

Lincoln County Broadband Commission Meeting
6:30 PM, Tuesday, October 24, 2023
Room 255/257/260, Lincoln County Service Center
801 N. Sales Street Merrill, WI 54452

Meeting ID: meet.google.com/vvz-szuh-ipi

Phone Numbers: 0266-283-862

PIN: 419 571 710#

Attendance: Ken Wickham, Elsa Duranceau, Pat Voermans, Gary Hartwig, Bill Bialecki, Tom Geiger, Earl Welker

Virtual: Renee Krueger, Jerome Ziegelbauer

- 1) Call to order @ 6:31pm
- 2) Introductions
- 3) Approve Minutes Motioned by Gary Hartwig, 2nd by Pat Voermans
 - Approved unanimous, yes.
- 4) Recommendations, Comments, and/or changes to the Draft Broadband Plan – All
 - North Central Regional Planning Commission would like our feedback re: the draft plan
 - We need a meeting where we explain what the draft plan and the maps mean. We can have a presentation about it.
 - Do we have the info re: how many service providers are in Lincoln Co? How many households do they service?
 - Is Frontier wanting to expand into Corning?

Chapter 1: No discussion

Chapter 2: Challenge – We need to be engaging companies re: speeds and speed capacity. Do we know how to access how many home businesses are in Lincoln Co? Farms? Census Info?

Chapter 3: Demographics: Census is most likely not accurate due to being conducted during Covid.

Chapter 4: Access, Affordability, Adoption: Internet Speed is an issue and the cost too high, could be reasons why households are relying on cellular data. Digital Equity and Digital Literacy grant programs coming in 2024. Collaborate with Libraries to implement these programs.

- Confirm/define upload/download standards: Jerome suggests 500 up 500 down would be more than enough goal for speed.
- Other recommendations/comments/changes

Chapter 5: Goals: Priorities/Potential Project Areas: Ken and Travis will look at maps and overlays to compare the project proposals and actual need. Where there isn't fiber, there's a potential project area.

Chapter 6: Gap Analysis

- 5) Frontier Communications Proposed Project for WI Public Service Capital Projects Fund Broadband Infrastructure Grant (Due Nov 7, 2023) - Ken/Pat
 - Frontier asked if we would support them for a grant project for 468 residents (West of Merrill in town of Corning and E of 51 town of Pine River). We will talk with them at the Nicolet BEAD Conference.
 - Fiber to nearly 500 households. No request for financial support so far.
 - If this is something we will support, should we collect letters of support?
 - Lincoln Co Economic Development Corp will provide a letter of support.
 - We can ask for letters from Townships, Aspirus, MAPS, City of Merrill, Chambers, Libraries, Fire Depts, Broadband Commission, County Board, EMS of Lincoln Co, Housing Authority,
 - Letters due no later than Nov 3rd
- 6) Speed test Flyer Update – Jerome: Updated with a reminder to disable the cellular data (make sure connected to the wifi). Letter to residents explaining what is trying to be done with explanation of how to take the test and why it's important to test periodically.
- 7) Public Outreach and Marketing – Standing item for next agenda.
 - Media push: Radio, voting stations, town clerks/newsletters, tax bills, Chambers, schools, Photo News and Tomahawk Leader
- 8) Commission By-Laws – Ken - Standing item for next agenda
- 9) Open Discussion – All
- 10) Next Meeting: November 30 @ 6:30pm
- 11) Adjourn 8:45PM