

Unapproved Meeting Minutes
Ultra High Speed Broadband Task Force Meeting
Friday, October 2, 2009
9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.



Location: Thomson Reuters
D4 – Special Events Room
610 Opperman Drive
Eagan, MN 55123

Facilitator: Anne Losby

Task force members in attendance: Steve Cawley, Brent Christensen, Tom Garrison, Mike Martin (for John Gibbs), JoAnne Johnson, Tim Lovaasen, Gopal Khanna, Neal Young (for Dan McElroy), Mike O'Connor, Kim Ross, Vijay Sethi, Dick Sjoberg, Bob Bass (for Karen Smith), Andrew Schriner (for John Stanoch), Mary Ellen Wells, Peg Werner, Robyn West and Glenn Wilson.

Replacements:

Mike Martin for John Gibbs
Bob Bass for Karen Smith
Andrew Schriner for John Stanoch

Jack Geller, Barb Gervais, Rick King, Chris Swanson, Craig Taylor were not in attendance.

Public attendees: Ann Treacy, Dennis Fazio, Tom Berkelman and Cathy Clucas.

Staff in attendance: Carlos Seoane and Shirley Walz from Thomson Reuters; Diane Wells from the MN Department of Commerce.

Opening comments; review meeting agenda – JoAnne Johnson

The meeting was called to order at 9:35. JoAnne Johnson welcomed everybody and noted that Rick King would hopefully be able to attend for parts of the meeting. JoAnne noted the substitutes.

JoAnne Johnson asked for comment or additions to the agenda. None. Motion to approve the agenda. Seconded. Approved.

The minutes from the September 18, 2009 meeting were moved and seconded. Approved.

Public Comments

No member of the public that was present indicated a desire to address the task force.

10:00 – 10:30 Ongoing Council Sub-group Report

(Mike, Steve, Mary Ellen and John Stanoch)

Mike O'Connor began the discussion on behalf of the subgroup and referred task force members to a two page handout. The sub-group was not quite in agreement. The idea for the ongoing council is that it be advisory in nature and not a new government entity. As an editorial comment, Mike noted that this section and the ubiquity section may need to ramp up language that the task force is suggesting we all have a lot of work to do to get us to our goals. We are not saying that the government should do this for us but that the state is a convener for us and can help us work through it.

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In referring to the handout, Mike noted that he is a project coordinator by training. There are a lot of projects that need to be coordinated. He recognizes that the language in the bullet points, while it has been through several iterations, isn't there yet. The ongoing council should help us figure out what needs to be done and the sequence. The stakeholders and the policy holders themselves have to do the heavy lifting.

For the bullet point "Build appropriate coalitions and identify available resources from inside and outside State government," the thought is it's good to have a place. Mike used the stone soup analogy—take resources and bring them to the table comfortably. This council won't have the power to make anyone do anything.

The next bullet point triggered some angst: "Obtain resource commitments." The idea is to get resources lined up so you don't run out of gas. It is not a mandate to force people to put in resources.

Ensure that projects are well defined before they are launched" was intended as a project management tool. It is easier to fix something before you start. Stakeholders are free to ignore the advice, but if it is good advice they won't.

For the last bullet point on page one, "Monitor and report progress as projects move forward," it would have been more accurate to have the word "Help" at the beginning.

For "Develop options to overcome obstacles as they arise," this council could be a group that the stakeholders come to because they've gotten stuck. Same with the last bullet point, "Resolve disputes and revise plans when circumstances change," a group that can help the stakeholders, a good group to bring a multi-stakeholder problem to because they don't have any authority to resolve.

Mary Ellen Wells added that a philosophical underpinning was that the sub-group does not want the work of this task force to collect dust. Our efforts have been many and long and we have a vested interest to see that our recommendations are implemented. We need a council to help ensure that it gets done. We've agreed that there should be an ongoing council and it's just the form that it should take.

It was noted that the section on the ongoing council would get inserted along with the recommendations.

There was some discussion about the specific language to be used for ongoing council recommendations. Concerns were raised about funding and paperwork requirements, the need to be specific, how the council can avoid taking sides if faced with a competitive issue. The importance of keeping this issue in front of the legislature was noted because there isn't a lot of interest or understanding and because everything that is important has an ongoing group or task force. What the council does, who it advises and assists all need to be spelled out. Reference was made that this could be similar to the Next Gen Energy Board which meets monthly outside of session and produces an annual report. If the names of other similar boards or councils are found, we could drop it into the language so the legislature understands.

JoAnne Johnson indicated she believes we are ready to send it back to the sub-group with something shorter coming back. We should have a vote on this at the next meeting. If anyone has comments on this section, send them to Mike.

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10:30 – 11:00 Recommendation #2 – Policies and actions necessary to achieve ubiquitous broadband – sub-group report

Mike O'Connor led the discussion and went over the results of the survey. The exercise was done to get through the recommendations of the ubiquity group. There was discussion on how people used the rating scale.

JoAnne Johnson suggested that the sub-group go back and pare down the recommendations. Peg Werner said that the ubiquity group could review and if there is dispute on a recommendation, decide whether to drop it, revise it or pursue it. If anyone had noted objections in the survey, Mike O'Connor requested comments by close of business on Monday.

BREAK

After the break, JoAnne Johnson noted that we seem to be putting off a lot of items and we know that. The next meeting in two weeks is going to have to be longer. What sub-groups bring back is going to have to be shorter and moveable.

11:15 – 11:45 Recommendation #5 – Evaluation and recommendation of security, vulnerability, and redundancy actions necessary to ensure reliability -- sub-group report

Mike O'Connor led the discussion on this recommendation. He noted that this is the same document as last time with a comment from Vijay added. Mike suspects that this language may have the same issues as the ubiquity section and that is people haven't had time to review.

The group decided to review the introductory language to see if they could come to agreement. Following discussion, Mike agreed to write the language and bring it back later in the agenda. Mike also indicated that he would thin out the language and move actions and recommendations to an appendix

11:45 – 12:30 Recommendation #7 – Economic development opportunities

Recommendation #8 – Evaluation of how broadband access can benefit organizations and institutions

The group was referred to p. 72 of the draft report for the language for Recommendation #7. Mary Ellen noted that she would like to add language on eHealth and will work with Craig on that.

Language on p.72 was edited as follows:

Rural Minnesota cities face unique economic development challenges. Often working on their own ~~not connected to other cities~~, rural cities have to expand their base by reaching beyond the city limits, serving as the hub of activity for geographical regions. In these areas, anchor tenants -- community colleges, health care centers, libraries, can help justify the cost and effort of providing power and broadband for the community. To keep costs down, we advocate judicious planning. Plan once -- develop coordinated broadband, electric-grid, energy retrofit projects; dig once -- coordinate construction projects, such as roads and electrical-grid improvements.

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The task force ~~recommends~~ believes that the legislature should consider public/private partnership models ~~in unserved and underserved areas of the state~~, which makeing funding s available for technology training, production, and adoption in communities at the margins of technology (i.e., rural, low-income, immigrant, senior populations and communities of color). Demand for broadband can be stimulated by increasing digital literacy and requiring an adoption component of all broadband projects funded. ~~An overseeing body could be created to measure progress.~~

Affordable, fast, and easy access to the internet can strengthen educational and health services, local business, citizen and civic engagement, ~~public participation~~, access to information, and government services ~~governance~~. Digital knowledge and skills enable people to use and shape the internet to meet their needs. Minnesota's government, community organizations, and private sector entities should support and promote free or low-cost training. Minnesota should fund digital and media literacy as a component of public education, and support education in libraries, YMCAs, and public housing community centers.

JoAnne asked for any other comments or suggestions. None. JoAnne asked if we had consensus. Agreed. Recommendation #7 is adopted.

Recommendation #8 was discussed and the following edits made:

By 2015, ultra high-speed broadband capabilities will be ~~required~~ necessary to not only connect public sector locations and communities, but also citizens and businesses. Each of these entities will need to have adequate access for e.mergency, e.government, e.conomic development, e.health, and e.learning.

The paragraphs below take a closer look at each of these areas, and how they will benefit from broadband.

e.mergency: Minnesota's public safety and emergency response organizations need broadband so they can rapidly share information between public health, safety, and emergency responder entities and private entities. Broadband is also required for cyber security, 24X7 availability, fault protection, and to support seamless disaster management between branches and levels of government, as well as to expand capacity and connectivity for the Public Safety and Homeland Security Networks of Minnesota.

The task force ~~recommends~~ believes that it is necessary to ~~connecting~~ to every public sector emergency responder facility (i.e., sheriff, police and fire, PCA, public health locations) as well as each of the 63 National Guard armories and training centers.

e.government: Minnesota's health, welfare, and public service delivery needs require high-speed connectivity across all branches and levels of government. High-speed connectivity is necessary to make needed improvements for connectivity to and between government facilities, citizens, and businesses, including adding or improving

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capabilities for remote services for citizens, sharing information among governmental agencies, civic and citizen engagement and providing infrastructure for alternative service delivery models (telecommuting, neighborhood service centers, communication and collaboration between units of government). In addition to high-speed, the state information infrastructure must provide for confidentiality, fault protection, and cost-efficiency. (See role of Government)

e.conomic development: Minnesota's need to stay competitive in a global economy requires citizens and businesses including home-based businesses, to have cost-effective, high-speed broadband connectivity. Examples include: access to global markets, the need to share and move information between locations, the need to provide employee telecommuting opportunities (which will result in lower costs and increased retention). (See Recommendation 7 Economic Development Opportunities)

e.learning: Minnesota's K-12 education/higher education/public library communities needs an open network infrastructure that allows interconnectivity, connections with each other higher education, and access to Internet2. At the same time, e.learning applications require security, capacity, availability, and world-wide connectivity. This advanced capability is necessary for the following:

- Student web-based learning systems.
- Data driven decision making systems with a Minnesota orientation.
- Instructional management systems for tracking and accountability.
- Electronic video streamed and web-based curriculum resources.
- Student access to educators, counselors, and student services.
- Shared interactive television, hybrid online/video, and online courses and instructional resources.
- High-stakes testing and assessment with various data collection devices.
- Secure student information storage, transfer, and reporting with common protocols.
- Access to reference and research resources.
- Network bandwidth traffic analysis and management.
- Library web-based resource and information systems.
- Cost effective voice-over-IP (VoIP) applications.
- Internet2.
- Seamless data and video connectivity between K-12 schools, higher education, and public libraries and to state agencies, cities, and counties to allow for exchange, use, and delivery of resources and services.

In order to support Minnesota's education community of K-12 schools, higher education institutions, distance learning and online students, Minnesota's public libraries need an ~~open network infrastructure~~, readily expandable bandwidth capacity, additional public access computer workstations, and increased wireless access throughout the library buildings. This capability will be used to:

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- Give students Internet access necessary for schoolwork after hours
- Allow students without home access to enroll in online classes/schools
- Allow K-12 and higher education distance students to take classes online
- Allows students to take locally-proctored online tests
- Provide access to the ELM (Electronic Library for Minnesota) databases
- Give all parents and students access to school information and records outside of school hours, including those without Internet access at home or those with dial-only access

In addition, public libraries need ~~more~~ sufficient bandwidth and public access computer workstations to provide Internet access to the digitally disadvantaged. Increased capabilities would be used to:

- Provide Internet access to thousands of Minnesota citizens
- Provide high-speed stable access to those who live in underserved (dial only) areas
- Assist beginners in computer use basics and Internet usage
- Assist the unemployed in filling out forms and filing claims
- Assist the unemployed in resume writing and job searches
- Provide email access to those without other means of attaining an account

Increased and readily expandable bandwidth ~~also allows~~ would be used by life-long learners to use the library in their educational process to:

- ~~Providing~~ Access online library catalogs for both in-house and web-based use
- ~~Offering~~ Take advantage of interlibrary loan and resource sharing across the state through the MnLINK database
- ~~Providing~~ Use internet access and research assistance.
- ~~Offering~~ Seek access to hundreds of electronic databases and thousands of ebooks

The task force ~~recommends~~ believes that public libraries receive bandwidth on an as-needed basis ~~to the wall~~, with continued funding by the State of Minnesota, and that K-12 education, higher ed and public libraries continue to fund interior wiring and network hardware, computer workstations and training for the public through local funds.

The task force also discussed adding a paragraph on civic engagement in the government section.

JoAnne Johnson asked if the task force was ok with the language as amended knowing we will see the eHealth language at the next meeting. Done. Recommendation #8 with the edits and the additional e.Health language to be drafted is accepted.

Lunch break until 1:20

The task force revisited Mike O'Connor's language on security, vulnerability and redundancy language. Mike noted that he tried to take the flowery language out. Vijay and Mike collaborated on the rewrite of Vijay's suggestion. Mike has a drafting note that everything else would go to an appendix. Since much of this echoes the ubiquity language we will learn a lot of lessons in ubiquity and push those back.

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JoAnne Johnson indicated we should walk through the language. Following discussion, Mike's language was amended to read:

The introductory paragraph to the specific goals reads: "The Task Force recommends that the State undertake and fund a detailed study of this issue to determine the advisability and approach to addressing the following goals (detailed suggestions contained in Appendix XXX of this report):"

The second bullet point was then revised to read: "Ensure that there are multiple diverse high-capacity routes for 'commodity' Internet traffic entering and leaving the state."

The third bullet point was revised to read: "Ensure redundancy for public safety." (Remainder is the same.)

The fourth bullet point was revised to read: "Explore peering strategy and the degree to which they can contribute to our security, vulnerability and redundancy goals."

The fifth bullet point was deleted.

The sixth bullet point was revised to read "Ensure there are mechanisms to ..."

The last bullet point was revised to eliminate the reference to the advisory council.

JoAnne Johnson asked after taking all edits, is the task force ready to take the security piece. Are there any serious objections? The security piece was adopted.

1:00 – 1:30 Discuss sections of version 5 of the report

- Language on data from Connected Nation

Brent Christensen led the discussion of the revised language on the information regarding the data from Connected Nation. He referred to the handout with the new language. This language would replace the language on p. 25.

JoAnne Johnson asked for comments. Brent noted that the sub-group could not come up with good wording for the paragraph right after the bullets and if the final editors could make the sentence read better, that would be helpful. Language approved.

- Speed data sources

Shirley Walz referred the group to the handout on sources for speed data. There is no one source that everyone is agreeing upon. The handout provides examples of the data that match to the statistics that the task force wanted to show. The question is what source should be used in the report.

Peg Werner indicated that the question went to the researchers for the task force so we should just go with what they decide.

Shirley Walz asked if members of the task force have other data, to please send cites.

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- Expectations for version 6

Anne Losby noted that version 5 of the report was handed out today. All of the agreed upon language from today will be taken back and put into version 6. It will be much closer to a final version. We plan to get you a solid version 6 with the expectation that you will read it cover to cover. In terms of fine tuning, we don't want to spend the full group's time doing that. If there are suggestions, funnel them through Shirley and Anne.

Shirley Walz also noted that at p. 21 a reach out was done to the League of Minnesota Cities for municipal broadband initiatives. At p. 24, there is a section on residential broadband pricing and we need pricing from providers here so please provide input.

JoAnne Johnson asked Brent Christensen will contact the MTA and then to get back to Shirley. Mike Martin can do the same with the MN Cable Association. JoAnne also asked if we could break out metro and nonmetro pricing as Mary Ellen noticed rates that must be metro rates because they aren't what is charged in the rural areas and Kim noted that price is really a big issue.

2:15 – 2:45 Recommendation #4 – Evaluation of strategies, financing, financial incentives used in other states/countries to support broadband development and Recommendation #6 – Cost estimate

Mike O'Connor noted that he needed to leave at 3:00 and that he had a handout on issues in the finance sections.

Dick Sjoberg gave a 30 second overview of these sections given that it was almost 3:00. He noted that if anyone has comments to please send them ahead of the meeting so they can be addressed in the next iteration.

2:45 – 3:00 Plans for Upcoming Meetings (reference planning calendar)

JoAnne Johnson noted that the items we had for carry over are the ongoing council and ubiquity and those sub-groups will meet before the next task force meeting on October 16. Mike is the convener for both of those groups and will be in contact with the sub-group members to set up the meetings. We are close on those topics. We will also discuss the finance sections at the next meeting. We will discuss minority reports. The more we do before we get to the meeting, the shorter it can be. However, be prepared to slog it out.

JoAnne Johnson mentioned the upcoming items of the press conference at the release of the report, the joint legislative hearing on Nov. 6, the breakfast on Nov. 9 and the Blandin Conference in Duluth November 18-19.

Meeting adjourned at 3:05 p.m.