

Unapproved Meeting Minutes
Ultra High Speed Broadband Task Force Meeting
Friday, August 21, 2009
9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.



Location: Bigwood Event Center
925 Western Avenue
Fergus Falls, MN

Facilitator: Anne Losby

Task force members in attendance: Steve Cawley, Brent Christensen, Tom Garrison, John Gibbs, JoAnne Johnson, Jack Ries (for Gopal Khanna), Rick King, Dan McElroy, Mike O'Connor, Kim Ross, Vijay Sethi, Dick Sjoberg, Andy Schriener (for John Stanoch), Chris Swanson, Craig Taylor, Mary Ellen Wells, Peg Werner, Robyn West, Glenn Wilson.

Replacements:

Jack Ries for Gopal Khanna – jack.ries@state.mn.us

Andy Schriener for John Stanoch – andrew.schriener@qwest.com

Jack Geller, Barb Gervais and Karen Smith were not in attendance.

Public attendees: Ann Treacy, Clay Drews, S. Carlson, Rep. Morrie Lanning, Bonnie Neas, Tim Brinkman, Dallas and Orrie Leabo, Eldon Linscheid, Jeanne Anderson, Randy Young, Hal Leland, Aaron Berge, Lois Josefson

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

Opening comments; review meeting agenda – Rick King

The meeting was called to order at 9:00. Rick welcomed everybody and noted the substitutes and absences. Rick asked for comment or additions to the agenda. None. Motion to approve the agenda. Seconded. Approved.

A motion was made to approve the minutes from July 17 meeting. Seconded. Approved.

Rick indicated that he is working to get input into the issues being addressed by the task force from Minnesota's Native American community and has gotten some feedback. He'll share when we get more responses back. Rick also mentioned the Blandin conference on broadband in Duluth on Nov. 18 and 19 and that they have space reserved for the task force on the morning of Nov. 19 to talk about the report. If you are interested in participating, let Rick know. If you think you might attend you might let Bill Coleman know.

Rick reminded the task force that we have 3 meetings scheduled in October. We won't hold meetings if we don't need to. In that regard, he asked the task force to take the report version provided today and read it as a full report. The other part about the report is the potential that we left open for minority reports. So far we've been pretty effective at discussing and compromising. That may not always hold true. But Rick put out a guideline that if we are going to have a minority position on something, and he is not saying we should, but if we are going to have, those need to be written up and printed by the first (week) meeting in October. The real important guideline here is this: we should keep working on compromises that we can live with. But if there are going to be minority reports, use that first meeting in October as a deadline.

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Today we are videotaping this meeting by the local community cable TV folks. We'll end up with a DVD. If anyone wants a copy to take the DVD to their community, let Rick know.

Rick also mentioned tentative plans for the report roll out and that we are probably going to try and hold some afternoon briefings at the Science Museum at St. Paul the afternoon of November 3. He'd like to have as many Task Force members attend as possible. More details to follow. There was discussion by the task force on the appropriateness of holding a press conference or just submitting the report.

Public Comments

Rick King opened up the meeting for public comment and asked commenters to please identify themselves and who they represent or where they live, whatever is relevant.

Daryl Ecker from Park Region Telephone Company told the task force about IPTV, broadband, and other services his company provides. He also discussed the challenges of providing broadband ubiquitously including that rural areas require large expenditures of capital. He responded to questions from the task force.

Mary Mehsikomer representing NorthWest-Links which includes 70 public school districts. Mary talked about library and public school needs, including distance learning and teacher training. She responded to questions from the task force.

Mark Birkholz with Arvig Communication Systems (37 exchanges with 7 different operating companies) addressed the task force. He described the services that his company provides, the cost, the difficulty of being the 4th or 5th provider, and the problem with a mandated speed. He responded to questions from the task force.

Dallas Leabo and Orrie Leabo also addressed the task force. They live out in the country and would like to have better service. They are 2 miles from Fergus Falls and 6 miles from Underwood. Dallas talked about the frustration to get her email, if she can get 1 picture in an hour they are lucky. If an email comes in during that time it disconnects. Many times they cannot get connected to the server. If they want to check on an Internet page, they can't. It is frustrating for rural people. If you ask what speed they have, very slow.

Rick asked if anyone else wanted to speak. No one did. He thanked those that spoke.

9:45 – 10:15 Bonnie Neas, VP Information Technology, North Dakota State University

Vijay introduced the next speaker. He indicated that he thought it would be helpful to have a discussion of what is going on in our neighboring state of North Dakota. Bonnie has been with NDSU since 1984 and has been heavily involved in the northern tier network consortium.

Bonnie Neas shared some of the things they've done in ND and noted that they have many of the same problems that MN has. The challenges of the rural areas are just as common in ND. She realized early that networking is more than the lines in the ground but also about people. Networking of people has to take place. She discussed the collaboration that took place to develop the Northern tier. Bonnie responded to questions from the task force.

Rick King thanked Bonnie Neas for her presentation.

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10:15 – 10:30 Recommendation #1 – Identify the level of service

- **Approve report language for speed goals and symmetrical service**
- **(Craig Taylor, Brent Christensen, Dan McElroy, Peg Werner, Shirley Walz)**

Rick King referred the task force to the handouts in front of them and the language for recommendation #1 and asked Craig, the subgroup leader to walk through the handout.

The task force discussed and Rick asked if we can agree to a couple of points: that this is what we want to say and that we will have final copy for agreement at our September meeting. We'll know whether we cause wireless a problem or not. If it's ok we'll just go on. We'll contact Karen. The task force agreed.

BREAK 11:00 to 11:20

On Recommendation #1, Rick stated his goal was to pass it. We had some unintentional regression of what we agreed to. We did make a lot of compromises on this area. We came to a point where we had everyone move to consensus so that it hurt a little bit. We have to be careful not to go back and undo that. Everyone had something in mind when they joined this task force on this issue especially. He would like us to keep the essence of what we did and move forward. Don't want to go back but want to say he hopes we can keep plowing forward.

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

- **Review sub-group recommendations**
- **(Mike O'Connor, Brent Christensen, JoAnne Johnson, Diane Wells, Per Werner, Mary Ellen Wells, Carlos Seoane)**

Rick King asked Mike to lead us through this.

Mike O'Connor presented the work of the ubiquitous subgroup, noting that the task force had seen the outline for this at the last meeting and that what has been done since then is to flesh the language out. (See language in draft report.)

Rick King asked if anyone had issues with the first paragraph. Should we move to approve that goal? Motion and seconded. Approved.

Rick King asked about the next paragraphs under Introduction. There was brief discussion.

Rick King asked for agreement. Motion and second. Approved.

Rick King noted that the rest of the work of the subgroup starts to get into action. The subgroup language discusses the concept of forming an ongoing council. There was discussion of the overlap with the Role of Government subgroup which had a similar recommendation. The task force discussed the concept of an ongoing council.

Rick King asked for a fist to five vote with a hand up if the idea of some kind of advisory group makes sense. Vote. A few no's. The reason for the no (fist) votes were discussed.

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Rick King suggested that we form another subgroup that comes up with a few options or models. Steve Cawley, Mike O'Connor, Andy Schriener (John Stanoch), and Mary Ellen Wells volunteered with Mike O'Connor serving as convener.

12:30 – 1:00 LUNCH

After lunch, the group agreed to discuss the speed goal again briefly. Agreement was reached to include a statement as to why the task force was not including a goal for speed compared to other countries. Further discussion on the speed language. With the concept being ubiquitous service by 2015. Motion. All in favor. Approved.

Role of Government -- sub-group report

- **Discuss and decide on language for the report**
- **(Tom Garrison, Mike O'Connor, Vijay Sethi, Karen Smith, John Stanoch, Robyn West)**

Tom Garrison walked the group through the Role of Government section. He highlighted the areas where there was not yet agreement. The idea of an ongoing council has been assigned to a new subgroup. Income eligibility was discussed for qualifying for assistance. Broadband safety and security was discussed. Consumer protection was addressed. Technical improvement and the role of government was mentioned. Emphasis was on the role of the state, but municipal and federal roles were also mentioned.

Recommendation #3 – Opportunities for public and private sectors to cooperate to achieve goal – sub-group report

- **Review sub-group recommendations**
- **(Brent Christensen, Steve Cawley, Tom Garrison, Tim Lovaasen, Vijay Sethi, Robyn West, Mary Ellen Wells, Diane Wells)**

Brent Christensen went over the changes this subgroup made from the last meeting. Brent mentioned we should come up with a common term for public private partnership that we use consistently.

Mike O'Connor moved that this section be approved, Mary Ellen Wells seconded. Approved.

Recommendation #4 – Evaluation of strategies, financing, financial incentives used in other states/countries to support broadband development

Recommendation #6 – Cost estimate

- **Review sub-group recommendations**
- **(John Gibbs, Dan McElroy, John Stanoch, Dick Sjoberg, Diane Wells)**

John Gibbs went over what the subgroup is doing, including gathering data on adoption programs and tax based incentives. In terms of the other incentives, the subgroup likes the work that has been done so either expanding it or having a supplement to get a lot deeper in to the

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tax incentives and credits. The subgroup has reached out to the tax groups at providers for ideas. Dick Sjoberg is working to outline some of the technologies and the costs. The task force discussed. John Gibbs said the subgroup would welcome people to review what has been written and send the subgroup members questions.

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

- **September 18, 2009 Thomson Reuters**
- **October 2, 16, 30 Thomson Reuters**

Rick King noted that the next meeting is September 18 and Connected Nation will be here. We will have some work back on symmetry language. We will have updates on the Role of Government and #4 and #6 (John Gibbs' subgroup). John Stanoch will be chasing some data. Recommendation #5 (Security, Vulnerability and Redundancy) we didn't get to today but will next time.

Rick King also indicated that there would also be a totally optional cocktail event put together for the night before the September 18 meeting. Rick said that he also noticed that in yesterday's paper they talked about Carver County introducing a telecommuting policy. We need to connect telecommuting and energy savings and delaying more roadwork into the report.

Rick King asked for any other comments. There was a request to reiterate the October meeting dates. Those dates are October 2, 16 and 30.

Meeting adjourned at 3:02 p.m.