

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

August 7, 2023

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

Present: Duane Anderson, Kelsey Baker, Mark Boeschen, Paul Bolle, Jesse Gislason, Jason Hulstein (via Zoom), Roger Imdieke, Tony Kirby (via Zoom), Ryan Nelson (via Zoom), Rollie Nissen and Chuck Stranberg

Excused: Bruce DeBlieck, Michelle Marotzke and David Sisser

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

Chairperson Mark Boeschen called the meeting to order at approximately 10:02 a.m.

MINUTES—

IT WAS MOVED BY Chuck Stranberg, SECONDED BY Rollie Nissen, to approve the Minutes of the July 10, 2023 meeting as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

NEW BUSINESS—There was no new business.

GRANTS—

Grant Update. The State of Minnesota has not announced an application acceptance date for the next round of Border-to-Border Broadband Development grants. Because announcements are normally made at least 60 days in advance, the earliest acceptance date will occur in October or later.

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds. Kandiyohi County has \$3.186 million in ARPA funds remaining for broadband projects. Included in this total are the 12 properties in St. Johns Township approved for funding at the last meeting and \$35,000 approved for New Vision Foundation.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS—

St. Johns Township Extended Services. Federated Telephone Cooperative (FTC) has identified as many as 30 addresses within the West Project that were part of a Rural Digital Opportunity Fund project that didn't materialize, including the 12 properties approved for funding at the last meeting. Kevin Beyer, General Manager of FTC, proposed the additional 18 properties be approved for funding in the same manner as the previous 12 to avoid leaving gaps in the West Project area. St. Johns Township approved the addition of funds for these addresses, while the other townships are aware of the situation but haven't agreed to additional funding. The

majority of these addresses are in St. Johns and Dovre Townships. Kelsey Baker reported the county is working with Beyer to finalize the contract for the West Project. It will go to the Board of Commissioners for approval on August 15, 2023.

IT WAS MOVED BY Roger Imdieke, SECONDED BY Duane Anderson, to recommend to the Kandiyohi County Board of Commissioners that it approve matching funds of \$2,192.85 for up to 18 additional addresses within the West Project area, for a total not to exceed \$39,471.30. MOTION CARRIED.

Updates on Additional Potential Projects. Chair Boesch provided a list of potential projects, including Lake Andrew, Colfax, Genessee, Fahlun, Kandiyohi and Lake Lillian Townships. FTC and Vibrant Broadband are the anticipated providers, with FTC handling Lake Andrew and Colfax Townships, and Vibrant Broadband handling the remaining four townships. After township contributions and a 50% match from the state, the projects total \$3.464 million, which is slightly higher than the remaining ARPA funds available from the county. If Colfax Township were excluded the total would be \$3.008 million and additional funds would not be required. Southwestern Kandiyohi County was excluded from this round of projects due to insufficient funds and lack of interest in the area. Federal funding may become available through the Broadband Equity, Access & Deployment program. This program will provide funds to the state, which will be responsible for disbursement. The six townships in the list of potential projects probably wouldn't qualify for these funds. Colfax Township officials understand that other areas may need to be completed before a project can get to them. Lake Andrew and Genessee Townships have been the most vocal so they became priorities. It was suggested that the county be asked to cover Colfax Township with funding other than ARPA funds. Regarding the excluded southwest portion of the county, Imdieke commented that fixed-based wireless internet works better in the southern part of the county due to fewer lakes and trees, making projects less critical. The general consensus was to move forward with the proposed projects in the six townships.

REPORTS—

Digital Connection Task Force. Sarah Swedburg and Michelle Marotzke worked at a digital connection booth at a Rockin' Robbins concert. A map showing broadband projects in Kandiyohi County was displayed and attendees were asked to complete a four-question survey about internet access. Several responses were received. The survey will also be offered at the county booth during the Kandiyohi County Fair.

West FTTP – Federated Telephone Cooperative (FTC). The West Project is moving along with the first step in the process, conduit installation, which is complete in St. Johns Township. The project is scheduled to be completed by the end of the year.

City of Willmar. The contract with Hometown Fiber remains under evaluation and will be taken to the City Council in the near future.

Vibrant ReConnect Project. Vibrant Broadband's ReConnect project, which includes parts of Burbank, Roseville and Irving Townships, will start next year and take one year to complete.

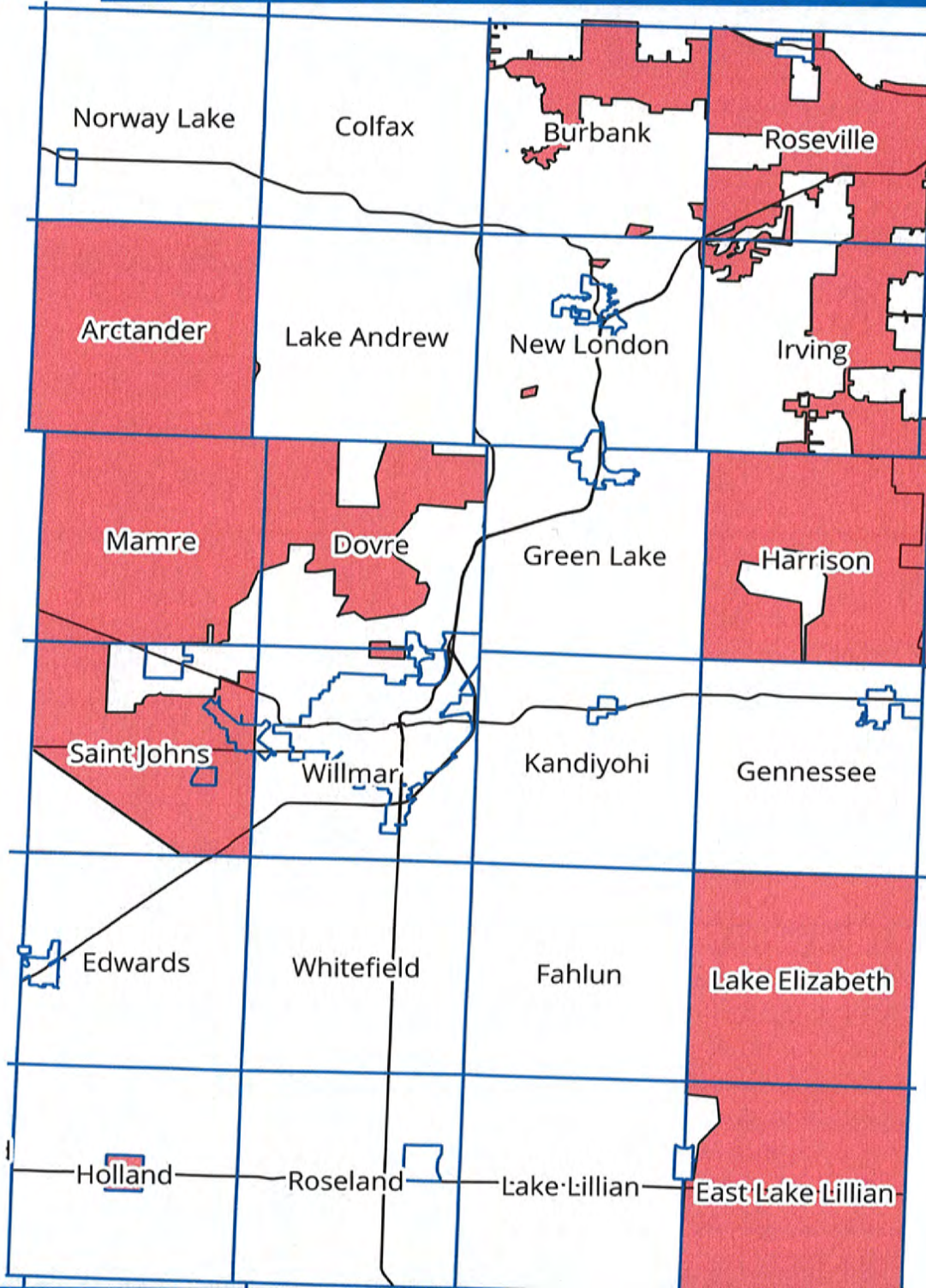
Vibrant Border-to-Border Project. Plans are to complete Harrison Township this year and Lake Elizabeth and East Lake Lillian Townships next year.

Take rates were discussed. Providers are awarded dollars from the state on every property that signs up for installation. FTC was expecting approximately 40 properties to decline, but the actual number was over 100, reducing the funds coming from the state. The township leaders are aware of this issue and will encourage everyone to sign up.

Line extension grants are in the two-month phase of identifying interested providers.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:58 a.m.

NEXT MEETING—The next regular committee meeting is **10:00 a.m., Monday, September 11, 2023** at Room 2057, Kandiyohi County Health and Human Services Building, Willmar and via Zoom video conference.



7 Projects Completed + 4 Projects In Progress

141st Ave NE (Charter)
199th Ave NE (Charter)
30th Ave NW (Charter)
Riverwood Cir (Charter)
Prinsburg (Arvig)
Hawick (Vibrant)

Long Lake (Vibrant)
West (Federated)
Harrison (Vibrant)
Southeast (Vibrant)
ReConnect—Northeast (Vibrant)

| | Passings | Total Cost | Cost per passing | ISP Pct | ISP Input | LEFT | State Pct | State | LEFT | | Twsp Amt | Twshp Total | LEFT | left pass |
|--------------|----------|-----------------|------------------|---------|----------------|----------------|-----------|----------------|----------------|------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|------------|
| LA | 1048 | \$12,319,753.52 | \$ 11,755.49 | 26% | \$3,141,537.15 | \$9,178,216.37 | 49% | \$6,036,679.22 | \$3,141,537.15 | \$2,997.65 | \$ 1,000.00 | \$1,048,000.00 | \$2,093,537.15 | \$1,997.65 |
| Colfax | 228 | \$ 2,680,251.72 | \$ 11,755.49 | 26% | \$ 683,464.19 | \$1,996,787.53 | 49% | \$1,313,323.34 | \$ 683,464.19 | \$2,997.65 | \$ 1,000.00 | \$ 228,000.00 | \$ 455,464.19 | \$1,997.65 |
| Genessee | 188 | \$ 1,600,000.00 | \$ 8,510.64 | 25% | \$ 400,000.00 | \$1,200,000.00 | 50% | \$ 800,000.00 | \$ 400,000.00 | \$2,127.66 | \$ 300.00 | \$ 56,400.00 | \$ 343,600.00 | \$1,827.66 |
| Fahlun | 370 | \$ 1,500,000.00 | \$ 4,054.05 | 25% | \$ 375,000.00 | \$1,125,000.00 | 50% | \$ 750,000.00 | \$ 375,000.00 | \$1,013.51 | \$ 300.00 | \$ 111,000.00 | \$ 264,000.00 | \$ 713.51 |
| Kandiyohi | 275 | \$ 1,560,000.00 | \$ 5,672.73 | 25% | \$ 390,000.00 | \$1,170,000.00 | 50% | \$ 780,000.00 | \$ 390,000.00 | \$1,418.18 | \$ 300.00 | \$ 82,500.00 | \$ 307,500.00 | \$1,118.18 |
| Lake Lillian | 93 | \$ 1,460,000.00 | \$ 15,698.92 | 25% | \$ 365,000.00 | \$1,095,000.00 | 75% | \$1,095,000.00 | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - | \$ - |

\$3,008,637.15 wo/ colfax
 \$3,464,101.34 w/ colfax

