

**KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
JOINT OPERATIONS BOARD OF DIRECTORS (OB)
BROADBAND AND ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
May 4, 2015
EDC Board Room, Willmar**

Present: Travis Bonnema, Dean Bouta, Bruce DeBlicek, Kathy Dillon, Wes Hompe, Larry Kleindl, Mike Malone, Jean Marthaler, Justin Mattern, Les Nelson, David Sisser and Donn Winckler

EDC Staff: Jean Spaulding, Assistant Director

Guest: Linda Mathiasen, Vision 2040, Goal 1 co-captain

Excused: Mark Boeschen and Linda Kacher

Absent: Gary Geiger, Leslie Kelly and Jonathan Marchand

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

Jean Spaulding called the meeting to order at approximately 12 noon.

MINUTES

IT WAS MOVED BY Dean Bouta, SECONDED BY Mike Malone, to approve the minutes of the April 6, 2015 meeting as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Alumnus Blandin Broadband Community. Spaulding notified the committee the EDC was approved by Blandin Foundation as an alumnus broadband community. A focus meeting was held as to potential projects that could be done with grant funds. Topics that arose from the focus meeting were wireless hot spots and additional WiFi on public transportation, Growmobile and school buses and WiFi at public parks and the Willmar Civic Center. Willmar's Continuing Education and Recreation Department suggested using funds to bridge gaps between technology and new education or formats for workforce education, however, no additional efforts have been done in this area. Committee members were asked to let Spaulding know if anyone has an interest in moving forward one of the focus areas. A 50% match is required for any project. The EDC allocated \$5,000 toward the Hackfest, but if sponsors are found and those funds are not needed, the EDC's funds could be used toward the match. A grant application will be submitted by the June deadline.

Hackfest. Spaulding reported a grant application was submitted to Blandin Foundation in April for the hackfest and \$10,000 was awarded, which will be used to complete development of any

applications started during the hackfest. The date of the hackfest is September 18-20, 2015. A planning session will be held between the partners soon. The partners would like to create a branding imagery for the event so it becomes known in the state and to create a reputation for high technology, innovation and job creation. Three to five apps are generally created during a hackfest. The plan is to give coders suggestions for app needs, but not dictate the projects. Suggestions for projects included the aquatic invasive species, healthcare and the group trying to get the area designated a bike-friendly community. Apps developed at other hackfests in the state have been tourism related, such as a trails guide. Justin Mattern will provide a list of local coders to Spaulding. Blandin Foundation will help promote the hackfest. Blandin Foundation approached five communities to host a hackfest. Redwing held its second hackfest. Spaulding will approach the CVB as to lodging for the coders, which they pay for themselves. The budget to host the hackfest is expected to be \$5,000 based on a target of 50 people. The hackfest will consist of people from the community and programmers. Friday evening is a kickoff brainstorming event to start focusing on an app. Anyone who would like to volunteer for the hackfest should inform Spaulding.

Federated Telephone Cooperative. Dean Bouta reported on a meeting, he, Spaulding and Wes Hompe attended with Federated Telephone Cooperative (FTC) as to their interest in running fiber to the home in Kandiyohi County. FTC works in partnership with a community or county. FTC is interested in Kandiyohi County, but any project is dependent upon FTC receiving a grant to complete a project in Swift County. FTC 's equipment has capacity and is built for approximately 150,000 users. FTC's return on investment is for a longer term than for a telco. FTC was provided with the total number of buildings in Kandiyohi County that are unserved or under served as shown on the Connect Minnesota map and the number of buildings on the north and south sides of Highway 12. The areas served in Kandiyohi County are essentially Charter's service area. If Charter reports one customer served in a census tract, the entire tract is noted as served. The county can dispute the Connect Minnesota map. It appears any work by FTC would be a four-stage process and they would possibly do the northwest quadrant of the county first and the southwest quadrant second. The Minnesota House of Representatives cut broadband completely out of the initial funding bill, including any funding for the Office of Broadband. Bouta emailed Rep. Pat Garofalo his opinion on wireless and about the need for services. Dave Sisser noted MVTW Wireless is providing services, but it does not meet the national standards for broadband. Spaulding noted she has shared her concerns on state funding with Rep. Dave Baker. Spaulding reported she forwarded emails from Jeff McCabe of Frontier and Jean Paulk of TDS. Some communities are bonding to install fiber rings. If the state eliminates broadband funding, it puts the burden on the local communities/counties. Larry Kleindl stated the majority of the county's voters are in the New London-Spicer and Willmar areas and are not likely to vote on a bond for a service they consider good. Bouta suggested additional conversations be held with Kandiyohi Power Cooperative. Kleindl stated the USDA is obtaining communication information. Should FTC enter Kandiyohi County, it would benefit all areas, whether served or unserved. Spaulding will be receiving the names of the state Conference Committee members, who should be emailed as to any funding concerns. A feasibility study would not be used by FTC to make its decision. Linda Kacher informed Spaulding that the Willmar City Council has a bid to replace wireless with fiber between the city and the Fire Department. New Ulm and Clara City Telephone have contracts with local schools and libraries and would possibly have an interest if there is a proven need and larger customers, in which case, a study might help.

NEW BUSINESS—There was no new business.

NEXT MEETING—The next meeting is **12 noon, Monday, June 1, 2015** in the board room at the EDC, 222 20th Street SE, Willmar.

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