



Broadwater County Broadband Advisory Board Meeting
Friday, July 14, 2023 at 8:00 am

Board Members Present:

Vic Sample, Chairman; Roger Flynn, Vice-Chair; Members, Joe Gill; Adam Six, Absent; Warren Smeltzer, Secretary

Broadwater County (BC) Staff Present:

Lindsey Richtmyer, Commissioner Liaison

Admin/Assistant:

Melinda Banks

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 am. All members were present except for Warren Smeltzer and Adam Six. Lindsey Richtmyer; Commission Liaison was also in attendance. Josh Romandia from Montana Internet was also present

There was no public comment and role was taken

Josh discussed with the board that Montana Internet would like to build a backbone. Its not a lack of wanting to continue service from Helena to Townsend, it is due to finances. Montana Internet was not able to use Broadwater County for certain funding. Montana Internet does not take grant money for projects and has never accepted any stimulus money. Josh stated that he was excited about seeing Broadwater County taking steps to improve our internet opportunities for our county and his company would like to help any way they are able. Fiber has more upfront cost, but maintenance would be cost effective. Josh has never worked with Montana Opticom but has worked with other companies in the past and would be open to partner with another company.

Josh also stated that there are 9 towers in our county. The board and Josh discussed open access and that could definitely bring more opportunities and transparency with pricing. Montana Internet does have its own fiber and has worked with Zayo when needed. The amount of fiber that Zayo has in Broadwater County was in question but now it is understood that they are installed on the power lines. There are customers in Broadwater County that are happy with just checking email and do not necessarily need faster internet, but the demographic in our county is changing. Montana Internet would like to back their customer service with fiber.

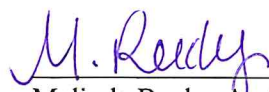
The board discussed the Communications Advisory Commission meeting and it was very informative. The board discussed on whether to have one Community Support Anchor per polygon. The anchor can be any building, such as a school, or a fire station. The polygon at the northeastern section of the map could possibly include Montana Learning Center as an anchor. The money that was used for ESSER funds because of Covid will be used for Broadband services in the state. The board wanted to send out a postcard to inform the public about the a new internet speed app. This information is needed by the FCC to determine accurate service speed and availability

The board will be attending the next Communications Advisory Commission meeting August 8. The board also discussed that the link for the challenge of the FCC map could be on the county website and a regular update for the paper would be beneficial. Also, a regular update to the Commission from a board member other than Commissioner Richtmyer was also encouraged.

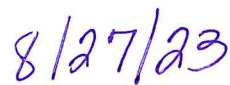
The next regular Broadband Advisory Meeting will be July 27, 2023 at 4 pm. Dean Nelson from Montana Opticom will be attending this meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:02 am

Respectfully Submitted:

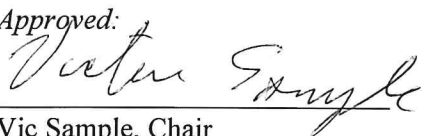


Melinda Banks, Assistant

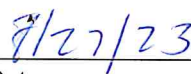


Date

Approved:



Vic Sample, Chair



Date