

**REGULAR MEETING
FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, AUGUST 7, 2007
4:00 P.M. - SCOTT HEYMAN CONFERENCE ROOM**

Present: K. Luz Herrera, Chair; G. Stevenson; D. Randall; D. Kiefer
Excused: P. Mackesey
Staff: C. Nelson, Public Works Administrator; A. LeMaro, Facilities; S. Whicher, County Administrator; G. Potter, Director, Information Technology Services; D. Squires, Finance Director; E. Marx, Commissioner of Planning and Public Works; P. Younger, Deputy County Administrator, K. Fuller, Deputy Clerk
Guests: R. Dietrich, Town of Danby; T. Joseph, Legislator; M. Robertson, Legislator, J. Dennis, Legislator; M. Sigler, Legislator; J. Starks, K. Frenzel, ECC Technologies, Press

Call to Order

Ms. Herrera, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.

Chair's Report

Ms. Herrera reported the meeting was to provide a preliminary overview of Broadband service capability within the County. She said ECC Technologies of Victor, New York, would address the topic of opportunities to improve affordable broadband Internet access and telecommunications services for citizens, businesses, and community-based organizations of Tompkins County. This presentation and subsequent discussions are a starting point for a recently "County-wide Broadband Service" goal adopted by the Facilities and Infrastructure Committee. Additionally, she noted that it appears this topic could be addressed by more than one Committee.

Introduction

Mr. Potter reported he recommended a special meeting to Goal 1 of the Facilities and Infrastructure Committee earlier in the year. This goal was to determine the feasibility of broadband access throughout Tompkins County and to make improvements in communication. Mr. Potter then introduced Joe Starks and Kurt Frenzel of ECC Technologies, of Fairport, New York, whose firm has performed analysis work and assisted municipalities in the gathering information and coordinate implementation of projects.

Presentation

Mr. Frenzel provided a brief overview of the firm, noting there are 15 engineers and 15 consultants. He then reviewed material contained within a Powerpoint presentation that provided an overview of community-wide telecommunications and Municipally-Owned Open Access Models. A copy of this presentation is on file with the original minutes at the Tompkins County Legislature.

During and following the presentation the following items were noted:

- At the present time the United States ranks 16th in the world for broadband penetration; seven years ago it was ranked number 4. Many countries government decided to compete in the global economy and installed fiber and wireless technology.
- Other countries offer higher speed at a lower cost than the United States.
- Many levels of the State Federal government are providing grant monies for infrastructure development in rural areas. The Department of Agriculture provides grants and the Department of Commerce also does. Empire Development also provides grants for wired buildings.
- A study could be undertaken to assist in determining if it would be useful to consider a municipal broadband service.
- Ontario County completed a telecommunication study to assist in determining what steps to take. The County determined to choose an open-access model, a two-year project with 180 miles of dark fiber optic to be run.

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- Dark fiber is a term used for installation of the fiber-optic cable that is then leased/purchased by various entities.
- A standard fiber-optic cable has 144 strands, with lease/purchase using several strands for services.
- The standard method of financing is revenue anticipation bonds and paid by the leases provided to businesses.
- Upon developing an open access model with the microwave could be used as an interim prior to installation of optic installation.
- Ontario County's cost for the open access model is \$7.3 million with an annual maintenance of \$400,000. Although the County will be responsible for the installation, a separate group will be responsible for the operations and maintenance of the infrastructure.
- Although work is being undertaken to utilize the electric grid for communications it has not been recognized as viable by the Public Service Commission or Federal Communications Commission.
- On average a study is \$40,000 to \$45,000 for a county to have a study undertaken. Grants are more readily obtainable when a thorough study and vision has been undertaken.
- Cornell University is part of the Northeast Lamberail (Light Rail) that provides access to regional, national, and worldwide networks of educational facilities.

Adjournment

On motion, the meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.