



**CHAMPAIGN COUNTY BOARD
BROADBAND TASK FORCE AGENDA**

County of Champaign, Urbana, Illinois
Tuesday, October 26, 2021 - 6:00 p.m.

Shields-Carter Meeting Room/Zoom
Brookens Administrative Center
1776 E. Washington St., Urbana

MINUTES – Approved as Distributed March 21, 2022

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

Members Absent: Brad Passalacqua and Eric Thorsland

Others Present: Sean Middleton, Dean Mischke and Andy Heins with Finley/CCG Consulting, Kathy Larson (ARPA Manager) and Mary Ward (Recording Secretary)

Agenda Items

I. Call to Order

Mr. Uken called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Roll call was taken and a quorum was declared present.

III. Approval of Agenda/Addendum

MOTION by Ms. Carter to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Paul. Upon vote, the **MOTION CARRIED** unanimously.

IV. Approval of Minutes

A. September 16, 2021

MOTION by Ms. Carter to approve the minutes of the September 16, 2021 meeting, seconded by Mr. Paul. Upon vote, the **MOTION CARRIED** unanimously.

V. Public Participation

Joseph DeWalt is interested in this topic and will be following along.

VI. Communications

Mike Smeltzer – shared an email about upcoming webinars the committee might be interested in.

VII. New Business

A. Update on Consultant Agreement

The agreement has been signed. The contract is not to exceed \$85,000 and is to be completed in four to five months.

B. Review of Broadband Terms and Definitions

Mr. Uken presented a PowerPoint of Broadband Terms and Definitions so that the committee is all on the same page. Information included ARPA Fund Eligibility, Types of Connections and Easements. (The document can be found on the county's website)

Mr. Smeltzer went over the handout on Fiber-Optic Cables. Fiber requires a tremendous amount of planning. We need to have a vision or plan on how we want this to end up and our consultants will help us get there. We need to be thinking ahead to future capacity. Mr. Smeltzer discussed fiber optic cable and the various types available. What we put in now will last a long time.

He also discussed MicroDuct, a small duct can have multiple compartments for running fiber optic cable. This makes it easier to add cables in the future.

Mr. Neal had a question on easements and how concerned we need to be about landowners approving the easements. Mr. Uken said it is typically a process. If the utility approaches and works with the landowner, usually it happens. If they don't work with the landowner, it can be contentious.

Ms. Carter asked about easements, if the fee was a one-time fee. It depends on the project, sometimes it's a one-time fee and sometimes they negotiate a multi-year fee for it.

Ms. Carter thanked Mr. Smeltzer for the UC2B map he provided and asked what percentage of the county already has fiber optics from UC2B. He didn't have that number, but it is mostly in Champaign-Urbana, so on a landmass basis it's not very much but on a population basis it's more than half. Hopefully, that is something our consultant will be able to help answer. Ms. Carter also asked about compatibility about types of fiber to be able to use.

Mr. Smeltzer commented easements and that some landowners are wonderful to work with and some absolutely refuse. With UC2B they had to map carefully to avoid some landowners.

C. Kick-off for Broadband Study with Consultant Finley Engineering/CCG Consulting

Mr. Uken introduced Sean Middleton with Finley Engineering/CCG Consulting. He introduced two other members of their team, Dean Mischke and Andy Heins. They introduced themselves and gave some background information on Finley/CCG and their backgrounds within the industry.

Mr. Middleton gave an overview of what their services will be. There are some resources already, but they will build a plan to reach all parts of the County. Design will be one part. It forms the basis of the project and make sure we accounted for all the stakeholders and come with the best fit and design methodology that can best utilize the funding available. Doug's team will do the assessment/analysis of the marketplace by doing a survey and will help identify key stakeholders. To ID every fiber route in the county will be difficult. Both teams will be busy from the start. They will compile maps of what fiber is already there so Doug's team can run analysis against while the design team looks at how they can connect every person to the network.

At this point, Mr. Uken had the committee members introduce themselves.

Ms. Carter had a question about existing fiber and if it can be used or if it's useless. On long haul fiber routes, the cables are much smaller. When serving fiber to the home, there is a fiber-optic standard that is tailored for providing the best performance. That fiber isn't necessarily the best for long haul performance. There is a need to be careful about using existing fiber so we don't degrade the reach capability which would then increase costs.

The end result of our work is to give us an action plan that is shovel ready and not just a report to sit on the shelf. The numbers that Doug creates are of sufficient quality that we can take to bonding boards and other entities who have the desire to help us build.

Discussion was held about how they would communicate with the Task Force. There will be a flurry of information/activity at the beginning followed by a quiet period. They can attend a limited number of meetings and probably give an once month update. And, maybe have a small point of contact group for questions, etc.

Mr. Heins said Mr. Dawson would want to have a kick-off meeting with the stakeholders to start to gather information. They will need GIS info, broadband gaps and need to understand all the elements of the project.

A point of contact group would consist of Mr. Uken, Ms. Carter, Mr. Neal, Ms. Larson, and Ms. Kloepfel for the County and Sean Middleton for Finley/CCG.

Ms. Carter asked if this is one of the biggest projects they have worked on. Finley/CCG has done multiple county studies and they have done several full county studies. They have done counties, municipalities, etc.

VIII. Other Business

A. Date of next meeting

The date of the next is to be determined. Mr. Uken will work on coordinating that.

IX. Chair's Report

Mr. Uken thanked everyone for attending and for their input into the meeting. Mr. Uken had Kathy Larson introduce herself. She is an Economic Development Specialist for the Champaign County Regional Planning Commission and is assisting the county with management of ARPA funds and projects. As related to broadband there is money set aside for next year for broadband purposes. For the proposed budget for FY22 there is \$3 million set aside for broadband.

X. Adjournment

Mr. Uken adjourned the meeting at 7:31 p.m.

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