

Governing Board Meeting – Special Meeting

February 7, 2024 9:00am-10:30am PT

Meeting Location: BROADLINE Offices 4420 East 8th Ave Spokane Valley, WA 99212

Virtual Attendance: https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_YTdhMTA3ZWQtOWZmNi00NmQ5LThkMWQtNzc1ZDFiY2FjNzBi%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22a96da42f-e2f7-4a12-828f-1e5506e42ddb%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22e92dd173-49df-498f-8107-bd55319fbae0%22%7d

AGENDA

1. **Call to Order** 9:01am
 - a. Board – Mayor Cooper*, Councilman Cathcart, Scott Simmons*, Kyle Twohig*
 - b. Staff – Ariane Schmidt, Andy Wittwer, Taudd Hume*
 - c. Guests – Steven McDonald*
2. **Public Comment/Courtesy of the Floor** - none
3. **Approval of the Minutes**
 - a. January 31st Minutes
 - b. Mayor Cooper called for approval. Acknowledged present board members Michael, Kyle, Terri. Kyle motion to approve, Michael second, passed unanimously.
Note from Ariane – the minutes are important backstory to the purpose of this meeting.
4. **Action Items: Various Resolutions, Agreements, Contracts and Grant**
 - a. None
5. **Old Items**
 - a. Board Request: Typical Fiber Procurement Cycle and Broadline Procurement Readiness

Ariane requested the board move this item and the Emergency Assistance item to later in the meeting given Scott Simmons notified the board he would be arriving late and is important to this discussion. Kyle made a motion to amend the agenda as requested by the ED. Michael seconds, passed unanimously.

Ariane shared she reached out to three established broadband construction entities for procurement cycles related to fiber construction. The process involves breaking down design and construction cycles, with a focus on meeting the assigned contract timelines considering the American Rescue Plan (ARP) constrictions. The goal is to have a secondary path for funds obligation within 25 weeks to avoid tight spots in November. Ariane shared a 7-page procurement list based on consulted organizations NOANet, Port of Whitman, and Joe Poire. Kyle raised a question about the seven weeks for construction issuance, expressing concern about its length. The team clarified that it is a subtask within design work and aims to accelerate long lead procurement needs. However, there was acknowledgment that the design process presents uncertainties, particularly regarding survey scheduling, property rights, and

potential delays. The team acknowledged the risk in the design process, which may take longer than expected, especially in obtaining necessary agreements and dealing with property rights. Kyle emphasized the importance of considering potential delays in the timeline, while Joe pointed out that the discussed timeline was primarily to get under contract, and the actual project timeline could extend over a year. Scott and Kyle expressed concerns about resource availability and the potential for delays in the design process. Joe highlighted the challenges in getting people for field walkouts and the need for additional time in the design phase, especially with considerations for environmental factors and pole planning. The conversation concluded with an understanding that the timeline was ambitious but very realistic given the goal was to have firms under contract (not started) before the December 2024 ARP Treasury Obligation timeline. The board would like to know by the next meeting what could be started immediately, considering the December 2024 deadline, and to have a Plan B in case optimal funding scenarios do not materialize by then.

b. Decision Tree for ARP SLFRF¹ Broadband Match Funding Obligation for US Treasury Timeline and NTIA BEAD allocations

The flow trees is at the request of Commissioner Kuney for a workflow related to the American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds, specifically the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF). The discussion highlighted the parallel efforts of ARP and the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) funding over the last two years. The US Treasury has set a deadline for ARP funds to be under contract by the end of 2024, allowing flexibility between 2024-2026 once under contract. The Broadlinc contract with the Washington State Broadband Office (WSBO), NTIA, GFOA and the County all of whom supported the concept. Councilmember Cathcart raised concerns about the lack of urgency and awareness nationally, and there was agreement that this is a widespread issue. A nuance regarding contracts in ARP funding was discussed, highlighting the prohibition of reimbursing subcontractors signed after the obligation deadline. The board expressed support for the proposed plan, understanding the complexities and urgency involved. Councilmember Cathcart moved to support the action. Mayor Cooper second. All in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

c. Spokane County ARP Revenue Replacement 6.2 Award Contract

Broadlinc has received its contract from Spokane County. The county framework is fixed, and key details for the board include Exhibit A and B, outlining the scope of work specific to the grant and the budget for the award. Earlier in the summer, the county released an RFP under a revenue replacement eligible category,

¹ State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) awarded to counties and cities for which IJIA BEAD Broadband Match is Eligible Category 5.21

incorporating match constraints. Broadline submitted a bid under broadband eligible constraints and proposed scopes of work for a local project, including the recycling of the project work for South Spokane Middle Mile and preparation for FTTH (Fiber-to-the-Home) and fiber deployment in the West Plains. The goal is to connect the West Plains with Noanet, the Small Arms Range, and potential future SREC Dispatch Center. The county requires Broadline to begin procurement in addition to match allocation ready for firm contract no later than the end of August 2024. For formality, Councilmember Cathcart motioned to move 5c to Action item under 4a, Kyle Twohig seconded, everyone in favor and the motion passed. After reopening the action item to public comment, Councilmember Cathcart moved to approve the ARP contract signed by the ED with the County. Kyle Twohig seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

d. Board Request: Follow-up for Emergency Broadband Assistance for Grey and Oregon Fire Recovery Areas Resources/Funding

The BoCC and Mayor Cooper met with Congresswoman McMorris-Rodgers as part of discussion was ongoing urgency for communications in the Grey and Oregon Fire impact areas. The fire destroyed CenturyLink poles, Inland poles and cellular infrastructure all which has yet to have been rebuilt. Additionally, Century Link has announced they were not providing service (which was poor before) due to end of life equipment. Representative McMorris Rodgers asked if we can appropriate BEAD funds, but Congress made no allowance for Emg funding and it must flow through the State Broadband Office. The goal is to get this area in the county in sufficient coverage until BEAD contracts solidify in 2025. (9:55 Scott Simmons arrives). Noanet has agreed to provide backhaul at no change from their fiber lines and connect COWs. There is also another line of fiber in the area owned by Pend Orielle PUD who we haven't reached out to yet. We've already received interest from two local ISPs and Verizon who will want to hang gear (as approved) – The Broadline board will need to help direct level of collaboration with SREC to ensure no public safety equipment is compromised. Broadline will triage to make sure things go smoothly. We are at the point to bring others to the table to build out a project plan and proforma that will expand beyond Broadline board. Councilman Cathcart asked whether Century Link have a duty to serve. Joe described Incumbent licensed Exchange Carrier (ILEC) obligation to provide voice services. Data/broadband has never been dealt with as a utility service. Councilmember Cathcart asked about lobbying for change in this area and expressed appreciation for Broadline's mission and presence to advocate for residents. Joe said Representative McMorris Rodgers and Murry and Cantwell are up to speed. We have to find a way to fund the high cost customer, not the high-cost company. High Cost customers are left with nothing. Ariane described creating borders of what engagement we do so they exactly match the BEAD project area borders in the area so all the work can pivot into forthcoming bead applications. Scott requested that Broadline proceed with a full draft coverage map and any needed additional towers/COWs that would them

be taken to the BoCC. Upon their approval SREC would be approached to work on the technical aspects of any additional networking equipment with the assurance that it would not interfere with emergency response. Mayor Cooper agreed with Scott's assessment

e. Board Request: Analysis Matrix of Priority Projects & Current Resource Capacity

The Board reviewed document for needed capacity within Broadlinc. Ariane proposed additional resources could be contract or through an employee with a budget 75-100k which Broadlinc is able to afford, and are working on more planning funds to augment the cash outlay. Scott Simmons preferred keeping the expertise gained in-house with a new employee and suggested 100-125 or 150 for a full year with benefits. We have extra dollars to invest in this resource. (Cathcart out at 10:47). Joe also supported adding an in house employee. We have 24000 BSLs in 30 project areas. It's a huge task. It would be nice to have someone grow in the process alongside Broadlinc. Scott agreed with Joe for the long game. Continuity and growth of in house knowledge is multi-year project and In house shepherding will be valuable. The board expressed wide support for finding this person. Kyle expressed that if we have projects in mind we should be having someone working on property rights now. Mayor Cooper agreed with Scott that we're looking at paying over 100k, perhaps more 125k and up to attract the specific skillset and knowledge base. Ariane to develop a job description, and suggested this position would work well braided into WSAC work and which would build Broadlinc favor. Mayor Cooper reiterated the urgency of bringing this person onboard. The group said they would review the job spec for comments prior to the next meeting as per Executive Director policy all positions need to be approved by the board before posting.

6. New Items

a. ACP Support Letter

For reference Ariane sending out technical assistance and ACP letters

7. Items for Executive Session

8. Adjourn – 10:57pm

Upcoming Meetings

- Broadband Action Team (BAT) Friday, February 16th 10am-11am PT
- Governing Board Meeting February 28*, 9am-10:30am PT (*rescheduled from 3/6/24)
- Broadlinc PDA Membership Meeting March 20 9am-10:30am PT