

Broadband Task Force

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



June 13, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order at 3:02 pm

1. Roll Call

Task Force Members in

Attendance:

Chair Michael "Mac" McCullough
Lee Adams
Paul Egnatuk
Monique French
Tommy Miller
Mike Nofs
Lorie Upright
Haley Snyder
Art Kale

Others in Attendance:

Kelli Scott
Lucy Blair
Kaitlyn Elias

David Hackett
Lynn Meikle
Brent Thelen
Erin Cummings

Not in Attendance:

Dr. Paul Watson
Angela Myers
Tina Rasey for Robert Stahelin
Derek Perry
Paulette Porter
Marc Newman
Jim Haadsma
Jeff Albaugh
Barry Skutt
Kathy Szenda Wilson
Mike Watza

2. Approval of minutes from the April 11, 2023 meeting
Action: Approval of Broadband Task Force meeting minutes

*Moved by Commissioner Miller, seconded by Member French, to approve the Broadband Task Force meeting minutes for April.
Passes unanimously*

3. ACP Update
Communications Director Lucy Blair gave the update. The first meeting of the Digital Equity Subcommittee was last week. The goal of the subcommittee is to look at solutions to bridge the digital divide. The group discussed chair and member options, the survey regarding internet resources, and the nationwide ACP Week of Action on June 14-22 from the Department of Education and White House. Outreach includes a press release explaining ACP and Facebook posts.

Chair Mac McCullough stated, to meet people where they are at, festival season is a good time to promote ACP by having tables set up at events and also having devices available to sign up. McCullough offered booking a librarian and finding places to direct people to sign up as solutions. Blair explained Veteran's Affairs can have items at their table.

As for the ACP Communications plan outreach, staff has met with and provided resources to WIC and Veterans Affairs. Next steps will be meeting with Senior Centers.

4. FCC Map Challenges Update

Communications Coordinator Lynn Meikle gave a brief background of the challenge process and a status update from the five ISPs that had FCC map challenges. The county met with Comcast to discuss challenges and is awaiting an NDA from Comcast to receive data about challenged locations and infrastructure data in the county. On the Broadband Data Collection website, most of the challenges were either conceded or upheld. Staff expressed that this will probably change as it appears the FCC has upheld the challenges from Comcast when Comcast means to dispute them.

5. Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Grant Program

Blair gave a brief background on the ROBIN and BEAD grant programs, Merit Conference in May, and a project in Livingston County. The project includes a middle mile network, connects government buildings and townships with fiber, and is a public private partnership with Lit Communities. The county would own the middle mile infrastructure.

Blair asked what is our plan for the BEAD application? The next step could be finding a grant writer. She asked the group if they knew of grant writers that have done federal grants.

Blair shared that from both Merit and Attorney Mike Watzka, there was concern that the BEAD allocation for Michigan may be reduced by about \$400 million dollars. Fixed Wireless may be considered served, so that is a factor of how much the state could receive.

Administrator Kelli Scott shared that in the CTC report we learned it would take about 300 million dollars to run fiber for the whole county, so the ROBIN grant money could only cover five counties. Calhoun is in a good position with the Ford Blue Oval Battery Plant coming.

6. Member Updates

Member Lee Adams shared that Kalamazoo County is steps behind Calhoun's broadband initiative, and he is learning from Calhoun. Kalamazoo County is doing a FCC Map Availability Challenge.

Administrator Scott explained that legal counsel is working on legislation to revise current law to include governments and other entities so that they are eligible for

BEAD funding. The current law prohibits government from applying. McCullough asked for talking points for the proposed legislation.

7. Citizen's Time

8. Adjournment - 3:52 pm

*Motion to adjourn Member French, Member Egnatuk supported.
Passes unanimously*