



Washtenaw County Broadband Task Force
 Established by the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners
 Working to Achieve Countywide Broadband Equity by 2022



VIRTUAL Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 15, 2021
 8:00 – 9:00 A.M.

I. Call to Order | Introductions / Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by Chair Fuller at 8:00 a.m

Present:

Barb Fuller	Chair of the Broadband Task Force
Ben Fineman	Vice Chair of the Broadband Task Force
Commissioner Jason Maciejewski	District 1
Kyle Mazurek	Comcast
Melanie Bell	Library Representative
Diane O’Connell	Ann Arbor Township
Karen Nolte	Dexter Township
Valisa Bristle	Freedom Township
Gary Munce	Lyndon Township
Lisa Moutinho	Manchester Township
LJ Walter	Northfield Township
Gary Pirkola	Saline Township
Alec Jerome	Scio Township
Amanda Nimke-Ballard	Sylvan Township
John Kingsley	Webster Township
Gregory Dill	Washtenaw County Administrator

Members of the Public:

Chris Scharrer	DCS Technologies
Jared Mauch	Washtenaw Fiber Properties, LLC
Patrick Zieske	
Ron Suarez	
Karen Woollams	
Lamar Weir	Congresswoman Dingell’s Office

II. Approval of the Agenda

Motion to approve agenda as presented: Gary Munce. Supported by John Kingsley
 Unanimous approval

III. Approval of March 18, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve March 18, 2021 Meeting Minutes as presented: Ben Fineman.
 Supported by Gary Munce. Unanimous approval

IV. Updates

A. RDOF

- No significant updates since March 18, 2021 BBTF Meeting.
- Mercury Wireless is rebranding as Mercury Broadband.
- Remember, the RDOF build out process allows for up to 6 full years (2027). Please help your residents to manage expectations.

B. RFI for Broadband Gap Filling

- It was emphasized that this was a request for information and not a request for proposals. The RFI responses will serve as a starting point for conversations about addressing the approximately 3600 Washtenaw County households that will remain unserved after RDOF and CMIC funded expansions and completed.
- BBTF Leadership Team working with CTC Technology & Energy consultants to review RFI responses and plan next steps.
- Received responses from Midwest Energy & Communications (MEC) and Comcast as well as a program management and engineering services from DCS Technology Design, LLC.
- MEC did not describe a cost sharing approach to funding
- Comcast's response suggested cost sharing (80/20 with Comcast contributing 20%)
- More information to be shared upon complete review and analysis of responses

C. American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 – Twp allocations

- Broadband expansion is one of the approved uses for these funds. Townships are encouraged to set aside funds to fill in the gaps that will not be covered by the RDOF or CMIC awards.

To find the allocation amount for your township, as well as a narrative about the ARP <https://www.semcog.org/blog/what-the-american-rescue-plan-act-means-for-local-governments>

- scroll down to Non-entitlement Communities
- within that section scroll to the 3rd paragraph and click on the *This spreadsheet* link
- scroll down to find your Township's line (the governmental units are listed alphabetically)

The Michigan Townships Association is likely another helpful resource

<https://www.michigantownships.org/>

- Conversation then moved to the efficacy of this group and the strength it possesses by virtue of its collective membership
- Should a township decide to build broadband infrastructure independent of the BBTF, please let Barb know

D. Back-To-School Hotspots

- Sylvan utilizing Verizon – almost done
- Sharon nearing completion of erecting telescoping antenna
- Please let Barb know if you would like a 'Hotspot' sign

V. Action Items - None

VI. New Business - None

VII. Old Business - None

VIII. Township Updates

- **John Kingsley: Webster Township victim of ransomware on 3/19**
 - IT Right (their vendor) helped them navigate
 - \$10k ransom was demanded
 - Webster did not pay
 - Accelerated their new website implementation
 - All township employees now have new email addresses (check website)
 - No sensitive information accessed
 - No information lost
- **Gary Prikola: Saline Township BBTF Information Sharing**
 - Finding ways to share work of BBTF with township residents
 - Social media hasn't been overly effective, nor has email
 - Found allies in Clerk/Treasurer, will be placing ½ page w/information in summer tax bills. Valisa Bristle, Freedom Twp Clerk, cautioned that some tax bills are sent to banks and mortgage companies. Those property owners may therefore never receive the information that Gary described.
 - Information will direct people to township website and BBTF website
 - Others suggested direct mail, using voter files, partnering with libraries to reach their library card holders
 - John Kingsley, Webster Twp Supervisor, noted that they use broadcast genius to reach their residents via email
- **County Commissioner Jason Maciejewski shared his thoughts on the work of this group**
- Broadband access is a county-wide problem
- He is committed to solving it and having Washtenaw County become the first county in the state with complete broadband access for every resident
- Jason urged solidarity amongst the BBTF members
- He invited everyone to tune into the 6:30 PM April 22, 2021 Working Session of the County Board of Commissioners where a BBTF report will be given. (link provided in meeting materials)
- Jason is in favor of a dedicated full time staff person at the County to manage implementation of the BBTF overall plan, specifically coordinate the gap-filling project and provide ongoing administrative support.

IX. Public Comment

- Ron Suarez talked about Michigan Chapter of the Internet Society
 - <https://www.internetsociety.org/>
 - Contact him if interested: <https://michiganinter.net/contact/>
- Jared Mauch shared information about Washtenaw Fiber Properties, LLC broadband efforts in Scio Township. He pointed out that existing coverage maps will likely not indicate this fiber and cautioned against using grant dollars to build redundant service
- Lamar Weir from Congresswoman Debbie Dingell's office, asked if RFI information would be posted on the BBTF webpage. He was advised that it would be following review by the BBTF Leadership Team.

X. Announcements

- Barb corrected the BBTF Update by noting that the MTA Conference is in April not May.

XI. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn Amanda Nimke Ballard. Supported by John Kingsley.

The meeting adjourned at 9:07 am

NEXT MEETING: May 20, 2021 @ 8:00-9:00AM – Zoom format

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