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**BROADBAND TASK FORCE
MONDAY, MARCH 6, 2023 AT 3:00 P.M.
CLINTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS ROOM
100 EAST STATE STREET, ST. JOHNS, MI 48879**

1	3:00	CALL TO ORDER, ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA
2	3:02	LIMITED PUBLIC COMMENTS
3	3:05	APPROVAL OF MINUTES
4	3:10	MIHI GRANT UPDATE - GUIDEHOUSE (ADAM SMIDDY) – NO ATTACHMENT
5	3:50	ANY OTHER BUSINESS
MEETING STARTS PROMPTLY AT CALL TO ORDER TIME LISTED. AGENDA ITEM TIMES MAY VARY		

PACKET INFORMATION IS CURRENT AS OF POSTING DATE. **NOTE:** ADDITIONAL INFORMATION MAY BE PRESENTED ON SCHEDULED AGENDA ITEMS. AGENDA ITEMS MAY ALSO BE ADDED DUE TO BUSINESS NEEDS.

TO REQUEST ACCOMMODATIONS OR MATERIALS IN AN ALTERNATIVE FORMAT, PLEASE CONTACT ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AT 989-224-5120 OR VIA EMAIL AT ADMIN@CLINTON-COUNTY.ORG NO LATER THAN 48 HOURS PRIOR TO THE MEETING.

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BROADBAND TASK FORCE
Wednesday, January 23, 2023

Members Present:

Bob Showers, Chairperson
Bruce DeLong
Craig Longnecker
Todd Campbell (alternate)
Patti Schafer
Nicole Fickes
Jason Almerigi
Doug Riley
Wayne Smith
Kari Dickenson
Wayne Petroelje
John Fuentes

Staff Present:

Penny Goerge
Craig Thelen
Phil Hanses
Cindy Moser

Others Present

Adam Smiddy, Guidehouse
Kyle Macyda, Plante Moran
Alan McCarrick, Plante Moran
Doug Steffen

Items of Business

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 10:01 a.m. Member Schafer moved, seconded by Member Petroelje, to approve the agenda. Motion carried.
2. **Limited Public Comments:** Broadband Task Force Chairperson Showers requested limited public comments. There were none.
3. **Approval of Minutes:** The January 4, 2023, minutes were presented for review and approval.

Member Petroelje moved, seconded by Member Almerigi, to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried.

4. **Broadband Initiative Update - Guidehouse:** Broadband Task Force Chairperson Showers introduced Adam Smiddy from Guidehouse to provide an update regarding Clinton County's Broadband Initiative.
 - **Michigan Highspeed Internet (MIHI) Office Grant Application** - Discussion took place regarding the ROBIN (Realizing Opportunities in Broadband Infrastructure Networks) Grant:
 - The Michigan High Speed Internet (MIHI) Office launched the ROBIN Grant Application process on Friday, January 13 and the 60-day application window closes at 4 p.m. on Tuesday, March 14;
 - Mr. Smiddy provided a brief overview of the ROBIN Application Scoring Summary, noting that more points are being awarded for "Grant to Project Costs" and less points are being awarded for the comprehensive proposal than originally anticipated;
 - Mr. Smiddy informed the members that MIHI narrowed their definition in the grant application to state that a fixed wireless internet service provider must be licensed to claim service capable of speeds meeting the 100 mbps download and 20 mbps upload speeds;

- The members reviewed the MIHI maps and members expressed their frustration regarding certain areas that MIHI identified as ineligible; discussion followed about gathering speed test data for these areas to prove they are eligible;
- Mr. Smiddy discussed the possibility of buying data from entities that have already conducted speed tests at these locations.

No action required.

5. **Broadband Infrastructure Development Proposal – Plante Moran:** Broadband Task Force Chairperson Showers introduced Kyle Macyda and Alan McCarrick from Plante Moran to present the Broadband Infrastructure Development Proposal.

- **Background:** Mr. Macyda and Mr. McCarrick explained the purpose of this initiative:
 - To facilitate projects that will successfully accomplish getting fiber-to-the-home internet to the unserved and underserved residents of Clinton County;
 - Provide service to the home utilizing fiber technologies that deliver a minimum 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload service upon project completion, expandable to 100 Mbps symmetric service;
 - Identify service provider(s) capable of delivering the required services to the eligible service areas;
 - Seek grant funding through the Michigan High-Speed Internet Office (MIHI) to offset costs to Clinton County;
- **RFP Overview:**
 - Mr. Macyda and Mr. McCarrick notified the members that Clinton County partnered with Guidehouse to develop the RFP to solicit broadband Internet providers to build the fiber-to-the-home Internet services for the residents of Clinton County;
 - It was noted the RFP requirements were largely driven by and based on the funding and grant requirements stipulated by the State of Michigan/MIHI (ROBIN Grant) and the Federal ARPA funding; Clinton County managed the RFP solicitation process and partnered with Plante Moran to assist in the proposal evaluation process;
 - The Members reviewed and discussed the proposed broadband service areas in Clinton County that were identified in the RFP as being underserved (West, Central and East); Providers were able to propose services on one or more service areas;
 - The members reviewed the RFP timeline highlighting the RFP was released in August of 2022 and proposals were due in late September;
- **Proposal Analysis:** Mr. Macyda and Mr. McCarrick provided a summary of the proposals received:
 - Six qualified proposals were received, and analysis was conducted between October 2022 – January 2023;
 - Based on the initial scoring results, interviews were conducted with three providers in November 2022;
 - The County partnered with Plante Moran to perform additional financial due diligence for the shortlist providers which identified some areas that required further clarification;
 - Updated FCC broadband maps were published on November 18, 2022; since this information was not available at the time of the initial proposal submissions to the County, all providers were afforded the opportunity to update their proposals by December 20, 2022, with a best and final offer;
 - The members reviewed the proposal cost summary detailing the total project cost for each provider as well as percentage of provider funding, and quantity of potential households served;
 - Discussion followed regarding the evaluation criteria outlined in the RFP as well as additional considerations;
 - It was noted that the quantity of potential households served is only based on data submitted by providers through the RFP process, and the actual quantity of grant eligible households served is subject to change based on the determination of the MIHI Office;
- **Provider Selection:**
 - The provider proposals were evaluated and scored by the County RFP Selection Committee (IT Director, Finance Director, County Administrator and Deputy Administrator) with the support of Plante Moran;
 - The members reviewed the RFP scoring summary that was provided;

- Frontier received the highest overall score in the RFP process and was the Provider with lowest cost per household capable of serving all three service areas;
- Frontier has potential to serve the highest number of grant eligible households across all three service areas and their proposed broadband infrastructure allows for future expansion to other areas and customers within the county (funded separately);
- Additional considerations included Frontier's strong financial position and their reorganized customer service division to better align with customer expectations;
- The County performed due diligence reference checks for the proposed finalist provider and the feedback was positive; legal counsel reviewed the contract terms and conditions from the proposed finalist provider and did not find any significant concerns;
- Plante Moran supports the recommendation of the Clinton County RFP Selection Committee to award all three service areas (West, Central, East) to: Frontier North Inc. (d/b/a "Frontier");
- **Member Discussion:**
 - The Members asked several questions, and discussed details relative to the evaluation process that took place;
 - Member Fickes and Member Almerigi expressed concerns regarding their past experiences with Frontier; their concerns were acknowledged, and discussion followed about having the County's professional consultant attend a future township meeting to answer questions;
 - The members reviewed the project funding summary that shows a total project cost of \$25,257,611 with the Provider's portion of the project totaling \$9,016,967 and the County's portion of the project totaling \$16,240,644;
 - It is anticipated the County's portion will require ROBIN grant funding in the amount of \$13,804,547 and ARPA funding in the amount of \$2,436,097;
- **Next Steps:**
 - Once this recommendation is authorized by the Broadband Task Force, the recommendation will be forwarded to the January 26th Ways and Means Committee and January 31st Board of Commissioners meeting for final approval;
 - Once approved, the County will notify the awarded Provider, and the County and Guidehouse will submit a grant application to MIHI;
 - Upon grant award, the County will begin contract negotiations with the provider (including review and validation of grant eligible households to be served);
 - The Provider can then begin make-ready, permit process and related construction activities.

Member DeLong moved, seconded by Member Schafer, to recommend to the Ways and Means Committee that Frontier be selected as the vendor for the Broadband Infrastructure Development Project to provide fiber-to-the-home broadband internet infrastructure in unserved and underserved areas in Clinton County. Motion carried. Member Almerigi voted no.

6. **Motion to Adjourn:** Broadband Task Force Chairperson Showers adjourned the meeting at 11:33 a.m.