



**Kewaunee County
BROADBAND STUDY COMMITTEE**

August 27, 2020 4:30 p.m.

Kewaunee County Administration Center, 810 Lincoln Street, Kewaunee, WI 54216
Human Services Training Room

Call to Order: Chair Weidner called the meeting to order at 4:31 p.m.

Roll Call: Members Present – Robert Weidner, Jeff Vollenweider, Matt Piesler, Scott Feldt, Ross Loining, Jeff Wisnicky, Richard Baker, Ryan Hoffman, August Neverman. Others Present – Steve Schneider, Jason Wied, Scott Nasgovitz, Chad Leudtke, Erin Rickamann, Frank Madzarevic.

Approval of August 27, 2020 Agenda: Hoffman moved and Neverman seconded to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

Update: Broadband Expansion Grant – Project Status: Schneider introduced himself and the Bug Tussel team to the committee. Schneider said he considered this to be the kick-off of the Kewaunee County project. Schneider presented the coverage map that was part of the application to the Public Service Commission. The coverage was to address areas according to the state that have limited coverage. The assumption in the application was that Algoma, Kewaunee and Luxemburg have providers. Bug Tussel still received calls and inquiries in those communities. To address some of these concerns, Bug Tussel is purchasing a tower in Luxemburg and will co-locate its equipment on county owned towers to address some of these concerns. Schneider then presented an amended coverage map that would increase the coverage area. This would result in the construction of six towers but add additional coverage by placing equipment on county owned, Bug Tussel owned and privately-owned towers for a total of 11 towers. This would result in 35% more coverage than the original proposal. Discussion followed regarding coverage and the siting of towers. Schneider stated that Bug Tussel is working with Cellcom to identify fiber and fiber routes that could expand the network beyond their initial phase. The committee talked about what Phase 2 might look like and what grants may be available for the next phase. According to Bug Tussel RFP response, the next phase is projected to cost \$5.1 million. Schneider added that Phase 2 could be broken into two parts. There was discussion about the advantages and disadvantages on moving towards the next phase. The main advantage is that significant funds are available from the PSC (\$24 million) in the next grant application round. The main disadvantage is that the County could be seen as moving too aggressively with regards to the overall project. Additional discussion followed regarding the potential of future providers and how the sale of spectrum could affect next steps.

A question was asked regarding Phase 1 and its purpose. The purpose of the project is to create a structure to address areas within the county with little or no service. Bug Tussel added that they are committed to filling holes that may remain after the project has been completed. Essentially Phase 1 involves the construction of a fixed wireless network (towers). Phase 2 is to upgrade service by bringing fiber to the towers and establishing fiber routes within the county. The final phase would be the maintenance of the system.



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Neverman moved and Baker seconded to direct Bug Tussel to draft two Phase 2 proposals for consideration. Document 1 would include the full Phase 2 project with an estimated cost of \$5.1 million. Document 2 would break Phase 2 into two projects with an estimated cost of \$2.6 million each. The proposals would be presented to the Executive Committee for discussion and possible action as to whether to submit a PSC Broadband Expansion Grant application in December 2020. Motion carried.

Schneider reviewed the project time line with the committee. Schneider indicated that the agreement between Kewaunee County and Bug Tussel was delayed. This has delayed site location and acquisition by approximately 60 days. This will delay regulatory filing by the same 60 days. Bug Tussel will begin Bug Tussel University in November if not sooner. The next round of PSC grants is due December 1, 2020. Schneider indicated he believes the towers will be constructed in March, 2021 and service to begin in April or May. In addition, there are looking to have fiber contracts in place by May or June.

Progress on tower siting: Wied spoke about the concerns that surround the zoning of towers. Common criticisms are aesthetics of towers and Wied explained there is little that can be done to change the look of towers. Second criticism is that towers lower property values and Wied responded there is no data to support this claim. Finally, there are claims of negative health effects and Wied answered there is no data to support this. This concern may be addressing 5G technology but the equipment on the towers being constructed will not be 5G.

Wied stated that Bug Tussel is looking for input with regards to identifying customers. Bug Tussel does contract with Independent Sales Representatives (ISRs) to assist in finding customers.

Update: Meetings with local officials regarding ordinances: Feldt stated that no meetings have been scheduled to discuss local ordinances or siting.

Next Meeting: September 24 at 4:30 p.m. in the County Board Room

Adjournment: Vollenweider moved and Loining seconded to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m.