



Harney County Economic Development

Minutes
Community Revitalization Team
Wednesday, March 01, 2023
5:30 PM- 7:00 PM

Attendees:

Bill Hart-Harney County Judge	Angela Singleton-Rural Energy Coordinator
Kirby Letham-City of Hines	Tucker Billman-OTEC
Nancy Gardner-City of Burns	Rick Paul-Community Member
Manuel Moses-Burns Paiute Tribe	Keith Macgeagh- Burns Paiute Tribe
Deanna Thrall-HC Chamber of Commerce	Barbara Canady-Fair Value Auctions
Patty Dorroh-Harney County Commissioner	Colby Marshall-Blackburn Real Estate
Curt Blackburn-Blackburn Real Estate	Feather Sams-Huesties-Business Oregon
Brenda Smith-High Desert Partnership	Jeff Graham-MiWave
Justin Chase-MiWave	Ryan Bailey-HC Economic Development
Representative Pam Marsh	Greg Smith-HC Economic Development
Becky Cunningham-Rimrock Recycling	Kim Needham-HC Economic Development
Nick Green	

1. Introductions Greg Smith opened the meeting and welcomed everyone by Zoom.

2. Old Business: No old business was discussed.

3. New business

A. Regular Reports:

No regular reports were discussed due to the time needed for the guest speakers.

B. Focus Work: Broadband

Representative Marsh: She started the conversation by mentioning we are in very different times now with broadband than we were in 2020 before the pandemic. At that time 5 million dollars was allocated to the state to spend on broadband. During the pandemic the need for broadband increased drastically and people who did not have access to broadband missed out on the ability to access education, work, community activities, telehealth, and religious activities. She said the Federal Government understands the negative impact not having access to broadband has had on the lives of so many. They have now allocated a significant amount of money for broadband. She shared that 157 million dollars has already been assigned to Oregon and a plan for how it will be used has been submitted. She said there will be 100 hundred million dollars allocated to each state. There will be 42 billion dedicated to infrastructure across the 50 states and 15 million will go to digital programming. There will be billions more money to compete for in each state that will go to unserved and underserved communities in rural areas of the state. Representative

Marsh said it is important for communities to start getting proposals together, so that when the money becomes available, they can be first in line. She suggested that our community develop a broadband action team as soon as possible.

Nick Green: He was previously a City Manager in John Day. Last year he started his own consulting team, which primarily does public private partnership development. He is also the rural business representative on the Oregon broadband advisory council, which means he gets to advocate for rural communities and assist communities to apply for broadband funding. During the time as the City Manager, he actively raised money for broadband funding. Nick provided a lot of insight on all of the things that were done in Grant County to get to where they currently are with broadband. He suggested that Harney County is at the stage where there is a need to get organized and form a broadband action team and get aggressive about raising money and start putting it into projects.

4. Updates:

Justin Chase, co-owner of MiWave Internet and Datacenter Services- provided an update on their progress with the fiber-to-the-home build in Burns and Hines. Currently a good portion of the county is mostly served with wireless internet. Their plan from the beginning was to move from wireless to fiber. In 2019 they coordinated a partnership with Harney County and the State of Oregon through Business Oregon to get financial assistance to get fiber built out into the community and eventually out to the rest of Harney County. Phase one is complete and is serving the west side of Burns through the downtown corridor. Phase two is under construction for the north side of town and the eastern portion of Burns. Phase three is in the permitting stage and will cover the southside of Burns. Phase four is in the engineering stage and will cover Hines and curve around the highway out the BLM building. Phase five will include the Burns Paiute tribe. They are looking to have all of Burns covered by the end of 2023 and to have phase 4 complete by mid-2024.

Angela Singleton, Rural Energy Coordinator- provided information on Energy Development Services which include, Solar Rebate Program, Community Renewable Energy Grants, Heat Pump Programs, Rural and Agriculture Energy, Audit Program.

General Announcements:

Meeting Adjourned at 7:30 PM

