

Decorah Telecommunications Utility Board Meeting  
January 31, 5:30 p.m.  
Decorah City Hall Council Chambers

Minutes

Members attending:

Bruce Butters  
Jarrad Walter  
Carolyn Corbin  
Anna Norris  
Paul Mattson

Others in attendance:

Chad Bird, city manager

Election of 2017 Officers

**Motion by Butters and second by Corbin to nominate Walter as chair for 2017.**

**No further discussion.**

**Roll call vote; motion carried unanimously.**

Approval of Minutes of the December 6, 2016 special meeting and December 20, 2016 regular meeting minutes

**Motion by Corbin and second by Norris to approve the minutes of the December 6, 2016 special meeting and the December 20, 2016 regular meeting minutes.**

**No further discussion.**

**Roll call vote; motion carried unanimously.**

Work session on municipal utility feasibility study and review of RFP response questions

*The commission reviewed the questions and clarification points as submitted by various interested consultants. The commission considered each questions and provided the response and answers to each as submitted below.*

Submitted questions and response

1. Per RFP page 5, "Background Information", 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph:

***Background Information***

*The utility commission has been exploring the feasibility of fiber to the premise since the community passed a referendum in 2015 that allows for the creation of a city-owned communications utility.*

*It is believed that the incumbent providers in Decorah are reacting to the voter action and are making or propose to make many upgrades and investments in their telecommunications networks.*

*However, while some additional investments have been made or are planned by the incumbents, Decorah, as a community is falling behind acceptable and competitive levels.*

What, if anything, have the incumbent phone and cable providers said or published about their future plans in the city/vicinity?

Response:

*Mediacom recently announced that it has finalized a system-wide upgrade making 1 gigabit internet service available to all its Iowa residential customers.*

*The Decorah Telecommunications Utility Commission is not aware of any other public statements of future improvements by any of the local service providers.*

2. If a budget amount has been identified for this consulting engagement, please share that.

Response:

*The RFP and feasibility study process are open for competitive bidding not to exceed \$60,000.*

3. To what extent does the Decorah Telecommunications Utility wish the consulting firm to rely on the University of Iowa's MetroNet study results?

Response:

*The Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities MetroNet study was an academic project, while it has merits worth considering in this proposal it is a guiding tool for some overarching framework ideas. The commission is open to discussion of the concepts in the study but realizes there are real world issues that will pre-empt the study's concepts.*

4. Shall the study focus on a full penetration FTTP network servicing every home, business, entity and address, or an "available on demand" network capable of delivering services to all addresses as services may be ordered?

Response:

*The commission will rely on the consultant for guidance on this issue. The premise of the study is to determine the best means and methods to reach the desired results in the community; to provide high quality broadband services to the Decorah community.*

5. What is the current available bonding capacity of the city and what percentage of that capacity should be considered available to the utility?

Response:

*The city is in a strong financial position with approximately 75% of its bonding capacity available. While the city may have legal capacity to bond up to \$18,000,000 any bonding will be at the discretion of the city council. It is the desire of the commission and the city council that a potential bond sale would include revenue bonds sold against the viability of the projected revenue of the new utility network.*

6. How many water meters (active and inactive) are currently deployed by the Decorah Water Utility? How many are residential, commercial and Industrial?

Response:

*The city operates 2,929 meters in the system.*

<i>Residential</i>	<i>2,482</i>
<i>Commercial</i>	<i>350</i>
<i>Government</i>	<i>91</i>
<i>Industrial</i>	<i>6</i>

7. Based upon the answers to the previous question, should the feasibility study focus on a 1, 2 or 5-year network deployment?

Response:

*The commission will rely on the consultant for guidance on this issue. It is the desire of the commission to look at a two-year deployment with goals and planning at least to the five-year window.*

8. Will city facilities (such as City Hall) be available for a limited number of public events to assess interest and gather information?

Response:

*The municipal building is open to the public for public purpose meetings and events. Scheduling is coordinated through the city clerk's office at 563-382-3651.*

9. Should the Luther College campus population be included in the study?

Response:

*City of Decorah population is 8,127 of which 2,165 are Luther College community students. The Luther Community has access to the Decorah MetroNet network. The commission does remind consultants of the Decorah MetroNet and the anchor members involved in that consortium including the city of Decorah, the county of Winneshiek County, the Winneshiek Medical Center, Luther College, Decorah Community Schools and Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission.*

10. If the utility commission places great importance on a market study or take-rate study will the commission consider extending the study deadline time frame by 60 or 90 days to August 31 or September 30, 2017?

Response:

*The commission will extend the feasibility study submittal deadline 30 days to July 31, 2017. Final contract terms will be negotiated with the successful bidder.*

Consider approval of RFP amendment

**Motion by Butters and second by Norris to approve the responses as developed by the commission and authorize Bird to issue the amendment to the RFP.  
No further discussion.  
Roll call vote; motion carried unanimously.**

Discussion on FTTP options and network build / design

*The commission engaged in general discussion about transport connection options and issues about developing initial "alpha" network design options. There was general interest in exploring the idea and Bird suggested the commission consider a joint meeting with the city council's utility committee to continue discussions. There was general agreement to keep the conversation going.*

Adjourn

The commission agreed to meet on February 8 and February 21 both at 5:30pm.  
The meeting was adjourned at 6:14pm with motion and second by Mattson and Butters respectively.

Respectfully submitted

