

**KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)  
BROADBAND AND ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES  
February 6, 2017  
Kandiyohi County Health & Human Services Building, Willmar**

Present: Mark Boeschen, Travis Bonnema, Donna Boonstra, Dean Bouta, Kathy Dillon, Larry Kleindl, Michelle Marotzke, Les Nelson, David Sisser and Donn Winckler

Excused: Bruce DeBlieck, Scott Froemming, Larry Handlin and Brian Mort

Guest: Kody Aasen, Aasen Tech

Staff: Connie Schmoll, Business Development Specialist

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

Chairperson Dean Bouta called the meeting to order at approximately 12:00 p.m.

**MINUTES—**

IT WAS MOVED BY Michelle Marotzke, SECONDED BY Donna Boonstra, to approve the minutes of the January 9, 2017 meeting as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

Dean Bouta introduced Kody Aasen, who is Haug Implement's IT person and the owner of his own computer business Aasen Tech.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Capitol funding.** The committee viewed the broadband section of TPT's Almanac at the Capitol show on Immigration, First Termers, Broadband.  
(<http://www.tpt.org/almanac-at-the-capitol/episode/immigration-first-termers-broadband/>)

It was noted there was no mention of Ag during the interview. Schmoll stated Rep. Baker is committed to broadband, but has not yet shared a dollar figure.

**WildFire 5G, LLC.** Kody Aasen stated WildFire 5G is creating a wireless solution for residential users. WildFire 5G uses 2014 5<sup>th</sup> generation wireless technology similar to 5G wireless cell service. WildFire 5G intends to use UHF towers in Kandiyohi County and have an eight-mile radius. The anticipated cost for residential will be \$20 per month. The service is backed by Microsoft and they are working with firewalls and internet protection with certain sites being blocked. WildFire 5G is trying to address the industry challenges of high costs, no scalability, slow speeds and low security. WildFire 5G plans to install a pilot tower in the heart of Willmar. Repeaters will be installed for those who are outside the eight-mile range. Anyone within the range of the tower will receive 100 Mbps network speeds. If a CP cellular repeater is installed, there will be a one-time charge of \$350. Each user will have an account

and enter a MAC (media access control) address. WildFire 5G is working with two fiber suppliers, one in St. Cloud and a backup in Marshall. They hope to have the Willmar tower up in February or March 2017. Paul Deming is the lead company representative in this area. No provider uses the air rights so there are no restrictions by current providers. They will use the old UHF bands for transport to connect to a CP device. They will place access points to keep boosting the power. The service is unlimited data with no restrictions. They plan to have a weekend pass available for campers to purchase while visiting the county. They are also looking at VOIP service. Schmoll stated the first community to have WildFire 5G service is in Georgia and Willmar will be the second community. WildFire 5G heard about Willmar/Kandiyohi County from the Blandin Foundation's blog. An informational meeting will be held Monday, February 13, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. at a location to be determined.

**CTC Project/Border-to-Border Grant Award.** Schmoll noted she forwarded to the committee the PowerPoint presentation she made to the Kandiyohi County Board of Commissioners on how well the project did and being awarded the grant. CTC has been focused on completing an existing project and has not yet started focusing on Kandiyohi County. It is anticipated CTC's website will have an interactive map showing where they are digging and where they will be next. The committee recommended getting marketing material to residents in the project area now so they do not enter into long-term contracts with another provider. The map of the project area is on the EDC's website, but it is not clear enough to see the boundaries. Bouta and Schmoll noted they have both been contacted by individuals wondering if they are in the project area. Schmoll stated CenturyLink is supposed to provide the addresses it will be servicing, but no information has been received to date.

**Project work sessions/brainstorming.** It is anticipated this committee will apply for another state broadband grant next year. Larry Kleindl stated he was contacted by Stearns and Renville Counties asking if Kandiyohi County is interested in planning with them. Kleindl informed them we are working on the current grant at present. Roadblocks include additional funding and dealing with the county's incumbents, especially if they are making small progress in the county. Kleindl stated it will be difficult to do more bonding for another grant. It was recommended to reconnect with Federated Telephone Cooperative along with continued planning with CTC. The project time line is two years. Kleindl stated the first year of the bond is interest only payments and the second year includes principal. Bouta recommended committee members sign up to receive the Blandin Foundation's blogs. It was noted recent federal legislation introduced \$20 billion for broadband internet access and the digital divide. It was noted the federal speed standards are lower than the state's standards.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**—Schmoll stated because Aasen's role with WildFire 5G is sales, it would be a conflict of interest for him to be a member of this committee.

**ADJOURNMENT**—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:00 p.m.

**NEXT MEETING**—The next meeting is **12 noon, March 6, 2017**, at the Kandiyohi County Health & Human Services Building, Willmar.