

PROCEEDINGS OF THE MURRAY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING
MURRAY COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER – SLAYTON, MINNESOTA
June 14, 2022 6:00pm

Pursuant to notice, the Murray County Board of Commissioners convened in special session with the following members present: Commissioners Molly Malone, Lori Gunnink, Dennis Welgraven, and David Thiner. Also present in person were County Administrator Carolyn McDonald, General Assistant Emily Ackerman, Extension Support Staff Samantha McClellan. Excused Absence: Commissioner Jim Kluis

The meeting opened by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

The purpose of the special meeting is to discuss ARPA Expenditure and the Border-to-Border Broadband Grant.

No conflicts of interest were identified.

Justine Wettschreck met with the board to discuss the infrastructure Category of the ARPA Funds. The request is to use \$10,500 in funds to construct a sidewalk at the Murray County Fairgrounds from the cattle barn to the hoop barn, and from the hoop barn to the arena. The ARPA committee had previously applied for the AARP Community Challenge Grant for the project, but the request was denied. There have been discussions with 4-H and 4-H Foundation on funding part of the project, at this time they do not know how much they can contribute.

This will add more access to the fairgrounds for people with mobility issues. C&B will make it their community project for the year, they will bring in 20 volunteers and equipment. Project to be completed after the Draft Horse Show and before the Murray County Fair.

Funds will be used to pay for materials and labor, cost could end up lowering if 4-H is able to assist in funding.

It was moved by Gunnink, seconded by Welgraven, and passed to approve expenditures to be paid from the Murray County American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds as follows for the sidewalks at the Fairgrounds

Jason Lorenz met with the board to discuss Broadband for Murray County. Topics discussed were a Feasibility Study conducted in 2018, Funding Options, Public Private Partnerships, Cost Estimates, Funding Notes, and the next steps for the county to take.

Feasibility study that was conducted in 2018 it was estimated to cost \$21,018,017 to get fiber to the home for the whole county, at the time it was not feasible without private partnership and/or multiple rounds of grants, estimated roughly 2,690 potential customers, based off of 70% of customers taking the option of fiber to the home, several municipalities were excluded because they already had some sort of highspeed broadband in their home.

Funding options would include grants such as Border-to-Border they will match up to 50% of the project cost up to a \$5 million max, BEADS Grant still currently being developed, they would potentially match up to 75% of installation costs, there are no specific requirement details yet, phase one is to release new broadband maps for the state. County ARPA Funds currently we have \$500,000 set aside that could be used. USDA Rural Development ReConnect Program 3rd round now closed \$1.2b in funding. Offered 100% Grant, 100% loan, or Combo options for underserved areas. 1st round 2019 \$656 million, 2nd round 2020 \$854 million.

Public Private Partnership discussions were held with Woodstock Communications they could potentially offer up to 25% of investment towards the project, they are already established in the NW corner of the county, they are working on funding the lakes area, for them to apply for Border-to-Border Grants they would need some funding from the county.

Cost Estimates were projected off a 2-year project of \$20,000,000 or 25,000,000, the project could take up to 4 years.

\$20,000,000 Project

- Year 1
 - \$12,500,000 Cost
 - \$5,000,000 Grant
 - \$2,500,000 Woodstock Investment
 - \$5,000,000 County Investment
- Year 2
 - \$7,500,000 Cost
 - \$3,000,000 Grant
 - \$2,500,000 Woodstock Investment
 - \$2,000,000 County Investment
- Totals
 - \$8,000,000 Grants
 - \$5,000,000 Woodstock Investment
 - \$7,000,000 County Investment

\$25,000,000 Project

- Year 1
 - \$12,500,000 Cost
 - \$5,000,000 Grant
 - \$3,125,000 Woodstock Investment
 - \$4,375,000 County Investment
- Year 2
 - \$12,500,000 Cost
 - \$5,000,000 Grant
 - \$3,125,000 Woodstock Investment
 - \$4,375,000 County Investment
- Totals
 - \$10,000,000 Grants
 - \$6,250,000 Woodstock Investment
 - \$8,750,000 County Investment

For Grants more likely if you are in the 30-40% match range to get the approval. Most grants are going to require financial commitment from a local government, county, township, etc. Most grants use a scoring-based system to determine eligibility. Talking specifically with Woodstock communications they would determine their investment % once the project costs are determined by us, they are currently working with the City of Slayton for their fiber project, they are also currently working on an engineering study of the lakes area, they already have their 2023 projects determined so earliest they could start this project would be 2024.

Next steps to take we would want to get a new feasibility study done as things have changed since 2018. The county will need to determine how much they want to invest for a provider to start making their budget and let us know the grants we are available for. The county will need to determine the provider they would like to partner with that could potentially have more grant options open.

The Border-to Border Grant will close on June 23, 2022, the board discussed where to find the funds to put in for the county investment requirement, it was brought up that we have \$500,000 of ARPA funds that we can financially invest to this project. It was discussed to see if we could possibly combine with both Woodstock Communications and Lismore Communications for a joint grant project, this will be looked into. Commissioner Malone suggested to apply for the Border-to-Border grant with designating \$500,000 in ARPA funds apply for as much area as we can this year and we can 100% commit to up to \$500,000 right now, if more than that is needed it can be readdressed at the June 21st meeting.

It was moved by Gunnink, seconded by Malone, and passed to utilize ARPA funds of \$500,000 to see what we can get on the first round of applications for the Border-to-Border Grant.

5:50pm. The meeting was adjourned.

ATTEST:

Carolyn McDonald, County Administrator

Molly Malone Chairman, of the Board