

**KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)  
JOINT OPERATIONS BOARD OF DIRECTORS (OB)  
BROADBAND AND ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES  
June 1, 2015  
EDC Board Room, Willmar**

Present: Mark Boeschen, Travis Bonnema, Dean Bouta, Kathy Dillon, Linda Kacher, Larry Kleindl, Jean Marthaler, Justin Mattern, Les Nelson, David Sisser and Donn Winckler

EDC Staff: Jean Spaulding, Assistant Director

Absent: Bruce DeBlieck, Gary Geiger, Wes Hompe, Leslie Kelly, Mike Malone 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 Jean Marthaler, SECONDED BY David Sisser, to approve the minutes of the May 4, 2015 meeting as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**Alumnus Blandin Broadband Community.** Spaulding reported Blandin designated Kandiyohi County as an alumnus broadband community. Four categories on which to focus were identified: 1) knowledge workforce, 2) innovation, 3) marketing and advocacy and 4) digital inclusion. Spaulding has been meeting with Central Community Transit, New London-Spicer Schools, Willmar Schools, Willmar Community Education and Recreation for the Civic Center and the United Way of West Central Minnesota on the grant application that is due June 15. The Willmar Civic Center is hosting several events that will require WiFi and the city of Willmar does not have any improvements scheduled for the Civic Center this year. Mark Boeschen noted the infrastructure is in place and WiFi is available, but Windstream is the only provider so there are no options for 10 mg service so speed may be the issue. Ross Smeby and Steve Brisendine received an estimate of \$16,000 to have cable laid by Charter at the Civic Center. The match for this grant is approximately 30% in which the grant partners have been asked to participate. The EDC has \$5,000 allocated to this grant and the hackfest, but it appears there may be private sector sponsors for the hackfest.

**Hackfest.** Spaulding reported the Hackfest will be held September 18-20, 2015 at WORKUP. The first evening will include a brainstorming session to determine what project will be worked on during the event. The planning committee is looking for community-based applications. The main goal for the EDC and its partners in hosting the hackfest is to showcase the community as

technology-based community with the needed workforce. The second objective is to give Ridgewater College and its students exposure to companies that are looking to hire in the technology-based area. It is hoped other MnSCU students will attend the hackfest. The third objective is to have actual applications developed. The attendees of the hackfest will determine what will be the format of the applications. The planning committee is meeting again tomorrow. Blandin Foundation has approved a \$10,000 grant for the EDC to complete any applications started during the hackfest. Three to four applications are typical; Spaulding is hoping for four to five. The event is being budgeted for 50 participants. Anyone interested in being involved should inform Spaulding.

**Legislative update.** Spaulding heard broadband could be a part of the special session and provided the names of the legislators to contact.

**Federated Telephone Cooperative.** Spaulding reported she spoke with Kevin Beyer of Federated Telephone Cooperative (FTC) on the next steps to keep Kandiyohi County moving along. Beyer feels the next step is to consider writing a grant application to Blandin for a feasibility study as to where and how would be the best approach to deploy fiber in Kandiyohi County. The majority of the Blandin broadband grants have been between \$40,000 to \$50,000. Beyer indicated FTC would split the 50% grant match with Kandiyohi County. The study would help FTC make a plan. Dean Bouta noted Kandiyohi County has more lakes and population density than FTC is used to. The Regional Development Commission wrote the applications for Big Stone County for the Blandin feasibility grant and state border to border grant. Donn Winckler will try to obtain a copy of the applications to use as a sample. Little Crow Telemedia has a contract to do connections for the schools and public libraries, which is being laid along Highway 23 in Clara City. Approximately 10 years ago, Scott County identified how important internet was to government services and invested in their own fiber system to all government buildings creating a looped system. Scott County fronted the money to deploy the big capacity fiber and when they found they had enough capacity, they opened it up to the private sector to lease off the dark fiber. Scott County is expanding its rings and deploying in areas where they are wanted. FTC's equipment has capacity for approximately 150,000 users and would likely deploy first in the northwest or southwest quadrants of Kandiyohi County. Spaulding provided information on what Annandale was attempting to do in the last legislative session. Bouta noted the grants are available to any provider that wants to apply for them and all area providers were asked to participate and all declined. The feasibility studies are made public, but ownership of the study would need to be investigated. Dependent on the special session and determination of state broadband funds, FTC plans to have its grant application for Swift County final by August and would then work with Kandiyohi County.

**NEXT MEETING**—The next meeting is **12 noon, Monday, July 6, 2015** in the meeting room at WORKUP, 1601 Technology Drive NE, Willmar.

**ADJOURNMENT**—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:06 p.m.