

Gogebic Range Broadband Committee
May 31, 2017 meeting notes

McKindles opened the meeting in the Iron County Boardroom at 12:05 pm.

Participants: Norm McKindles (primary/secondary education), Jim Lorensen (Gogebic College), Brandon Yuchasz (Gogebic Range.Net), Loren Peterson (Superior Connections), Joe Bonovetz (Gogebic County Board), Mike Shouldice (Mercer resident), Jerry Wuorenmaa (WUPPDR), and Opal Roberts (Iron Co WI Supervisor).

Committee updates:

Gogebic County: Jim Lorensen reported that Connect MI is underway with the survey due in by the end of August.

Iron County: McKindles explained that all the contributors toward the matching funds for the last grant have paid except for Mercer. Norm and Brandon will attend tomorrow night's Mercer Town Board meeting to give the board the reason for requiring the \$2,000 Mercer had committed to for the grant. Brandon stated that the grant can't be closed without all matching funds being paid.

Future PSC grant ideas will not be easy. In the Spider and Fisher Lakes area the topography is difficult. Looking at high pieces of ground in those areas. Residents in the Lake of the Falls area are very interested but, the topography being fairly flat, would require smaller, free standing towers to provide service.

Broadband Summit/Fair:

Shouldice gave the committee several handouts on the Internet Fair to be held in Mercer. Five speakers are slated with the main focus being on education, jobs and safe use of the internet. At least seven providers have signed up. McKindles presented a draft press release giving some background on the Broadband Committee and its accomplishments since its inception in 2013 for the committee to review.

USDA Grant Opportunity:

Eric Frederick of Connect MI had sent information on a grant opportunity from the USDA Rural Utility Service. The purpose of the grant is to provide online education and telehealth to unserved rural areas. This is a very involved grant and may not be feasible for us. If you can get a cell phone signal in any of your areas you would not be eligible.

Jerry Wuorenmaa stated that several senators are introducing legislation to require the FCC to acquire newer, more accurate maps and data for internet access.

Next meeting date is June 28th 2017 at noon in the Iron County boardroom.

Meeting adjourned at 12:53 pm.

Submitted by Opal Roberts