

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

December 4, 2023

Kandiyohi County Health & Human Services Building, Willmar and Via ZOOM Video Conference

Present: Paul Bolle, Mark Boeschen, Bruce DeBlieck (via Zoom), Jesse Gislason, Jason Hulstein (via Zoom), Michelle Marotzke, Ryan Nelson (via Zoom), Rollie Nissen, David Sisser and Chuck Stranberg

Excused: Duane Anderson, Kelsey Baker, Roger Imdieke and Tony Kirby

Secretarial: Cathy Skindelien, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc.

Chairperson Mark Boeschen called the meeting to order at approximately 10:01 a.m.

MINUTES—

IT WAS MOVED BY Jesse Gislason, SECONDED BY Rollie Nissen, to approve the Minutes of the November 6, 2023 meeting as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

GRANTS—

Minnesota Line Extension Grant Update. Chair Boeschen reported the second allocation period for the Minnesota Line Extension Grant closed on November 1, 2023.

Border-to-Border Grant Applications Update. Chair Boeschen shared a presentation given to the County Board of Commissioners (see attached), updating the board on the projects authorized by this committee at the last meeting. The sole change was in Project #1, where a costing error by a Federated Telephone Cooperative (FTC) engineer resulted in a cost reduction of \$600,000, making the total ARPA funds request for the three projects \$3.403 million of the remaining \$3.5 million, leaving a balance of \$95,722. All townships approved their requested contributions except Norway Lake Township, which was not initially included in the project. It approved \$3,210; 10% of the request of \$32,100. FTC will fund the remainder.

The Border-to-Border Broadband Development Grant applications for the three projects will total \$11 million out of the \$50 million available (\$30 million for Border-to-Border grants and \$20 million for the Low-Density grants, for which Lake Lillian Township will qualify). More applicants are anticipated this round as state money is easier to work with versus federal funds. FTC has worked through engineers to determine which areas in Lake Andrew Township are serviced by TDS through the Enhanced Alternative Connect America Cost Model program. An estimated 70 homes in the South Lake Florida area may be affected. These homes will be eliminated from the project if they are already served. The State of Minnesota is aware of federal programs and understands the

situation. TDS has not responded to notifications of grant applications for the area. Border-to-Border grant applications are due on December 7th at 1:30 p.m.

REPORTS—

Digital Connection Task Force. Sarah Swedburg reported the grant applications do not address digital equity. She is working with Michelle Marotzke to include findings from the Digital Connection Task Force work that happened in 2023. The applications are 85% complete, with a few loose ends and a double check of the numbers remaining. The State has added a portal allowing work on the application in conjunction with FTC. Reminders have been sent for letters of support with good response. Minnesota Representatives Dave Baker and Dean Urdahl have submitted letters, while Senator Andrew Lang has yet to respond.

Current Local Projects

West FTTP – Federated Telephone Cooperative (FTC). Chair Boeschen reported the groundwork of the West Project is complete and FTC has turned its attention to running and splicing fiber. The first customers will be connected to service in the next few weeks, with approximately 10 customers added per day.

City of Willmar. David Sisser reported a meeting has been scheduled next week with Kyle Box, Willmar’s City Operations Director, who has taken over the Hometown Fiber project following the resignation of Planning Director Justice Walker.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:24 a.m.

NEXT MEETING—The next regular committee meeting is **10:00 a.m., Monday, January 8, 2024** at Room 2057, Kandiyohi County Health and Human Services Building, Willmar and via Zoom video conference.

Broadband Project Proposals for Round 9 of the MN Border to Border Development Grant Program

Project 1

Township	Passings	Notes
Lake Andrew	849	Includes complete township with exception of small TDS served area
Colfax <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	372	Includes complete township
Norway Lake <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	27	Passings on the route of the mainline
St Johns	35	Completes this township
Dovre <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	9	Includes a few properties we were unable to get to in the last grant
TOTAL	1292	

Costs

B2B Grant	50%	\$8,206,351.00
Federated	25%	\$4,103,176.00
County	15%	\$2,423,576.00 (\$1876/pass)
Townships	10%	\$1,679,600.00 (\$1300/pass)
TOTAL		\$16,412,703.00

