



**CHAMPAIGN COUNTY BOARD
BROADBAND TASK FORCE AGENDA**

County of Champaign, Urbana, Illinois
Thursday, September 16, 2021 - 6:30 p.m.

Jennifer Putman Meeting Room/Zoom
Brookens Administrative Center
1776 E. Washington St., Urbana

MINUTES – Approved as Distributed October 26, 2021

Members Present: Samantha Carter, M.C. Neal, Brad Passalacqua, Kyle Patterson, Jacob Paul, Mike Smeltzer, Eric Thorsland and Brad Uken

Members Absent:

Others Present: Darlene Kloeppel (County Executive) and Mary Ward (Recording Secretary)

Agenda Items

I. Call to Order

County Board Chair Kyle Patterson called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Roll call was taken and a quorum was declared present.

III. Approval of Agenda/Addendum

IV. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

V. Communications

There were no communications for the committee.

VI. New Business

A. Selection of Chair and Vice- Chair

This was the inaugural meeting of this committee. Mr. Patterson explained the County Board process of selecting a Chair and Vice-Chair.

Mr. Passalacqua nominated Brad Uken for Chair and Samantha Carter for Vice-Chair. There were no other nominations. Upon roll call vote, the nominations were approved unanimously.

At this point Mr. Uken took over the meeting.

B. Interview Questions

Discussion followed on questions for the Selection Committee to use at the upcoming interviews for the RFQ Proposals.

55 Some of the proposals had very nice timelines and some did not. It was felt that those who did not
56 should outline that schedule. Also, that discussion should be held on each companies' confidence in
57 their timeline and cost of their proposal.
58

59 It should also be asked how many of these types of studies they have done before. There should be a
60 distinction between 'worked with' and having done a study like this.
61

62 Mr. Uken asked, for clarification, what the counties timeline was for interviews, approval of contract,
63 begin work, etc. Mr. Patterson said that the interviews are next week and would probably have
64 something for approval in October.
65

66 It was asked if the Farm Bureau had worked with any of the companies that had provided proposals.
67 They have not worked with any of them.
68

69 Mr. Smeltzer stated this was an unusual opportunity with a larger urban area that has some pockets
70 that need help and an over 1000 sq mile rural area that needs help. He felt we needed to ask how
71 wedded they were to an all-fiber solution or if they were open to a hybrid fiber/wireless solution.
72 Have they ever worked with a county that looks like Champaign County?
73

74 Mr. Passalacqua asked if someone proposed doing all fiber, who will do the leg work securing all the
75 easements? There would be a lot of easements to get. Typically, with easements, the farmer or
76 landowners own to the middle of the road, so they can't just run along the road without getting
77 permission.
78

79 Mr. Thorsland spoke of hybrid systems; fiber connected wireless in the rural area and fiber-fiber to
80 other areas. His question would be what their experience with a hybrid system is that is municipal
81 fiber and dedicated wireless in the rural areas. Have they done these previously and any follow up on
82 the outcome?
83

84 It was asked if it would be unusual to have a hybrid system for a county such as ours. Discussion on
85 UC2B followed and a request was made for a map of where UC2B runs. That is a work in progress
86 but it's possible to get a map. A hybrid system would not be unusual as fiber is going to be expensive
87 to run. We need a solution to serve the whole county.
88

89 Mr. Neal talked about funding and said our hope is to supplement the ARPA funds with grant
90 opportunities. The state has several programs including Connect Illinois and there are other
91 opportunities out there.
92

93 Mr. Passalacqua mentioned a last mile fiber solution. If it was wireless to every residence would
94 there be more hardware/more install at the point of use? We will have to see what they come up with.
95 ARPA has guidelines and they say you must get to 100 symmetrical (100 upload/100 download
96 speed) or the system has to be designed scalable to that. Plus, you have to prove that you can get to
97 that.
98

99 CBRS was mentioned. This is Citizens Band Radio Service. The government has taken some of the
100 CB bandwidth and allocated it to Broadband. We may want to ask how CBRS fits into the planning
101 for Broadband.
102

103 Other questions to be considered are:

104 Can we get fixed wireless to 100 and 100?
105

106 Experience in rural areas?
107
108

109 Questions about affordability. How have they helped the customers they've worked with, with
110 affordable broadband/connections.

111 Questions about last mile connections.

112 The future of people's devices and how they connect.

113

114 Mr. Paul asked what are the goals of the members and the people in their individual districts?

115 Everyone may have something different they're wanting to see come out of this.

116

117 Ms. Kloeppe said that what we've stated in the RFP is that we want them to work with this
118 committee to develop a plan for the county to build out the county. Each area of the county may have
119 a different goal.

120

121 Mr. Patterson said that his district is a big part of campus and the center of town. He is not aware of
122 any connectivity issues. His ultimate goal is to have everywhere in the county connected.

123

124 Ms. Carter mentioned that affordability is important to her constituents. What is the estimated cost
125 of a project like this? Part of the goal of this committee is to figure out how much this will cost.

126

127

128 **VII. Other Business**

129 A. Date of next meeting

130

131 The date of the next was tentatively set for Tuesday, October 26, at 6:30 p.m. and will be held via
132 Zoom.

133

134 **VIII. Chair's Report**

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136 Mr. Uken thanked everyone for attending and for their input into the meeting.

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138 **IX. Adjournment**

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140 Mr. Uken adjourned the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

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145 *Please note the minutes reflect the order of the agenda and may not necessarily reflect the order of business*
146 *conducted at the meeting.*