

Allegan County Broadband Action Workgroup  
April 7, 2022  
Minutes

**CTO:** 4:00 pm

**Roll Call:** The following members answered: Marsman, Kotas, Siler, Williams, Beltman, Bursma, and Storey. Also present were Jill Dunham, Project Manager, Rob Sarro, Administrator and Janeen Horton, Bloomingdale Communications.

No member of the public sought recognition

**Presentations:**

**Melissa Fish**, Governor Gretchen Whitmer's regional representative, briefed the BAW on the actions at the state level to support broadband expansion. She highlighted funding in a recently passed bill that directs \$250 million of the state's ARPA allocation towards underserved and unserved areas. She described the qualifications in the legislation for the distribution of funds. Priority will be areas where there is no service with emphasis on community support and the technical capacity for the provider. There is a one pager on the administration's effort which she will send to the BAW. Jill asked how fast the funds will flow. Storey asked which agency would administer the funds for broadband: Labor and Economic (LEO) Opportunity. Siler asked when the MIFI office would be up to speed: soon.

**Dan Manning**, 10 years with non-profit Connect Michigan, to advocate for high speed internet. He added some notes on how the MIHI office will work within LEO. He said MIHI will be processing the grants for the MIHI office. He described how the infrastructure audit being done by Connect MI. There will be 16 teams (driver and engineer) driving the roads for the project audit. Allegan will likely be soon. The \$5 million project will audit the location of existing fiber in the rights-of-way. The goal of the project is to identify the splicing points and poles where there is existing fiber. The existing FCC maps are inflated as to where there is service. Will not be driving through cities, but will focus on rural areas, to determine the accuracy. Target for 65,000 miles to be driven and audited. Plan is document the current infrastructure and to update expansion. It will also be used to help determine the distribution of funds under the BEAD (Broadband Equity Access Program.)

Under the \$42.5 Billion BEAD (\$1.5 billion for MI) for unserved and underserved areas, he anticipates funds will be available to Michigan counties in late 2022 or early 2023. "Whoever is the most prepared will be in the best position to get the money," Manning said. Notice of Funding Opportunity announcement of the BEAD program will be in mid-to-late May. NTIA is the federal granting agency. Leader of data collection effort for Connect MI is Chip Span, [cspann@connectednation.org](mailto:cspann@connectednation.org). Intent is to be completed with the data collection effort by November 2022. The BAW members discussed the application of the data collection and fund allocation. Manning said he will advise the BAW and county generally when data collection starts in the county.

**Communications:** Chair Marsman said he received news release from Van Buren and Storey said he is receiving emails from residents and that he will share them with the BAW going forward, deleting the name and email address of the sender.

**Reports:** Jill said the township meeting was well-attended. She reported on the status of collecting non-disclosure agreements. Two smaller companies did not require them to hand over data to the BAW. She reported that AT&T has started installing fiber in Monterey Township, which was unannounced. Project scope document was provided to the BAW members in their packet.

**Discussion:** New approach for the RFP – the county is preparing it for distribution. Jill said that we need to discuss bid scoring and evaluating matrix. The RFP will allow responders to bid for segments of the county who will have to serve the entire area. Member Kotas said he hopes the county in awarding money for providers for specific areas will consult with local units as to the quality level specific providers have or will furnish. Siler said the BAW should set priority for areas to receive public funds. Jill, Siler and Sarro engaged in a discussion as to what the RFP or RFQ should seek to obtain information.

**Action:** Members discussed the survey.

**Public Participation:** No one:

**Adjournment:** 6:15PM  
Respectfully submitted

Jim Storey, Secretary