

Broadband Action Workgroup

Minutes

October 19, 2023

Call to order: 4:01, acting Chair Storey

Members Present:

Cooper(v); Armstrong(v), Marsman(v), Williams, Bursma(v), Beltman, Storey. (v=virtual attendance). Also present: Anthony Smith & Henry Gent, of Tilson Corporation; Project Manager Jill Dunham.

Presentation: Representatives Tim Westrate and Lucas Minnich of AT&T wireless were remote to speak about status of AT&T's work in the county; Westrate spoke about Baldhead implication. Mt. Baldhead. Lucas: added five towers since 2019 in Allegan County, most recently September 20, this year; two additional towers last year in northern VanBuren County that impact service in south Allegan County. Dunham shared her field experience with cell coverage. Lucas: FirstNet was born of 911 response, with a dedicated channel for first responders. Don't currently have many responders on that system, only three. Need to get more first responders on the system to improve connection. Would like to do a drive test with emergency manager or a sheriff deputy to determine where more contact is needed. Smith introduced himself to the AT&T representatives.

Communications:

Dunham emailed MIHI office asking when announcement of grant approval. Fingers crossed for this week that we would.

Minutes:

Beltman moved approval of minutes of October 5; seconded by Williams. Approved.

Project Manager Report:

Planning a news conference after the announcement of grants. Will need two to three weeks. Awaiting final ROBIN award. 123 Net is reviewing the scope of the project based on challenges from MIHI office. Finalizing 41,000-piece mailing to all residents who are thought to have internet. Stressed two things that people need to do: mailer recipients need to contact Dunham if they do not have internet; property owners who aren't on the coverage maps need to also advise Dunham.

Dunham reported that 123Net is holding a meeting Nov. 6-7 for municipal entities on how different counties approached improving broadband penetration. The meeting is focused on BEAD grants that will make funding available for connecting individual residents to a fiber cable.

Adjourned: 5:02 p.m.

Next meeting: November 2 @ 4pm.