

CITY OF CONDON
Fiber Committee Notes
Thursday, March 9, 2017, 4 p.m.
City Hall – Council Chambers

Present: Mayor Jim Hassing, Councilors Jan Stinchfield & Donald Jamieson, Chief Dale Scobert, Elizabeth Farrar, Rita Rattray & CA Kathryn Greiner; Guests: Tom Wolff, Columbia Basin Electric Cooperative(CBEC) General Manager, Lori Anderson, CBEC director & Gilliam County Commissioner Mike Weimar

Wolff stated that in a meeting in January with Gilliam County Judge Steve Shaffer, Wheeler County Judge Lyn Morley, CBEC director Roy Carlson and State Rep, Greg Smith, CBEC was offered 18 strands of fiber to be constructed by Gilliam County from Cedar Springs to Condon to assist with the distribution of fiber to residents of Gilliam County. Wolff added that he gave Judge Shaffer limited assurances that CBEC would not compete with Frontier Telenet (FTN) customers. In return, CBEC would have no financial obligation for the build, and the line would be buried.

A discussion as held if the proposed county buried line could coordinate with CBEC distribution system to get to their customers with Wolff stating that it would depend on the county's route and how far they would have to go to their poles then to their customers. Commissioner Weimar said that Home Telephone (HT) has had discussions that they would partner with Gilliam County and CBEC to get fiber to the homes of rural residents. Wolff said that in a discussion with HT representative Ken Gross said it is not economically feasible to go to rural areas unless they received grants or loans and estimated the line to Lonerock from Condon would cost approximately \$600,000. Wolff stated that he asked HT if CBEC got it to the barnyard if they could then hook it to the house, which HT said they can do. CA Greiner asked if HT was the ISP would they require all customers to have a landline as they are requiring in Condon which is currently unknown.

Farrar asked if Gilliam County was willing to give money to a private company, with Commissioner Weimar stating that the project will need to be bid and they could not guarantee it to any company. Councilor Jamieson asked if Gilliam County was open to the City of Condon contributing money to the project as a "buy in," and Weimar said that he didn't have an issue with it but Gilliam County would own and operate the fiber line.

Woff noted that CBEC has retained a telecommunications attorney and is waiting to determine if they are moving forward with the city or the county in obtaining an Indefeasible Right of Use (IRU). Condon also has a telecommunication attorney that is waiting to see the details of the county's proposal to draft an IRU or other intergovernmental agreement for a portion of the dark fiber.

Wolff stated that the route from Cedar Springs to Condon is a "relatively direct route" and aerial is "no doubt cheaper" to install than bury. He added that they already had the easements and poles to install

fiber and a defined route. When asked about aerial in regards to the recent Scott Canyon fire and weather issues, Wolff explained that approximately 100 poles were lost in the fire but they had the electricity back up within 24 hours. CBEC crews sterilize the ground around transmission poles in areas that there is fire danger, and if they do burn usually the fire had moved through before the cross bars come down so the lines may not be damaged. If the lines are damaged, then they splice the wire to replace the damaged portions. Estimated costs gathered by CA Greiner were \$1 million for aerial and \$2 million for a buried fiber line.

The committee discussed Frontier Regional's (PSAP) request for "mission critical" or buried fiber to Cedar Springs that would then give them a direct route to FTN's digital switch in Sherman County. It was noted that if the line was aerial and had an issue where it went down, PSAP had two redundant back-ups lines available until repairs could be made to the aerial line. FTN has indicated that they will continue to maintain their wireless system and HT has fiber in their building next to the PSAP/FTN system to use in case of aerial fiber failure. The PSAP also has listed Prineville PSAP as a back-up if they are unable to operate. Councilor Stinchfield noted that the PSAP could connect immediately to HT now until a fiber line has been built, then retain for an emergency back-up system. Rattray noted that when the fiber lines was washed out on their property southwest of town, it took a good deal of time to find the issue, then get equipment to fix it. Farrar said that earlier this year a buried line went down near Pendleton and it took four days to find and fix the issue.

Farrar stated to Commissioner Weimar that "you ultimately hold the purse strings," so the county needs to decide if they want to bury a line that estimates show will cost twice as much to install as an aerial line existing CBEC route. She added that FTN cannot market expanding the PSAP until they get the fiber and with a temporary connect to HT could be a solution to expansion. Anderson stated that the money could go further of the organizations involved, and get much more done based on costs of buried vs. aerial. Wolff asked Commissioner Weimar where the county may be comfortable on cost points. He asked if the buried fiber cost \$1.5 million, \$2 million or \$2.5 million – when would they determine the difference and decide it may not be the most cost effective? Commissioner Weimar said he does not have that information at this time.

CA Greiner was directed to do a spreadsheet noting the pros and cons of aerial vs. buried and will have Wolff review it prior to distribution. The City of Condon has pending RFPs to award for telecom engineer to string an aerial fiber line on CBEC route. Wolff that CBEC is in the process of completing a feasibility study to facilitate fiber to the home in their service area and need to know the route of the backbone fiber line no later than April 15. Commissioner Weimar said that it would be important to get engineering done to see the "whole picture."

Anderson stated that the city, county and CBEC are using public money and need to make decisions based on what is best for their customers and constituents.

Rattray recommended that the city proceed with the engineering to get solid cost figures for an aerial build because without this being completed there will not be costs of the project. CA Greiner said that in the RFPs the timelines are similar of 3 months to complete the engineering and have bidding documents

completed. **The committee recommended to the council to move forward with the telecom engineering for an aerial build.**