

RESOLUTION NO. 2019-__

Supporting Telecommuting Opportunities and Telecommuter Forward! Certification

Executive Summary

Telecommuting and broadband are increasingly important to the economy, education and daily life and are a key goal in Jefferson County's Strategic Plan. The State of Wisconsin, as well as its citizens, local units of government, schools, and businesses, all have an interest in expanding telecommuting opportunities throughout the state. Under Wisconsin statute section 196.5045, a city, village, town, or county may apply to the Wisconsin Public Service Commission for certification as a Telecommuter Forward! Community. If approved, the Commission issues a Telecommuter Forward! Certification showing that a local unit of government has taken steps to demonstrate its commitment to promoting the availability of telecommuting options by coordinating with public and private partners to become "telecommuter ready."

The Public Service Commission has prepared a Telecommuter Forward! Community Model Ordinance and application form to facilitate certification and statewide consistency. If a political subdivision adopts this model ordinance, or enacts its own ordinance and submits a certification that its ordinance meets the statutory criteria in Wisconsin Statute section 196.5045, it is eligible for Telecommuter Forward! Certification.

Enacting the Telecommuter Forward! Community Model Ordinance and obtaining Telecommuter Forward! Certification ensures the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin and the people of the State of Wisconsin that Jefferson County supports: 1) coordinating and partnering with broadband providers, realtors, economic development professionals, employers, employees, and other telecommuting stakeholders; 2) collaborating with broadband providers and employers to identify, develop, and market telecommuter-capable broadband packages; 3) working with broadband providers and economic development professionals to develop common goals; 4) promoting telecommuter-friendly workspaces, such as business incubators with telecommuting spaces; 5) utilizing broadband mapping tools and other state-level resources; 6) maintaining regular communication with the state broadband office; and 7) making regular reports to the governing body of the political subdivision.

This resolution demonstrates the County's efforts in seeking additional grant funds for purposes of expanding telecommuting opportunities throughout Jefferson County. The Broadband Working Group considered this resolution at its meeting on November 6, 2019, and recommended forwarding to the Jefferson County Board of Supervisors for approval.

WHEREAS, Jefferson County supports the availability of telecommuting options, and

WHEREAS, Jefferson County hereby appoints the County Administrator or designee as the single point of contact for coordinating telecommuting opportunities with Jefferson County including the following responsibilities:

1. Coordination and partnership with broadband providers, realtors, economic development professionals, employers, employees and other telecommuting stakeholders.
2. Collaboration with broadband providers and employers to identify, develop and market telecommuter-capable broadband packages.
3. Communication and partnership with broadband providers and economic development professionals to develop common goals.
4. Promotion of telecommuter-friendly workspaces, such as business incubators with telecommuting spaces, if such a workspace has been established in the political subdivision at the time the political subdivision adopts the resolution.
5. Familiarity with broadband mapping tools and other state-level resources.
6. Maintaining regular communication with the state broadband office.
7. Making regular reports to the Jefferson County Board of Supervisors and/or the Jefferson County Broadband Working Group.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Jefferson County Board of Supervisors hereby supports telecommuting opportunities throughout Jefferson County and authorizes the Jefferson County administrator to submit an application for Telecommuter Forward! Community Certification to the Wisconsin Public Service Commission.

Fiscal Note: This resolution has no fiscal impact

Ayes:_____ Noes:_____ Abstain:_____ Absent:_____ Vacant:_____

Referred By:
Broadband Working Group

11-12-19

REVIEWED: County Administrator: ; Corporation Counsel: ; Finance Director: 

RESOLUTION NO. 2019-_____

Authorizing and Supporting the Application to the Public Service Commission (PSC) for Fiscal Year 2020 Broadband Grant and Further Endorse a Partnership with Bertram, Netwurx, Dodge County and ThriveED.

Executive Summary

Broadband has often been referred to as the infrastructure of the future impacting business, education access, residential attraction and quality of life. During the development of the County's Strategic Plan, broadband expansion was highlighted as a key need for the County that impacts all to include rural and urban residents, business and agri-business, access for education and access for lifelong learning. As a result, broadband expansion was highlighted as one of the key goals for action. The broadband expansion goal of the strategic plan was recently validated by interviews with the County's townships and municipalities in preparation for the Comprehensive Plan update where broadband was a consistent theme of need brought forward by our communities.

The County has taken significant action steps in moving this strategic goal forward. On December 11, 2018, the Jefferson County Board enacted a Broadband Forward! Community Model Ordinance with the expressed desire to facilitate the expansion of broadband access and usage in unserved and underserved areas of Jefferson County. On March 12, 2019, the Jefferson County Board approved the development of a Broadband Working Group charged with additional efforts to expand services within the County. The efforts of the Broadband Working Group have included engagement with private partners, economic development partners and Dodge County. It also included education on current state of broadband in the County, potential options to provide services and review of grant options available to the County to expand broadband.

On April 11, 2019, the Broadband Working Group recommend moving forward to the County Board a pilot broadband expansion project, in partnership with Netwurx Internet, to provide access to service for underserved and unserved portions of Jefferson County. This recommendation was approved by the County Board on April 16, 2019, with Jefferson County providing \$45,610 towards the project and Netwurx is providing \$30,407 through cash and in-kind contribution. This project is projected to have service be made available to 257 residential properties, 28 Agri-businesses, 2 multi dwelling units and 68 businesses. It is anticipated this project will be installed by the end of FY2019.

Most recently, the Broadband Working Group focus is on prepping for the FY2020 PSC Broadband Expansion Grant. This included looking at provider partners as required. On August 29 the Working Group authorized the County Administrator to formalize efforts to work with the both Netwurx Internet and Bertram Communications for the purposed FY2020 PSC Grant through a letter of intent or memorandum of understanding. Further, the Broadband Working Group held discussions of collaboration with Dodge County and ThriveED, the regional economic development organization providing services to Dodge and Jefferson County, in support of a comprehensive expansion project. Collaboration with the private sector and other

governmental entities as well as support of economic development are additional goals within the County's Strategic Plan.

To further the efforts of the PSC grant application the County Administrator, with concurrence of the Finance Committee, has recommended including up to \$250,000 in the FY2020 Budget for a grant match. This would be part of the initiative to also buildout the county wide communication system which could facilitate a cooperative effort for broadband and access to the County's first responders. Finally, on November 12, 2019, the County Board approved the Telecommuter Forward Certification Resolution.

WHEREAS, the Executive Summary is incorporated into the resolution, and,

WHEREAS, Jefferson County has identified collaboration, access to education, and support of economic development activities, to include agri-business, as key goals in the Jefferson County Strategic Plan, and,

WHEREAS, Jefferson County has identified Broadband as a crucial strategic goal to move forward as part of the Jefferson County Strategic Plan, and,

WHEREAS, Jefferson County has showed its commitment to this furtherance of the expansion of broadband goal by approving the PSC BroadBand Forward Certification and Telecommuter Forward Certification, and,

WHEREAS, Jefferson County has furthered supported the expansion of broadband strategic goal by developing a pilot project with Netwurx LLC, that was approved by the County Board on April 16, 2019, which is anticipated to provide service access to 257 residential properties, 28 Agri-businesses, 2 multi dwelling units and 68 businesses, and,

WHEREAS, the proposed Jefferson County/ThriveED PSC grant application buildout is designed to expand on the investment of the Jefferson County Pilot Project and the Town of Watertown PSC Grant project, and,

WHEREAS, Jefferson County is working to coordinate the proposed PSC Broadband Expansion project with the County Communication Project to facilitate economy of scale and system redundancy, and,

WHEREAS, the PSC Broadband Expansion Project is supported by the Broadband Working Group with financial commitment supported by the Finance Committee.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Jefferson County Board authorizes and supports the application by Thrive ED, on behalf of Jefferson County, to apply for the PSC Broadband Expansion Grant for FY2020, and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED this resolution ratifies the direction by the Broadband Working Group to form a partnership with Bertram Communications LLC, and Netwurx Internet

as providers to expand broadband infrastructure in Jefferson County and in furtherance of securing grant funding, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Jefferson County Board supports efforts to collaborate with Dodge County to support the expansion of broadband access in the region, and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Jefferson County Administrator is authorized to execute any and all applications, agreements or similar documents necessary to pursue access to or enhancement of broadband services in Jefferson County and oversee the execution of said grant if successful.

Fiscal note: The FY2020 budget has included matching funds in the Capital Projects account in conjunction with the Countywide Communication Project.

Ayes: _____ Noes: _____ Abstain: _____ Absent: _____ Vacant: _____

Referred By:
Broadband Committee

11-12-19

REVIEWED: County Administrator: _____; Corporation Counsel: _____; Finance Director: _____

Committee/Board Name:

Name (Please Print)

Cost Backlog

City or Township
Town of Jefferson

Self

General Comment