JOINT COUNTY COUNCIL AND COUNTY

 COMMISSIONERS MEETING MINUTES

APRIL 29, 2019

Denise Konkle, County Council President, opened the meeting and led the Pledge of Allegiance

1. Letter of intent to finance Mainstream Broadband grant project.

Denise Konkle stated the meeting is to sign a letter of intent for moving forward with a project what would supply broadband service into areas of our county that currently don’t have broadband service.

Don Lopp stated an overview had been given previously. This is for an application for the Next Level Connections Broad band grant from the State of Indiana through the Office of Community and Rural Affairs. Letters have been submitted which is part of our application we have submitted to Mainstream Fiber since they will be the lead applicant for the grant agreement requirements. Total cost is $4,263,510.00. Total miles of the backbone is 91. Number of households reached by the backbone is 2,983. The state portion of the grant is $2,089,119.00. Mainstream’s portion is 1,449,594.00. The County’s portion is $724,797.00. The steps that need to be taken tonight are the Commissioners would need to pass a Resolution allowing Mainstream Fiber to submit the grant application by the deadline which is May 3rd. Commissioners will also need to sign a broadband economic agreement which the county attorney has reviewed and is ready for signature with Mainstream Fiber for the services that would be part of that grant application. Then the County Council would pass a motion that would allow Denise Konkle to sign a financial commitment letter for the $724, 797.00 for the project. Don Lopp would be more than happy to answer any questions.

Senator Grooms and Representative Engleman were ask to give a short statement. Senator Grooms stated that Senate Bill 460 passed which created a broadband funding account to allow money to be available throughout the state of Indiana to fund assistance for specific local projects. There is 100 million dollars for expanding broadband to rural areas. This is a very important project if we are going to grow. And if we are going to grow we have to have infrastructure and we have to have connectivity. Everyone want the fastest and the best. Senator Grooms read a quote that he will be forwarding to the grant application process, this is an opportunity that cannot be passed up. I fully support Floyd County in their partnership with Mainstream Fiber to invest in their rural community to bring affordable and fast internet so we have internet coverage to all residents of Floyd County to the best of our ability to provide that.

Representative Engleman states she knows how important it is to have dependable internet service. She states Mainstream Fiber is a great company to work with.

Hope Gesenhues stated her home is not in the area for service and she is asking for the county to include her area in the grant application.

Bill Fender stated he has a personal and business internet account and that was the only way to get reliable service as he runs a small business from his home. Hi speed internet is no longer a luxury it is necessity. He states the return on the county’s investment is a good one.

Michele Castile states she lives on Gunn Rd in Lanesville and she does not have any internet. There are 10 homes on her road and she would like to see the internet come to her neighborhood.

Phil Simms said there are 8 or 9 houses that do not have the opportunity to have internet. He would like to see those homes get internet.

***Motion to pass Resolution 2019-9. Moved by John Schellenberger; seconded by Shawn Carruthers. Motion passed unanimously.***

***Motion to allocate, appropriate and budget $724,797.00 and for President to be able to sign the letter of engagement after the meeting. Moved by Brad Striegel; seconded by Tom Pickett. Motion passed unanimously.***

Discussion: Dale Bagshaw has a concern it is not going to meet expectations. Also, there should some talk about a possible surcharge of $5.00. State statute allows a surcharge be put on. Brad Striegel stated we are going to talk about the surcharge at our next meeting. Adam Roberts thanked Senator Grooms and Representative Engleman for coming and speaking. Also, he thanked Mark Gabriel from Mainstream Fiber for being at the meeting and answering questions. Danny Short said that this is a grant project and is not guaranteed but ask Senator Grooms if we have a good chance of receiving the grant. Denise Konkle ask Don Lopp if we do not receive the grant are we obligated to continue the project. Don Lopp and Billy Stewart stated if we do not receive the grant then there is not a match. Brad Striegel stated there are a few other details concerning the project that need to be worked out but they do not have to be done in this meeting.

Billy Stewart ask Rick Fox about a contract to approve. Don Lopp handed out the broadband economic development agreement that has to be submitted with the grant application.

***Motion to approve the broadband economic development agreement. Moved by John Schellenberger; seconder by Shawn Carruthers. Motion passed unanimously.***

John Schellenberger thanked Senator Grooms, Karen Engleman and Mark Gabriel for coming. Also, thanked Don Lopp and Justin Tackett for all their hard work on the project.

***Commissioners to approve Community Corrections contract. Moved by John Schellenberger; seconded by Shawn Carruthers. Motion passed unanimously***.

1. Scott Clark describe issue with property tax billings that went out wrong and how he intends to address the issue.

Denise Konkle stated we have had problems with some tax bills. Scott Clark will address that. Scott Clark stated all tax bills have been corrected with the exception of four. He stated in the past there have been a much larger number of corrections so this is not an issue. We are current in the office with corrections.

1. Insure that settlement is filed on time.

Denise Konkle ask Scott Clark if settlement would be filed on time. Scott stated that it would be.

John Schellenberger thanked the County Council for the action they took on the broadband project. He also thanked Suzanna Worrall for her help

Denise Konkle thanked everyone for coming.

Brad Striegel thanked the Commissioners for catching the vision of the broadband project as well.

***Motion to adjourn. Moved by Dale Bagshaw; seconded by Brad Striegel. Motion passed unanimously.***