

BCN Advisory Committee
DRAFT Minutes: December 13, 2007
Room 320, UW Pyle Center

Attendees: Joan Wade, Steve Sanders, Larry Bader, Tom Taibel, Matt Rains, Elena Pokot, Carol Nelson, Gordon Hanson, Bruce Vande Zande, Ed Meachen, Tim Schell, Oskar Anderson, Jamie Poindexter, Randy Corough, Connie Bandt, Jamie Lane, Mike Mietz, Carol Mothershead

DOA/TEACH Staffing Transitions:

- Gordy Hanson: Gordy is leaving TEACH. A brief review of the accomplishments of TEACH over the past 11 years. Gordy will be available for 3 months yet in state service. The BCN Advisory Council gave Gordy a hearty “Thank You”.

Elections:

Chairperson

Nominations: Nominee: Tim Schell (Nominated by Joan Wade, Seconded by Ed Meachen). No additional nominations
Vote: Elected by unanimous voice vote.

Vice Chairperson

Nominations: Nominee: Ed Meachen: (Nominated by Tim Schell, Seconded by Joan Wade). No additional nominations.
Vote: Elected by unanimous voice vote.

At Large:

Nominations: Nominee: Joan Wade (Nominated by Tim Schell, Seconded by Ed Meachen). No additional nominations.
Vote: Elected by unanimous voice vote.

2008 Meeting Schedule

March: March 20

June: June 19

September: September 18

December: December 18

(At the meeting there was indecision about whether the March meeting should be March 20 or March 27. The BCN Advisory Council Secretary conducted a poll. The only realistic date appeared to be March 20.)

Possible meetings with Peering ISPs

Discussion:

There is a perception among one or more other ISPs peering with BCN that WiscNet gets more information from BCN. Other ISPs have indicated that they need more information from BCN regarding peering.

Network and Transport has a prime vendor (AT&T), but with ISPs there are more who are involved.

Two ISPs are currently peering at BCN points of presence: Solaris and Infinity. DOA has not heard from those ISPs that they desire meetings, although Infinity has expressed some concerns. The group noted that these meetings need not necessarily be quarterly, but as there are changes during the year, it would be helpful for these ISPs to meet with BCN so as to avoid the perception that WiscNet is getting preferential treatment. The Executive Committee members indicated that they would be available to facilitate the process if desired.

Other News:

- There was a report of a significant interruption of service in the Wittenberg area on December 12. Details were not available at the meeting, but general indications are that while the inconvenience was significant, the vendor worked very hard to minimize the length of the disruption.

Futures: What should “BadgerNet 3” be?

Discussion: There was considerable discussion of this topic. Rather than portray that discussion in time order, these minutes instead have organized the discussion around points that were captured during the informal discussion, so that these points can form the basis of future activities. These points have been captured in Appendix A to these minutes.

- Portions of the Executive Committee have met with state CIO Oskar Anderson. Some of the issues discussed were reported to be:
 - Business Plan: Re-examine if this model is the desired model. Should there be a small group to look at that.
 - Smaller schools may find less expensive rate in their area, but what does that do to rural areas and to the entire network?
 - There is some agreement that indeed we need to look at business requirements and business plans. But things can change underneath a long-term plan, which requires an examination of what has changed.
 - There are many different factors that need to be looked at. How TEACH is used and postalization (making it hard for BCN to re-provision). So if we continue on down the road, a number of years from now pricing pressures are likely to “warp” the BCN network concept, thus we need to reexamine the business drivers.

- The Executive Committee resolved (consensus) to take on the task of developing an initial draft of a method / survey to assess the needs of BCN moving forward. Next steps to include:
 - The Executive Committee will put together a small working group:
 - Need maybe 4 or 5 people.
 - Look at various groups and figure out how to address their business drivers.
 - Perhaps start with Executive Committee + a few additional folks. (Such as Jamie Poindexter, a DOA representative and Jamie Lane).
 - Draft a direct customer survey, perhaps in January, and share with group in February, for approval and deployment in March.
 - To begin work in January
 - See Also “Needs Assessment” and entries after that, in the Appendix.

Appendix A: Points of Discussion Regarding Future BadgerNet and a Needs Assessment

- There is a consensus that it is time to pursue a strategy for the future
 - Experience is that procurement process can take some time.
 - Do we need an assessment of the existing network, to look at what the issues actually are: Cost/postalization, service levels, applications, customer experience, anticipated new services.
 - Given the timeline, we do need to proceed with some sort of needs assessment discussion, and a way to find out what concerns customers have, and to uncover potential, “threats” and issues related to BCN.

- What issues exist / advances might we be able to make under the current contract?
 - Are there any flexibilities or modifications we should be seeking under the current contract?
 - Contract does allow for future pricing negotiations – next opportunity is apparently late next year.
 - What kind of pricing is an acceptable price for bandwidth & service?
 - Were there any projections of what we thought would be the state in the original project? Where are we not getting customers/business where we expected?
 - In some cases grant funding ended, causing changes.
 - DOA determined costs based on overall contract, and we could look to adjust the numbers for the low end and higher bandwidth.
 - If pricing is too high, we are already taking currently needed applications “off the table”.
 - Look at how we can work on things within the current contract. Pricing and volume of business are linked.
 - Agreement that taking the time to evaluate the current network would be useful and valuable. (See also “Needs Assessment”, below)

- What are some of the improvements we might desire to make with respect to the future contract?
 - Perhaps we need to also look at how TEACH is structured, as it is over 10 years old.

- What changes might be made in the business model?
 - BCN is intended to be a statewide network. But if a lot of customers seek out other providers due to the cost structure, we could have issues during the next procurement, and there are benefits to having large numbers of stakeholders on the contract.

- DOA indicated that it “wants” to do something like that. Current Services: WAN (including video transport), ISP transport, managed video. Video seems to be broadening.
 - DOA determined costs based on overall contract, and we could look to adjust the numbers for the low end and higher bandwidth.
 - One thing that was in the original business plan was to take certain ERate funding (around \$5 Million) and use that to subsidize education uses of BCN – but that did not actually occur. Unfortunately, that money could not be used that way.
 - There is a need to look at this holistically in the context of TEACH.
 - Are there other sources of funding that we could approach and leverage?
- How are things changing already on the current network?
 - ICS seeing use of video over regular internet, collaboration, course management, “second life”, HD video conferencing. The latter already affects things. ICS has also been providing conferencing and other conferencing services for state agencies, and they are also looking at HD.
 - New applications are emerging even on the current network: User managed video. Disaster Recovery services for locations outside Madison.
- What is our vision for the future network?
 - How do the stakeholders partner with DOA to have a broad and transparent design and acquisition?
 - What about wireless (longer distance – not 802.11)
 - Are there emerging gaps that we cannot address now in BCN but need to address later?
 - DOA staff perceives service levels seem to be going very well. Do we consider providing the service “in house”?
- What are the impediments to increased use of video conferencing
 - Some agencies are using video conferencing, others are not. Sometimes it is an issue of awareness.
 - Sometimes agency resources are not available. (New Codec contract may help that).
 - Sometimes agencies need access to consulting resources to help them get started.
 - Whose role should it be to work with state agencies?

Needs Assessment

- Needs Assessment should include questions regarding:
 - Service Level
 - Types of application
 - Customer Satisfaction

- Pricing
- Need and mechanisms for outreach / education, training / “marketing”
- Other points regarding a needs assessment:
 - Cannot rely solely on needs assessment, but still, they can provide information. Also other groups can provide information based on their experience.
 - Stakeholder: Large districts in SE Wisconsin: they have real cost alternatives, because their direct costs are sometimes less than BCN subsidized rates.
 - In K12, schools that are new sometimes assume that the content is already readily available, but that is not always true. K12 sees continued growth in video, but some other groups may be moving away towards less need for managed video.
 - What may also be missing is what this is all about, a need for “re-education” and “reintroduction”. Sometimes folks have turned over. TEACH, 1x3 video, conferencing, etc.
 - Do we need to find a way to become more agile? Waiting 5 years between assessments is too long. We need some kind of more continuous process.

Proceeding forward:

- Survey(s)
 - How do we identify the groups who should have input into the assessment?
 - How do we do the survey?
 - Need sponsorship and a project direction to do this.
 - Make this more cyclical
 - Survey more things
 - What are your sources of info
 - What kinds of info sources would you be looking for
 - What are the business drivers?
 - Who gets the survey
 - IT People
 - End Users
 - Administrators
 - Should there be more than one partition