

Lincoln County Broadband Commission Meeting Minutes

Meeting Details: **Thursday, July 24, 2025**

6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

Lincoln County Service Center (801 N. Sales Street Merrill, WI 54452)

County Board Room (#255/257/260)

Online Access: <https://meet.google.com/bjz-oiso-gpx>

Action Team Attendees (6/9 total): Tom Backen (Vice Chair), ~~Jennifer Bishop~~, Sara Guild (Secretary), Amber Lambrecht, Clyde Nelson, ~~Heidi O'Hare~~, ~~Amanda Patterson~~, Earl Welker, Ken Wickham (Chair)

Other Attendees (2 total): Travis Spoehr, Chet Strebe* (NTC)

**Participated online (1 total)*

1. Call to Order – 6:30 pm by Wickham

Action Team Quorum = 5 (Backen, Guild, Nelson, Welker, Wickham)

Arrived after call to order = Amber L (6:33 pm; new member)

2. Welcome & Introductions

Postponed to Lambrecht's arrival during Item 5.

3. Public Comment - None

4. Review & Consider Approval of Prior LCBC Meeting Minutes – June 19, 2025

Welker/Nelson motioned to approve the June 19, 2025, minutes as presented; motion carried.

5. Consider Nominations for LCBC Action Team Member

Wickham reported that two people expressed interest in the open Action Team seat vacated by Gordon Sennet. The first was Laurie Ollhoff, Executive Director for the T.B. Scott Free Library in Merrill and a regular LCBC participant. The second was Amber Lambrecht, Vice President for CWAV, LLC. She lives on the southern border of Lincoln County and runs CWAV with her husband; they install and service Starlink satellite systems, primarily in rural central Wisconsin. Wickham read a short email statement from Lambrecht that outlined her personal passion for supporting internet service access for all people, especially those in underserved rural areas.

6:33 pm – Lambrecht arrival

Upon her arrival, Lambrecht further clarified her interest in joining the Action Team and answered questions from attendees about her business and her familiarity with Lincoln County. Wickham and Guild also reiterated the primary goals, activities, and criteria of the LCBC and its Action Team members.

MOTION: Backen/Nelson nominated Amber Lambrecht to the LCBC Action Team for a three-year term ending in 2028; motion carried.

6. Monthly Updates from LCBC Leadership & Partners

a. Commission Chair

Wickham and Guild responded to multiple queries this month from residents seeking updates on internet service timelines, especially from people who observed infrastructure going into the ground near their addresses.

Guild also thanked Wickham for his assistance in providing information for the recent article that was published in both the Tomahawk Leader and Merrill Foto News. The Action Team commended both Wickham and Guild for their roles in developing such an informative and timely article.

b. Public Service Commission (PSC)

Leonard was unavailable, so Guild provided a brief update on recent BEAD program activities. The new Benefit of the Bargain (BOB) round opened in June. After the “Letters of Intent” phase ended on June 30, a total of 41 internet service providers (ISPs) were approved to apply for BEAD funds, including both Frontier and Bertram Communications. BOB Round 1 opened July 17 and will close on July 28. In August, the PSC will review and score all applications and take any necessary steps to develop a final proposal that brings internet service to all qualifying service locations (BSLs). Guild also noted that 41 BSLs were removed from the list of “serviceable locations” in Lincoln County because they are now considered “served” using the new BOB parameters; Spoehr offered to try to identify exactly where they are located. Attendees discussed various questions related to the new BEAD process and scoring criteria.

c. *Internet Service Providers (ISPs)*

i. *Charter RDOF Project Implementation*

Crawford was unavailable due to a family commitment. The current Charter RDOF timeline map is now available on the website; a link was included in the July LCBC meeting notification email.

ii. *Other ISPs - NONE*

d. *Action Team Members - NONE*

7. Digital Pathways Project

a. *Develop key stakeholders outreach list & meetings plan*

Guild displayed a spreadsheet Wickham created based on recommendations from UW-Extension listing various categories of people/organizations that the LCBC may want to engage with as part of their stakeholder outreach process. She reiterated that the goal of the stakeholder outreach meetings will be to identify common issues related to internet service & technology utilization in Lincoln County and then use that information to develop specific goals and actions to help mitigate those issues. Attendees reviewed each category and suggested names and/or organizations for each one. Guild will work with Wickham and Backen to clean up the list and add more details. It will then be shared via email with the rest of the Action Team for additional input. The final list will be reviewed at the August meeting, at which time the LCBC will also develop a plan for executing the stakeholder engagement meetings, including creating a list of key questions.

8. Future LCBC Meetings Information

a. *Future Agenda Topic Suggestions*

The August LCBC meeting will include a review of the final stakeholders list and a discussion on how to execute the stakeholder outreach meetings.

b. *Confirmation of Next Commission Meeting Date/Time/Location*

The next Lincoln County Broadband Commission meeting will be held on Thursday, August 28, at 6:30 pm in the Lincoln County Service Center; online access will be provided.

9. Meeting Adjournment – Meeting adjourned by Wickham at 8:30 pm.

Minutes Approved: 08/28/2025 by LCBC, recorded by SG