

Broadband Task Force

315 W Green St, Marshall, MI 49068 | calhouncountymi.gov/broadband



July 11, 2023 Meeting Minutes

These meetings take place the second Tuesday of the month at 3 p.m.

Meeting called to order at 3:02 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Task Force Members in Attendance:

Chair Michael "Mac" McCullough
Paul Egnatuk
Angela Myers
Mike Nofs
Lorie Upright
Sonja Elder
Dr. Paul Watson
Art Kale
Haley Snyder
Paulette Porter
Monique French
Mike Watza

Not in Attendance:

Tina Rasey for Robert Stahelin
Derek Perry
Marc Newman
Jim Haadsma
Jeff Albaugh
Barry Skutt
Kathy Szenda Wilson
Lee Adams
Tommy Miller
David Hackett
Erin Cummings
Kaitlyn Elias

Others in Attendance:

Kelli Scott
Lucy Blair
Lynn Meikle
Brent Thelen

1. Approval of minutes from the June 13, 2023 meeting

Action: Approval of Broadband Task Force meeting minutes

*Move to adopt minutes by member Watson, second Member Elder.
Passes unanimously.*

2. Digital Equity Subcommittee Update

Communications Director, Lucy Blair will review the digital equity survey results and send to constituents. Results over time will be reported back to the Task Force. Blair was interviewed on the Richard Piet Show Podcast about the task force and ACP: Week of Action. The communications department conducted a campaign for Week of Action with social posts and press release.

3. ROBIN Grant Outcomes

Blair recapped the ROBIN grant process and outcome. Calhoun did not receive any ROBIN funds. After reviewing and scoring each application, 24 projects from 11 applicants have move forward as ROBIN Initial Grant Recommendations (IGRs). There was a massive about of match dollars, and the amount of matching funds exceeded the amount of ROBIN money. 123.net and MEC both got funding for other areas, but they are interested in Calhoun. Staff will react out to Comcast and ACD.net to see their applications, and will contact the MIHI office to see what we can do to make a BEAD application process successful.

4. BEAD Allocation in Michigan

Blair updated the Task Force that \$1.5B was allocated to Michigan for BEAD. The county will be meeting with internet service providers to discuss what their plans are for BEAD, and will connect with MIHI and NTIA to understand how we can have strong applications.

Attorney Mike Watza, in 2020 and 2021 there were obstacles to access BEAD money in Michigan, contrary to BEAD guidelines. Merit lead the charge to get new legislation passed so that governments are eligible to apply for money. Administrator Scott thanked Watza and Merit for their work. We may see a similar response as we did with BEAD, with ISPs applying for Calhoun.

Member French stated partnering with another county could make for a stronger application.

Watza stated that when meeting with other counties, to let them know they are now eligible to apply for BEAD funding which puts them in a better position to compete with ISPs and gives better negotiating power to form a partnership with them. Also, the more unserved and underserved groups you can put together with multiple counties, the stronger the application will be.

5. Member Updates

Chair Mac McCullough stated internet use is ramping up at Willard Library.

The goal of Digital Equity Committee is to compile a list of digital resources, and to help others to provide resources to the public.

6. Citizen's Time

7. Adjournment at 3:35 p.m.

Motion to adjourn Member French, Member Watson supported. Passes unanimously.

This meeting is capped at an hour. If we reach an hour before getting to citizens time, please send your questions or comments to Calhoun County staff at information@calhouncountymi.gov.