

# Winchester Broadband Committee

## Meeting Minutes

July 29, 2022

**Meeting called to order** by Committee Chair Jim Hochstetter at 1:58

**Attendance:** Committee members: Jim Hochstetter, Dave Lull, Nancy Johnson, Gary Engstrom, Nicholas Newton

Also in attendance: John Grimmer, Town Board Liaison and Bill Niemuth, Vilas County Economic Development Broadband Committee

**Approval of Agenda:** Motion by Gary Engstrom, second by Dave Lull, motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of April 22, 2022 and May 20, 2022 meeting minutes:** Motion by Dave Lull, seconded by Gary Engstrom to accept the minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

**New Business:** Focus of the meeting was to receive updates at the county level from Bill Niemuth. He provided the following highlights:

1. 3 of 4 grant applications by Vilas County communities were awarded in the recent July round. Bill felt that Western Vilas county was a successful beneficiary and that Vilas is close to being on par with Bayfield, Price & Sawyer counties. He believes we are seeing the infrastructure growing with the addition of 2600 living units with these 3 recent awards.
2. Brightspeed's application in the last round for Winchester was not granted. Bill believes the reason for the failure was lack of Brightspeed to solicit community involvement.
3. VCEDC will be taking a more active role in the grant application process.
4. Winchester & Manitowish Waters have terrific opportunity with the sale of CenturyLink to Brightspeed. (planned closing date is 10/1) and Bill indicated that Winchester and Manitowish Waters should combine to create a single project. He believes that the secret to getting grants approved was revealed during the recent grant process. The PSC likes working at the county level and receiving well thought out, large projects which is where combining Winchester with Manitowish Waters makes sense.
5. Bill will be having discussions with Brightspeed in the next couple weeks and then bring Town's into the discussions.
6. Next round of grants potentially could open in September, closing 12/1. Bill sees Winchester/Manitowish Waters submitting a request in this round.

7. Winchester and Manitowish Waters broadband committees should be in communication.
8. The committee's next to-do's are to educate the Winchester residents on the options to project implementation and John Grimmer will inform the town board and reach out to Manitowish Waters.

The committee tabled the resetting of priorities and educating stakeholders agenda item until next meeting as the meeting ran overtime.

**Correspondence or other items:** none

**Next meeting date:** Wednesday, August 17, 1:00 at the Town Hall

**Meeting adjourned:** 2:15

**Submitted by:** Nancy Johnson, Committee Secretary