

ADDITIONS/REVISIONS/CORRECTIONS

Regular Meeting

May 17, 2022

Remove From Agenda

Regular Agenda Item 6/Household Hazardous Waste Facility Bid

Add to Agenda

Regular Agenda Item 6.1/Comments to Public Utility Commission

Consider comments to submit to the Public Utility Commission (PUC) Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) related to LTD Broadband.

Change to Agenda

1. **Regular Agenda Item 3: Doenz New Hire:** Removal of “contingent upon a successful background check”.
2. **Regular Agenda Item 9d:** Snake River Watershed Management Board & Snake River 1W1P – CANCELLED



PINE COUNTY

Administrator's Office

635 Northridge Drive NW
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Pine City, MN 55063
1-800-450-7463 Ext. 1620
Fax: 320-591-1628

Commissioners

Steve Hallan – Dist. 1
Josh Mohr – Dist. 2
Terry Lovgren – Dist. 3
J.J. Waldhalm – Dist. 4
Matt Ludwig – Dist. 5

County Administrator

David J. Minke

May 17, 2022

Contact: Lezlie Sauter (320) 591-1619 Lezlie.Sauter@co.pine.mn.us

Pine County has the 2nd worst broadband in all of Minnesota, according to the 2021 Broadband Profiles created by the Blandin Foundation. Connected Nation reported in October 2021 that of Pine County's 11,373 households approximately 6,140 households (54%) are unserved with a wireline service, usually the most reliable and affordable broadband available.

Pine County is working aggressively to bring broadband internet service to unserved and underserved areas. Pine County has participated in the Blandin Foundation's Community Broadband Resources – Accelerate program, and we received a grant through the Blandin Foundation to conduct a broadband assessment with Hometown Fiber. This assessment provided us information on the existing fiber network and ways to repair, upgrade or activate it to serve the residents homes that it is near. Additionally, we received another award through Blandin's Broadband Communities program to develop and implement community-led technology & broadband initiatives, which will help local businesses and rural areas stay connected.

We have applied for and received a Community Development Block Grant – Coronavirus Grant through the Minnesota Department of Employment & Economic Development to expand broadband to non-Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) areas where more than 51% of the households are low-to-moderate income (LMI). This was a requirement of the grant application, and we were "lucky" enough to have non-RDOF areas that met the LMI requirement and have a local internet service provider (ISP) willing to develop a plan in 30 days.

On the attached map of Pine County, you will see areas that were awarded RDOF funding to a Minnesota communications company called LTD Broadband. As you probably know, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) conducted an "auction" and awarded RDOF funding to various communications companies around the country to bring broadband service to unserved and underserved areas, primarily rural. LTD won the auction for large areas of Minnesota and other states.

Pine County understands that LTD Broadband is essentially a small wireless broadband provider, who is proposing to provide wireline connections throughout Pine County without first understanding the topography, the current infrastructure, or demographics. First, we believe that fiber to the home is the best long-term solution as it offers the best speeds and

consistent service, but we know that in very rural, remote areas it is not feasible. Second, LTD Broadband's small presence and unproven track record in anything approaching a project this large, causes us considerable concern. Third, we understand LTD Broadband could have up to 10 years to fulfill its obligation under the FCC auction, all the while we may not use other federal or state funding in RDOF areas. Many of our residents will be locked out due to federal RDOF rules and despite the historic state and federal investment in broadband. We have recently issued a Request for Proposals to provide ARPA grants to providers so they can begin to work, but providers will not be willing to step into these areas until LTD is no longer in the picture.

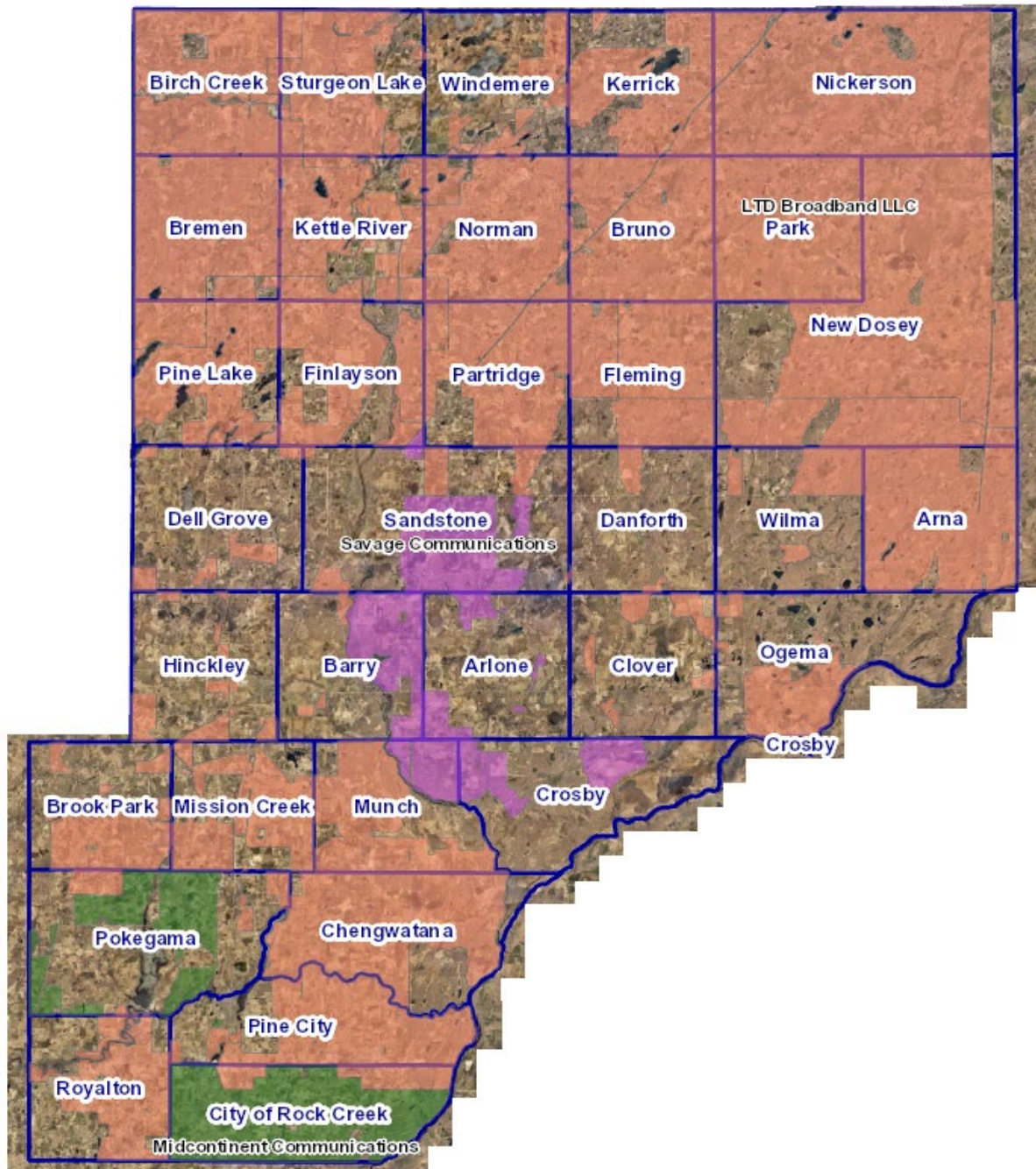
Ideally, the RDOF funds could flow into Pine County and be used by a broadband provider to bring fiber to the home. ARPA and RDOF funding could work together and along a similar timeframe to bring broadband service to all our residents. However, the prospects of that occurring seem very small. So, what solutions do we propose?

- Challenge the FCC to require LTD (and all other successful) bidders to tangibly demonstrate the organizational capacity and capital to fulfill their obligations within the RDOF areas
- Give successful bidders an aggressive timeframe (we suggest end of 2022) to establish a viable plan to deliver fiber broadband or else relinquish areas awarded at auction
- Although we do not favor extending timeframes, another option would be to match the ARPA timeframes with RDOF (instead of a 2026 deadline to spend ARPA funding, extend the ARPA funding deadline to match RDOF)
- Thinking "outside the box," one final solution could be to redirect RDOF funding to counties and allow them to bundle those dollars with ARPA funding. Local governments are in a far better position to work with local providers to build a complete broadband network. As our County map shows, RDOF areas are in some cases scattered, creating significant technical challenges for one company to build a coherent broadband network. With the results of our broadband assessment, we will know exactly where funds should be directed to improve access, connectivity and speed.

Thank you for considering our suggestions. We look forward to continued conversations and invite you to speak to the County Board at any time.

Figure 1 - Pine County RDOF Award Map

LTD Areas show in Orange





AGENDA
PINE COUNTY BOARD REGULAR MEETING

- District 1 Commissioner Hallan
- District 2 Commissioner Mohr
- District 3 Commissioner Lovgren
- District 4 Commissioner Waldhalm
- District 5 Commissioner Ludwig

Tuesday, May 17, 2022, 10:00 a.m.
North Pine Government Center
1602 Hwy. 23 No.
Sandstone, Minnesota

The public is invited to join the meeting in person or remotely: by phone call 1-312-626-6799, (Meeting ID): 913 8246 1935; (password): 5911400. Click the link on the county website (www.co.pine.mn.us) for more information and to watch a live stream broadcast of the meeting.

- A) Call meeting to order
- B) Pledge of Allegiance
- C) Public Forum. Members of the public are invited to speak. After being recognized by the Chair, each speaker should state his/her name and limit comments to three (3) minutes.
- D) Adopt Agenda
- E) Approve Minutes
 - Approve Minutes of May 3, 2022 County Board Meeting and Summary for publication
 - Approve Minutes of May 10, 2022 Special Meeting – Committee of the Whole (Road Tour)
- F) Minutes of Boards, Reports and Correspondence
 - Pine County Zoning Board Minutes – March 24, 2022
 - Pine County Extension Committee Minutes – February 17, 2022
 - Chemical Health Coalition Minutes – May 9, 2022
 - Initiative Foundation Correspondence – May 6, 2022
- G) Approve Consent Items

CONSENT AGENDA

The consent agenda is voted on without any discussion. Any commissioner may request an item be removed and added to the regular agenda.

1. Review April, 2022 Cash Balance (attached)

Fund	April 30, 2021	April 30, 2022	Increase/Decrease
General Fund	2,169,872	2,010,412	(159,460)
Health and Human Services Fund	1,105,007	1,495,309	390,302
Road and Bridge Fund	1,442,986	2,290,932	847,946

COVID Relief	0	2,341,124	2,341,124
Land	2,629,059	2,473,969	(155,090)
Self Insurance	599,858	307,869	(291,989)
TOTAL (inc non-major funds)	16,344,366	18,370,073	2,025,708

2. **April 2022 Disbursements/Claims Over \$2,000 (attached)**

Consider approval of the disbursements paid in April 2022 (\$2,728,313.36) by fund. There were 600 total claims, 101 claims that were over \$2,000 to be approved and are individually detailed on the separate listing, and 499 claims under \$2,000 or not needing approval totaling \$614,666.74.

3. **Pine County Commissioners' Expense Claim Forms**

Review and consider approval of Commissioners' Expense Claim Forms.

4. **2022 Timber Auction Results**

Acknowledge results of the May 11, 2022 timber auction. Seven timber sales were offered consisting of 5,975 cords with an appraised value of \$152,950. All seven sold with bids totaling \$248,494.70. Down payments are collected at the auction with the remaining amounts due as the harvesting progresses.

5. **Contracts**

A. Consider approval of the 2022 Federal Supplemental Boating Safety Patrol Grant in the amount of \$4,000 and authorize Board Chair and County Administrator to sign. This grant will be used for enforcement hours only and does not require matching funds. The grant period is for May 13, 2022-September 5, 2022.

6. **Final Payment of Contracts**

Consider approval of final payment to the following and authorize County Administrator to sign the Certificates of Final Contract Acceptance:

A. Contract #1902: Midwest Contracting, LLC in the amount of \$55,483.21 related to:

SAP 058-652-010, Located on CSAH 52, Between CR 157 and CSAH 42.

B. Contract #1906: Midwest Contracting, LLC in the amount of \$93,607.10 related to:

SAP 058-667-001, Located on CSAH 67, Between CSAH 9 and 1.25 miles west of CSAH 9.

7. **Personnel (Promotion/Transfer)**

A. Consider approval of the internal transfer of Social Worker Nicole Vork to the Child Protection Services (CPS) Investigator position, effective May 18, 2022. Grade and wage remain unchanged.

B. Consider approval of the promotion of Assessor's Office Clerk III Jolene Sievert to Property Appraiser, effective May 31, 2022. Grade 8, step 1, \$23.03 per hour.

8. **Training**

Consider approval of the following training requests:

A. Health Educators Hailey Freedlund and Jenae Hicks, Public Health Supervisor Jessica Fehlen, and Community Health Services Administrator Samantha Lo to attend the Global Exchange Conference, November 1-4, 2022, in Orlando, Florida. Costs per person: Registration/\$800, travel/\$800, meals/\$150. Total cost per person: \$1,750. Funds are available in the Public Health Federal COVID-19 grant.

B. Assessor Lorri Houtsma, Deputy Assessor Troy Stewart, Senior Appraiser Jennifer Christensen, and Property Appraisers Karen Stumne and Molly Benoit to attend the Minnesota Association of Assessing Officer's Summer Seminars May 25-26, 2022 in St. Cloud. The

cost of the seminar is \$250 per person which includes meals. A county vehicle will be used. Total cost is \$1,250. Funds are available in the 2022 Assessor budget.

REGULAR

1. **Health & Human Services Advisory Committee Report (Minutes Attached)**

The Health & Human Services Advisory Committee met May 4, 2022. Minutes are for information only. No board action is necessary.

2. **Personnel Committee Report (Minutes Attached)**

The Personnel Committee met May 9, 2022. The Personnel Committee made the following recommendation:

A. **Health & Human Services**

- i. Acknowledge the resignation of Eligibility Worker Danielle Snedeker, effective April 19, 2022, and approved backfill of the position and any subsequent vacancies that may occur due to internal promotion or lateral transfer.
- ii. Acknowledge the resignation of Social Worker Brenda Danielson, effective May 2, 2022, and approved backfill of the position and any subsequent vacancies that may occur due to internal promotion or lateral transfer.

B. **Auditor / Treasurer**

- i. Approve updating of the temporary Election Judge job description to meet MN Statute 203B.121 requirements with a change of lifting requirement from 50 pounds to 25 pounds.
- ii. Approve updating of the temporary Election Assistant job description position with assisting with updates to remove 2020 election language, assisting with absentee and mail ballots including answering questions, and assisting in voter registration in-person and over the telephone.
- iii. Approve updating of the Zoning & Solid Waste Support Specialist job description position with additional GIS projects and reclassifying the position from Grade 4 to Grade 5 based on the SAFE System classification method. The increase in wage from \$19.02/hour to \$20.17/hour is contained in the unbudgeted revenues from the One Watershed One Plan fund.
- iv. Approve updating of the Zoning & Solid Waste Technician job description to include more environmental tasks and reclassifying the position from Grade 7 to Grade 9 based on the SAFE System classification method. The increase in wage from \$22.65/hour to \$24.01/hour is contained in the unbudgeted revenues from the One Watershed One Plan fund.

C. **Sheriff's Office - Dispatch**

- i. Ratify the termination of part-time, probationary Dispatcher Kevin Stibbe, effective April 26, 2022, and approve backfill of the position and any subsequent vacancies that may occur due to internal promotion or lateral transfer.

D. **Public Works**

- i. Approve the backfill of the open Highway Engineer Technician II position and promote Sign Maintenance Worker Greig Roubinek to the Highway Engineer Technician II position, effective June 6, 2022, Grade 9, Step 4, \$27.54 per hour. Approve the backfill of the position and any subsequent vacancies that may occur due to internal promotion or lateral transfer.

Other items are for information only.

3. **New Hire**

Authorize the hiring of Amber Doenz as an Eligibility Worker, effective May 23, 2022, Grade 6, Step 1, \$20.49 per hour, contingent upon a successful background check.

4. **Midwest Medical Examiner's Office Annual Report**
Dr. A. Quinn Strobl, Medical Examiner for Pine County, will present the Medical Examiner's 2021 annual report for Pine County.

5. **Emergency Medical Services Week**
Consider approval of Resolution 2022-27 designating the week of May 15-21,2022 as Emergency Medical Services Week and authorize Board Chair and County Administrator to sign.

6. **Household Hazardous Waste Facility Bids**
Consider bids for the Willow River Household Hazardous Waste Facility. Bids are due May 12, 2022 and a recommendation will be available for the meeting.

7. **Commissioner Updates**
Audit Entrance meeting
Facilities Meeting - cancelled
Central Minnesota Council on Aging
Pine City–Pine City School District–Pine Technical and Community College–Pine County meeting - Cancelled
Soil & Water Conservation District
GPS 45:93
AMC Legislative Update
East Central Solid Waste Commission
East Central Regional Library Trustees Board
Chemical Health Coalition
NACo Telecommunications and Technology Steering Committee
State Community Health Services Advisory Committee (SCHSAC)
Blue Zones Kick Off meeting
Lakes & Pines Community Action Council
Other

8. **Other**

9. **Upcoming Meetings (Subject to Change)—Contact the Organization Hosting the Meeting to Confirm Meeting Details**
 - a. Pine County Board of Commissioners, Tuesday, May 17, 2022, 10:00 a.m., North Pine Government Center, 1602 Hwy. 23 No., Sandstone, Minnesota
 - b. Arrowhead Counties Association, Wednesday, May 18, 2022, 6:00 p.m., Hampton Inn, Duluth, Minnesota
 - c. Tribal Economy Summit, Monday, May 23, 2022, 9:00 a.m. – Grand Casino Mille Lacs Events & Convention Center, 777 Grand Avenue, Onamia, Minnesota
 - d. Snake River Watershed Management Board & Snake River 1W1P Policy, Monday, May 23, 2022, 9:00 a.m., Kanabec County Courthouse, 18 North Vine, Mora, Minnesota
 - e. Technology Committee, Tuesday, May 24, 2022, 9:00 a.m.
 - f. NLX, Wednesday, May 25, 2022, 10:00 a.m.
 - g. Pine County Housing & Redevelopment Authority/Economic Development Authority (HRA/EDA), Wednesday, May 25, 2022, 1:00 p.m., North Pine Government Center, 1602 Hwy. 23 No., Sandstone, Minnesota
 - h. Northeast Minnesota Emergency Communications Board/Radio Advisory Committee, Thursday, May 26, 2022, 10:00 a.m., St. Louis County EOC – Pike Lake, 5735 Old Miller Trunk Highway, Duluth, Minnesota

- i. Facilities Committee, Wednesday, June 1, 2022, 9:00 a.m.
- j. AMC District 1 Spring Meeting, Thursday, June 2, 2022, 8:00 a.m., St. Louis County, Radisson Downtown Duluth
- k. East Central Regional Juvenile Center Advisory Committee, Thursday, June 2, 2022, 7565 Fourth Avenue, Lino Lakes, Minnesota
- l. Pine County Board of Commissioners, Tuesday, June 7, 2022, 10:00 a.m., Board Room, Courthouse, 635 Northridge Drive NW, Pine City, Minnesota

10. **Adjourn**