

BCN Advisory Committee
Minutes: December 18, 2008
Room 320, UW Pyle Center

Attendees: Mike Mietz, Tom Taibl (phone), Larry Baeder, Bob Bocher, Tim Schell, Carol Nelson (phone), Greg Barniskis, Ed Meachen, Matt Rains, Jay Jaeger, Bruce Mathew, Bruce Reines, Jamie Poindexter, Tara Baxter, Mike Kessenich, Elena Pokot, Joan Wade (phone), Oskar Anderson

(Since it was difficult to hear, some phone in attendees may have been missed)

Welcome / Introductions

Futures: BCN Updates (Mike Mietz)

- DSL Service: DOA was not able to work things out with WBAA for DSL service in time for this year.
 - Most local exchanges offer DSL service now (PSC has maps of DSL, SONET, Cable, etc.)
 - Discussion as to whether it should be pursued for next year. Consensus seemed to be no, that customers should contact their local communications provider.

Elections (All)

- Description: Executive committee: Secretary (Jay Jaeger), at large (Bob Bocher), up for election (two year terms)
- Nominations for Secretary
 - Nomination by Joan Wade, seconded by Bob Bocher
 - Jay Jaeger indicated he would be willing to serve
 - No other nominations, nominations were closed
 - Vote: No dissent
- Nominations for At Large
 - Nomination by Jay Jaeger, seconded by Matt Rains
 - Bob Bocher indicated he would be willing to serve
 - No other nominations, nominations were closed
 - Vote: No dissent

Meeting Schedule for 2009 (All)

- 3rd Thursday, 3PM – 5PM
- March 19, June 18, September 17, December 17
- [Note: Contact WisLine for phone number]

BCN Futures (All)

- Customer base changes
 - BCN faces competition from cable
 - Not a problematic issue from a total revenue guarantee standpoint
 - In some sense, this represents an accomplishment with respect to the vision that BCN embarked upon.
 - Report at next meeting? (Some customers may be late notifying TEACH)
 - Recent activities from libraries taking advantage of subsidy to 3Mb. This subsidy is greatly appreciated.

- Impact of state budget
 - Meetings and analysis of expenditures taking place within DOA
 - Establish base costs of facilities and services, analysis of current contract
 - Exploration of options, including examination of other jurisdictions
 - Bandwidth is an important driving force

- Going forward
 - Input from BCN retreat earlier this year
 - Analysis of models of customer requirements
 - Analysis including forward-looking estimates of likely needs
 - Not based on individual application analysis
 - Analysis not bound to governance / development options
 - Three models were developed, independent of current vendor. Options:
 - One option: In-sourcing operation within the state, purchase access
 - Second option: Leasing a core, purchase access for the rest
 - Third option: 3rd party sourcing for everything, (possibly including state agency network service)
 - Telepresence impact analysis, HD support impact analysis may be considered.
 - Time and equipment requirements were a consideration
 - Worked with Cisco on design concept, exercising due diligence
 - Estimated \$75 Million / year with substantial bandwidth for educational needs, and adequate bandwidth for state agency requirements
 - Core is about 38% of total cost, access layer is still about 62% to 65%, video 30% to 40% [*Editorial Note: Since core + access layer are 100%, it is not certain what the video is a percentage of.*]
 - Timeframes expected for transition used for analysis varied between 32 months (vendor-managed similar to existing relationship), 45 months (in-sourced with or without leased core) and 47 months to implement for a brand new provider.
 - Had to make assumptions about various factors in timeframes

- Question: What if we no longer “had a network”, but instead operated with relationships with a large number of other service providers.
 - May allow more flexibility with subsidies
 - Would likely require legislation and administrative changes
 - How can we reduce overhead of contract and management, and simplify?
 - Some of these options would require a lot of flexibility
 - Can we use subsidies to enhance the market, rather than controlling it?
 - How do we manage video conferencing and distance education? (Perhaps using standards to layer on top of heterogeneous transport?)
 - How do we / would we handle network management in a diverse environment?
- There is currently no national broadband strategy. Might we need to do something in that area?
- Special requirements for privacy and protection
- US Government is consolidating their Internet access.
- Concern because timeframes are long as compared to pace at which technology changes
- Current contract has 3 years remaining, plus up to 5 1 year extensions
- At current time, this is just analysis. No recommendations are being made at the current time. One goal is getting senior management informed regarding these processes and what is involved.
- These decisions will affect what users pay, and what services they can get a number of years (say five) from now.
- The decision timeframe has not yet been determined.
- Should we set a timeline for analysis/education/research portion, to establish a plan of work?
- Should analysis take into account a comparison with our current environment and its costs? Some of these options (say, 100Mb access) would likely increase costs over current numbers.
- Current contract is approximately \$2 Million / month, or \$24 Million / year.
- Should we consider hiring a national consultant to have them look at these options? (Perhaps Burton Group?) Timing is an issue, since the budget will be set in January (folks really needed information last month)
 - Ed Meachen indicated that he would ask WiscNet staff for any ideas about “where we might go”.
 - As we interact with other states, we should ask them about their plans.
 - We might also ask thru Norex.
- Components:
 - Access: Fiber to all nodes on the network is highly desirable, if not mandatory (likely a one-time capital investment)
 - Core and aggregation scalability

- Video conferencing / distance education / scheduling
 - We schedule large numbers of sessions (205,000 was mentioned – note-taker did not catch the timeframe)
 - Cohesiveness of management and support
 - Timing for further work
 - After budget, maybe March
 - Then perhaps an RFP to get consulting support
 - Some number of months, probably not by June

Incoming US Administration / Economic Stimulus

- What do we do if there is a major federal initiative?
 - GAO “20 questions” response preparation
 - It is not likely that such a stimulus would bypass the telecommunications industry
 - There is an item in the “infrastructure list”. Path was from DOA thru Governor, to National Transition Team.
 - What can we do to be ready?
 - Inventory of who does and does not have fiber.
 - Transition to fiber runs from 6mb to just over 10mb/s (so 15mb or more would certainly require fiber)
 - Could have a common scheduling system, layered on top of heterogeneous network – a homogenous network is not a prerequisite, though there can be some challenges.
 - Could we get the vendors to use some kind of standards-based web service capability so that they could “talk” to each other directly? (This is probably not something that would happen over the short term).
 - Some old TV channels are being auctioned off for wireless broadband, which may provide some options, but there are also a lot of challenges.
- Options
 - Some kind of “purchasing standard” might be used to drive network bandwidth improvements.
 - TEACH could provide framework for use of funding
 - Existing contract could provide pathway for use of funding
- State of discussions
 - Bob Bocher: American Library Association (ALA)
 - Naturally lots of possibilities are being brought forward
 - Stimulus package work will likely begin even before inauguration.
 - ALA will be meeting with transition team to discuss “fiber to library”
 - William Gates foundation may also help some
 - Telecommunication industry is the expected provider
 - Laissez-faire policy of existing administration has been OK for urban areas, but not rural.

- On E-Rate side: FCC has basically frozen until new administration takes office
- There are discussions regarding major reforms to E-Rate
- Hope that FCC will be more helpful on E-Rate in the future (history of denials in the past)
- What role might TEACH play?
 - Would need to check for statutory limitations, and how those might be adjusted.
 - Request has been placed into DOA agency budget to extend use of federal appropriation
 - Would depend on what form any possible funding might take
 - Should we start looking at that, so that we are prepared?
- Should we do some kind of formal communication? Would there be some benefit?
 - Consensus was that there was likely some value.
 - Content
 - More bandwidth, fiber libraries, schools. Infrastructure for 21st century.
 - Support for educational technology access
 - Help to get infrastructure, especially to rural areas
 - Keep at a high level.
 - Tele-medicine
 - Energy savings
 - Jobs / economic stimulus
 - Our role / who we area
 - Indicate that we have a framework in place to utilize such rinds
 - Who do we send this to?
 - US senators, representatives, governor
- Model might be similar to when copper phone service was provisioned many years ago.
- Private sector perspective?
 - Access to libraries may be easier than schools
 - 38% of high schools already have fiber
- **Motion to charge the executive committee to work with State CIO to draft communication to transition team. Passed without dissent.**

TEACH

- VoIP is still an issue, but size of that issue is somewhat uncertain.
- Subsidies for larger amounts of bandwidth (beyond 3Mb) could also use some discussion.
- Some language in legislation is a bit dated. To date we have avoided changes in the language for various reasons.
- Getting into applications with respect to eligibility is difficult to define.
- Selling services requires particular care.