

Allegan County Broadband Action Workgroup

February 17, 2022

Minutes

CTO: 4:00pm

Present: Chair Marsman, Vice Chair Kotas, Mach (v), Cooper* (v), Armstrong (v), Williams; Beltman, Storey *Cooper needed to leave at 5pm. (V-attended through virtual link).

Communications: Jeff Snyder of Comcast offered to present Comcast's role in offering Broadband. He offered three dates and the committee requested March 17.

Minutes: The minutes of February 3 were circulated prior to the meeting and were approved with changes.

Reports/Updates: Jill Dunham was introduced as the project manager for the Broadband effort. She addressed the workgroup, noting that she is a go getter, wants to set a plan for spreading broadband throughout the county.

Action items: The group discussed the resolution to support funding for the Michigan High Speed office. Was passed with amendment.

Local government correspondence: The group discussed the communications to local governments and the urgency to speak with them about expansion of broadband. The communication went to each local unit's supervisor and clerk.

Updates of Lee Township: Vice Chair Kotas made a presentation on the Lee Township plan. He asked for feedback to "Why Lee Township is critical to Allegan County's success". The presentation focused on the success factors and the variance among the units that make-up the county. In discussing information on mapping, he said that it has been horrible. Some companies have misrepresented the level of service. "Our communities are identifying the number one need is broadband." He noted the price of internet that is available in Lee Township, where he lives, is not affordable to most in the township. The township has contracted with a consultant to determine a feasibility study on getting fiber to the home. Project is underway. "So in any request to the county or the state, we can demonstrate exactly how many homes we can connect." He argued for a longer term vision for funds beyond ARPA.

Mandy Cooper thought we should consider a series of money buckets for using the ARPA funding. One for those priority areas, a second one for governments that want to get help, and a third for other projects.

Update on Plainwell Industrial Park – Marsman reported on meeting with Plainwell for expansion of industrial park. Looking for funding to help with broadband expansion.

Public Participation: Steve Schulz of Bloomingdale Communications thanked Beltman for going to the township meetings to explain the broadband. He observed that it helps the various local government boards understand the county efforts.

Tim Carr, Fillmore Township, Board of Public Works, researching expanding its network in Fillmore township.

Adjournment: On the motion of Beltman, seconded by Williams, the workgroup adjourned at 5:22pm.