



Broadwater County Broadband Advisory Board Meeting  
Thursday, May 18, 2023, at 4:00 p.m.

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**Board Members Present:**

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

**Commissioner**

**Lindsey Richtmyer**

**Assistant**

**Misty**

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**Call to Order:** Meeting called to order by Chairman Sample at 4:02 p.m..

**Roll Call:**

**Reading of Previous Minutes:** The previous minutes were not ready and will be approved at the next meeting.

**Public Comment:** The Chair called for public. Hearing none he moved to the Agenda Items.

**Agenda:**

\* Discussion/decision of meeting with Senator Tester's field representatives and Dean Nelson from MT Opticom and follow-up action items

All agreed that we felt that the representatives from Tester's office learned a lot from the meeting.

Dean was very knowledgeable. Dean clarified where they would be installing using the ARPA funds. He also shared with us the number of monies he has been awarded under Connect MT (10 million with a 10 million match). He also said his proposal for Reconnect was for 25 million dollars. These monies have not been awarded.

BEAD funds should be awarded to the State by the end of June and the State has until December 30 to publish the proposal for BEAD funds. It will likely be the end of 2024 before any of these funds are awarded.

The importance of partnerships was discussed.

It is clear we cannot run our own network unless it is an area that is not being served.

Dean stated his proposed line would be a closed line. He also said he needed 10 houses per mile to make it viable. The cost for a mile of line could run from forty thousand for plowed in line to two hundred thousand for lines that needed to be bored in.

Commissioner Richtmyer discussed getting community support for increased service in the county. This should be an agenda item for the next meeting. It was agreed that for the next meeting we have an idea

of the stakeholders we could get for support. Information on what they are doing in Colorado was passed out.

\* Discussion/decision of meeting with BroadbandMT and follow-up action items

It was decided that we should get Brian Obert in for our next meeting.

\* Discussion/decision of partnerships with Broadband companies, Industry Organizations (like BroadbandMt) and follow-up action items.

We discussed the importance of partnerships even if it is with some of the industry giants.

\* Discussion/decision Broadband.money and follow-up action items

Joe talked about a phone call he received from this group. They have a free service as well as a paid service. They help counties get funding for things like this. They would like to have a meeting with us. Joe could just do it with him first. We agreed to do some more research on this organization.

\* Discussion/decision Blackfoot Communications meeting and follow-up action items \*

There Meet and Greet had a poor turnout. They are only going to service those in town or very close. They are interested in businesses primarily. Roger asks if they were interested in spreading out further. They told him no.

They are running new fiber to the water tower.

Discussion on how we go about getting maps of what fiber companies have in the ground was held.

Discussion/decision Robyn Madison and follow-up action items.

Action items were assigned, and each person will report at next meeting.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted:

W. Keedy  
Warren Smeltzer-Secretary

5/25/23  
Date

Approved:

Vic Sample  
Vic Sample, Chair

5/25/23  
Date