

COUNTY AND COMMUNITY MEETING

MINUTES

April 25, 2023

6:00 P.M.

Basement of Sheriff's Office

Meeting convened at 6:00 P.M. with Bill Henson, County and Community Committee Chairman, leading the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Roll call taken by Lori Linder, County Board Secretary. Present were Tracy Murray, Brock Waggoner, Jack Riley, Bill Henson, and Debbie Smith. Absent was Judith Meeks-Hakim.

RECOGNITION OF GUEST: Guest: Kevin Cripps, Marion County Sheriff, Christopher Krupp, and Bill Smith.

COUNTY AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE: Chairman Bill Henson began by introduction of Committee members to Matt Schmidt, Office of Illinois Broadband. Mr. Schmitt appears virtually and presents a Broadband slide presentation.

He began the presentation with background information. He stated that Illinois is in a good position because of starting the program back in the year 2020. Significant funding is available with more coming in the near future. Funding is available through BEAD and the Digital Equality Act programs. The timeline of the BEAD process indicates that the Office of Illinois Broadband is in the planning stage of the best use of the money. The Universal goal for Broadband is set for the year 2030. The priority for the use of the BEADS funds includes unserved locations, underserved locations, and coverage for everyone. In addition, the Digital Equality Act Fund will provide money to the entities in the state of Illinois for state planning, state capacity, and competitiveness. The next slide covered populations and gaps in Illinois. Broadband of Illinois' priority is to assist with getting this service to everyone, including people with digital illiteracy skills, internet access, low income households, aging populations, veterans, rural families, and people with disabilities.

In conclusion, Mr. Schmidt discussed their investment details. He began with information in regards to the Office of Broadband (IOB) and the Illinois Broadband Lab (ILB). The Lab and the Broadband office are synonymous. Their presence is located in every county in Illinois. More information is available on their webpage. Their newsletter is also accessible on this page and the Marion County Board can enroll to receive this service. A copy of this presentation will be e-mailed to the Committee immediately after the conclusion of the meeting with Mr. Schmidt.

Committee Chairman Bill Henson mentioned that two providers are being considered for this service. They are Wabash Communications and Clearwave Communications. He requested Mr. Schmidt's opinion as to forming a Broadband Committee or a Sub-Committee. Mr. Schmitt's response was that each County or Local Government addresses this issue differently. He suggested that in order to demonstrate dedication, it would be best to have a group of individuals that are more focused,

County and Community Committee – Continued

knowledgeable and able to obtain specific information in regards to this program. Multiple counties have formed Broadband Committees. Next, Mr. Henson stated that a Resolution to show the provider that the Board is supporting them and their services within the community will be created in the near future. Committee member Brock Waggoner had questions in regards to the Resolution. Mr. Schmidt stated that this will also demonstrate to the Office of Illinois Broadband that the Marion County Board is in support of the provider when they are submitting their applications.

Chairman Bill Henson affirmed that the goal is to select a provider to start the program and have them move forward and to show the County Board's endorsement. The timeline for the application process is set quarterly, but Mr. Schmidt recommended to have the provider submit their application within the next six months.

In conclusion, additional Broadband information can be located on the Connect Illinois website. For example, the data on this page includes Broadband grants and instructions for the applications, mapping for Illinois, and the newsletter. Access to Webinars that have been archived are also located on this page.


A motion to form a Broadband Committee was made by Brock Waggoner and second by Tracy Murray. Voice Vote: All ayes – No nays. Motion passed. Chairwoman Debbie Smith was officially informed and will create the Committee.

Lastly, Mr. Henson briefly discussed the flagpoles at the Courthouse. He will be presenting a complete update at the Full Board meeting scheduled at the conclusion of this meeting.

Nothing further to come before the Committee, Tracy Murray made a motion to adjourn with mileage and per diem and second by Jack Riley. Voice Vote: All ayes – No nays. Motion passed.

Time: 6:50 P.M.

Approved: DS
Date: 5/9/23


Debbie Smith, Marion County Board Chairman

