

**KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
BROADBAND AND ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
November 2, 2020
Via ZOOM Video Conference**

Present: Mark Boesch, Sonja Bogart, Donna Boonstra, Dean Bouta, Bruce DeBlicke, Jason Hulstein, Roger Imdieke, Michelle Marotzke, Rollie Nissen, Glenn Otteson, Gregg Price, Ramsey Schaffnit and David Sisser

Excused: Les Nelson

Staff: Connie Schmoll, Business Development Manager

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

Chairperson Mark Boesch called the meeting to order at approximately 12:09 p.m.

AGENDA—Added to the Agenda under New Business was item 4d, Resignation of committee member.

IT WAS MOVED BY Rollie, SECONDED BY Ramsey Schaffnit, to approve the revised Agenda. MOTION CARRIED.

MINUTES—

IT WAS MOVED BY Donna Boonstra, SECONDED BY Ramsey Schaffnit, to approve the Minutes of the October 5, 2020 meeting as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

NEW BUSINESS

CARES Funds for Broadband. Roger Imdieke reported Kandiyohi County allocated \$25,000 for broadband with \$10,000 of it going to advertise the Minnesota Rural Broadband Coalition speed test in conjunction with daylight savings time. A press release was sent to local radio stations and newspapers. KWLM radio implemented a prize drawing for anyone who registered and took the test through the radio station's website. As of Friday at 4:00 p.m., 1,000 people had registered through KWLM. A screenshot of the speed test map was taken prior to the marketing campaign starting. Ramsey Schaffnit noted a large ad in the *Lakes Area Review* relative to the speed test. Imdieke stated the *Lakes Area Review* also did a very nice article, which included an interview with Nathan Zacharias. The remaining \$15,000 allocated by the county is being used to update the engineering study for the northwest part of the county. Rollie Nissen stated \$16,000 was actually designated for the engineering study. Glenn Otteson stated the engineering study will be looked at this month.

Resignation of committee members. Chair Boeschen reported Les Nelson submitted his resignation from this committee.

IT WAS MOVED BY Roger Imdieke, SECONDED BY Rollie Nissen, to accept, with regrets, the resignation of Les Nelson from the Broadband and Advanced Technology Committee. MOTION CARRIED.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Township project update. Schmoll reported she will be attending Dovre and Mamre Township meetings and has already visited with St. Johns Township. All three agree that residents now know that they need better broadband. Nissen noted Arctander Township is still interested in participating in a project. Schmoll spoke with Kevin Beyer, who is interested in expanding the project, dependent upon cost. The maximum grant that can be received is 50% of the project or \$5 million, whichever is less. Adding additional townships will be up to the provider. Chair Boeschen questioned if the County Board would approve allocating a specific amount of funds for each township in the county for broadband. Imdieke indicated the County might, if each township also participated. He feels broadband is like infrastructure where everyone in the county pays for it. Chair Boeschen indicated it would be nice to know what kind of commitment the county is willing to do. Discussion was held on when and how to approach the County Board for funding. Imdieke suggested first obtaining champions from each township. Michelle Marotzke suggested placing signs in the yards of champions. Chair Boeschen asked what is the committee looking for in a champion? Marotzke questioned if area lake homes are being used more now during the pandemic? Real estate values may not have been pointed out during the last campaign. Schmoll stated the committee will need to decide what should come first. She believes Dave Sisser should first update his financial document and put together some cost scenarios using 50% being received from the state. Then Schmoll would like to meet with the townships and identify a champion—people may be more willing now than they were before and the survey data is now available too. Things the committee will need to work on include education, a decision on how many townships to include and get buy-in by the townships and county. Schmoll stated Kevin Beyer will join the meeting next month.

Federated Telephone Cooperative project. Schmoll asked members to obtain letters of support for the grant application. Chair Boeschen stated a timeline and list of projects will be put together. It was noted that the 25 Mbps download/3 Mbps upload speeds are the state's goals by 2022 and the goals by 2026 are 100 Mbps download/20 Mbps upload so this committee should actually be striving for the 2026 goals.

Meeker Cooperative Light & Power Association. Schmoll stated Meeker Cooperative Light & Power Association decided not to move any more forward into Kandiyohi County as it still has work to do in Meeker County, which will be its priority. When it feels ready to move more into Kandiyohi County, it will contact the EDC. Chair Boeschen reported Star Link that is in beta format is asking \$100 per month for beta testing. Gregg Price stated Star Link is satellite system with a plan of having 2,500 satellites.

Schmoll reported she received a note from Mayor Marv Calvin that a letter is being sent to the Governor's Office of Broadband Development asking for speeds of 100 Mbps download and upload. It was noted that having cities compete for broadband funding is not beneficial to Kandiyohi County. Imdieke commented if cities are included in the grant process, funding will be harder to get. Schmoll reported Rep. Dave Baker responded to the committee's letter that the state will be facing a deficit and additional funds for broadband are unlikely.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business,

IT WAS MOVED, SECONDED AND CARRIED to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:43 p.m.

NEXT MEETING—The next committee meeting is **12 noon, Monday, December 7, 2020** via ZOOM video conference.