaluate relevant community uses of the network

Once a consultant is secured and a timeline established, EDC staff will require that the feasibility consultant provide monthly updates on progress of the study throughout the process.

Who will carry out these activities? Do they have the requisite skills and experience?

Kandiyohi County, through the EDC, is a Blandin Foundation Minnesota Intelligent Rural Communities Partner and Demonstration Community. The EDC has performed well with grant funds and used Blandin grant funding with great fiduciary responsibility. The EDC has annual governmental audits performed. The EDC governing boards and committees are engaged and knowledgeable about local affairs and needs. EDC staff members are well educated and experienced and have the skills, knowledge and abilities to provide a successful outcome to the project. See attached resume. The EDC Broadband and Advanced Technology Committee's membership is compiled of individuals from telecommunication, agriculture, technology and healthcare industries. They are knowledgeable about broadband needs and issues and meet regularly to discuss broadband strategies. Committee members are listed in the attachments.

The Mid-Minnesota Development Commission (MMDC) will also provide professional technical assistance as requested on a pro-bono or limited cost basis. The MMDC staff has an extensive history of grants administration, fiscal agency

hosting, and providing assistance with successful outcomes. MMDC staff also serve on the EDC's Broadband and Advanced Technology Committee.

The EDC has obtained a list of Broadband Feasibility Study Consultants and has been in contact with consultants and current broadband providers to establish a cost "range" of the project. Many of the consultants that would receive the RFP are already working in other counties of Minnesota.

The feasibility consultants will be vetted on their professional histories of performance and their abilities to deliver a complete and useable product in a timely manner. References will be checked and former authored products will be reviewed.

FTC experienced staff, including its CEO, Kevin Beyer, will be able to provide a vast amount of knowledge in helping prepare RFP documents and vetting consultants who submit responses to the RFPs. The project is benefited by this public/private partnership.

The project will be coordinated by EDC staff, MMDC staff and the EDC Broadband and Advanced Technology Committee. There will be monthly project timeline updates submitted by the feasibility consultant.

What are the long-term strategies (if applicable) for sustaining this effort?

This is considered to be a short-term process and project. The timeline includes:

- Completing and providing RFP's to consultants: 2 weeks
- Consultant analyzing RFP and responding 3 weeks
- EDC analyzing proposals and selecting consultant 2 weeks
- Consultant completing feasibility study 12-18 weeks
- **ENTIRE PROJECT TIMELINE 19 – 25 weeks**

The long-term strategy will provide a comprehensive feasibility study that will serve as an economic development and community development tool to be used by a broadband provider or providers to bring FTTP broadband to the entire county. The EDC will facilitate discussions with the private providers to share results and help initiate plans to move forward. The EDC and Kandiyohi County will continue to push for legislative action to increase funding in the Border-to-Border Broadband Development Grant Program, make applications to this program, and seek out other sources for funds needed to proceed with implementation of a robust broadband network throughout Kandiyohi County.

III. Assessment

Describe what success looks like and how you will measure success?

- The completed Broadband Feasibility Study will produce the needed meaningful factual data and information for Kandiyohi County, the EDC, FTC and any other private industry partners to be able to reach the needed decisions to move forward in implementing an affordable robust FTTP broadband network. This will include information on what level of investments, grants, and/or public subsidy is required to secure private providers to move forward on implementation. Success will almost certainly need to come in phases as implementing county-wide service at one time will be financially infeasible given the limits of grant dollars needed to assist in making the project viable.

Some of the results we are looking for in the feasibility study are:

- Knowledge of existing fiber/copper cable locations, speeds, and vendors
- Pre-engineering and network design

- Deployment options
- Comprehensive cost estimates
- Internet service providers that will partner and help the County move forward with expanding broadband services
- Determining the areas and stages of deployment most feasible to eventually cover all of Kandiyohi County.

How will you know you've met your project goals?

The project goals will be met when the partners have secured a study report that outlines the marketing analysis, preliminary engineering, operations planning, financial modeling and business planning information necessary for Kandiyohi County, FTC and other potential ISP partners to determine how to expand affordable robust high-speed broadband service throughout Kandiyohi County.

The study will lead to an implementation plan that is acceptable to the Kandiyohi County Board and leads to approval of financial support as necessary. The plan will have potential for use in executing agreements with FTC and/or other private industry partners and securing the essential funding to move forward with expanding broadband service to locations in the county that are currently un-served and underserved. The end result will be that there will be FTTP network throughout Kandiyohi County. At a minimum, expansion of the broadband network needs to meet state broadband objectives for all of our residents and businesses.

Give specific examples of how your project/program contributes to a healthy rural community?

In today's world, the availability of robust high-speed broadband is essential for our businesses and residents to access services and opportunities provided by digital technologies. Broadband enables residents to conduct business, receive or deliver education and healthcare, and connect to the rest of the world from their homes and offices. Areas that do not have quality broadband services have difficulty attracting businesses and workforce. Housing values increase if there is broadband service available and can be greatly harmed if service is not available.

There is a need for broadband fiber to the premise FTTP service throughout Kandiyohi County. Four recent community meetings called by area legislators and Senator Amy Klobuchar revealed community concerns including the following:

- 1) Lakes area people want to work remotely but are not finding the access and speed sufficient to do so. This includes medical doctors and new graduates who want to live in the lakes area.
- 2) New farm technology requires high speed internet. Utilizing data for making decisions about application of fertilizer and pesticides "as needed" requires timely information. Precision ag specialists such as Haug Implement would like to do processing of farm data in-house but cannot because of inadequate internet speed. Farmers report that they are putting data on flash drives and driving it into town to process. They cannot process over wireless connections.
- 3) Broadband is needed for timely transmit & process of information. Rural business managers are reporting difficulty in accessing emails, video for training, on-line markets and on-line marketing opportunities. Jennie-O Turkey Store is experiencing dead spots and speed issues when trying to push training through the internet to farm operators. Internet traceability is a big issue for turkey barn security issues.
- 4) The leaders in our schools and colleges are concerned for students who are required to utilize learning management software and video to complete assignments. A RITA (**Research and Innovative Technology Administration**) grant was received by Ridgewater to help students access the internet anytime/anywhere but that is not possible for students in areas with internet access and speed issues.
- 5) Emergency services experience communication difficulties. Internet connection needs improvement for adequate monitoring of patients at home, video chatting doctor to patient, ambulance to hospital communication and the law enforcement Next Gen System.

6) County social workers who work in the homes need to return to the office to input data because of internet access and speed issues.

7) Inadequate and inconsistent broadband can contribute to decreasing market values for homes.

8) High speed internet is a necessary ingredient to attract and keep young people in the area.

Securing affordable high-quality broadband services throughout Kandiyohi County will address and solve the stated issues and will assist in producing a higher quality of life and a healthier rural community for all of Kandiyohi County.

Explain the process to measure and document progress?

The EDC’s Broadband and Advanced Technology Committee will meet monthly to review the progress of the project including the creation and distribution of the RFP document, analysis and selection of the feasibility consultant, responding to the requests for assistance by the feasibility consultant as appropriate and with-in budget, and facilitating meetings with potential service providers. Committee meetings will include a written outline of progress on the study and a timeline of the next steps. EDC staff will communicate with the feasibility consultant to ensure provision of monthly reports.

After the feasibility study is completed, progress will be measured with each planned phase of construction of FTTP network being completed. Success will be additionally measured by the actual increased number of residents and businesses affordably utilizing the broadband services, including advancing digital inclusion throughout Kandiyohi County.

IV. Budget and Sources of Funding

Provide a statement of the amount and type of funding needed to see the project through.

To determine estimated costs for the broadband feasibility study, five consultants were contacted to discuss the study. Estimates ranged from \$50,000 to \$80,000. The \$60,000 consultant estimate is used in the attached budget. FTC is familiar with the agency the provided the \$60,000 estimate and is comfortable in their ability to provide necessary information and results.

The proposed budget of \$62,500 includes \$60,000 in estimated consultant services and \$2,500 in estimated costs for additional work including preparation of the RFP, committee meetings, public notifications or ads, meetings with private service providers, and assistance with the study.

Sources of Funding:

- The Kandiyohi County Board \$25,000
- Federated Telephone Cooperative \$12,500
- Blandin Foundation Grant \$25,000 pending
- Total \$62,500

Additional Kandiyohi County and EDC staff time, including technical services and administration, will be contributed to ensure success of the project. Kandiyohi County’s GIS system will be available to be utilized as needed. The wide diversity of skills of persons who serve on the EDC’s Broadband and Advanced Technology Committee will also be utilized as needed to assist with the project’s efforts.

Minnesota Border-to-Border Broadband Development Grant 2015 Awards

