

Gogebic Range Broadband Committee
February 28, 2018 meeting notes

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

Participants: Norm McKindles (primary/secondary education), Brandon Yuchasz (GogebicRange.net), Kelly Klein (Iron Co Economic Development), Amy Nosal (Iron County Extension), Mike Shouldice (Mercer resident), Richard Thiede (Oma resident), and Opal Roberts (Iron Co WI Supervisor).

Gogebic County update: No update on Gogebic County due to absence of participants. Yuchasz explained that he needs to provide the Ironwood City Commission with a few more documents on the Mt Zion project. McKindles discussed the upcoming Connected Nation Broadband Webinar to be held on March 8th, from 2:00 to 3:00 pm. Discussion will be on grant funding for broadband initiatives.

Iron County update: McKindles stated he had downloaded and viewed some of the comments in support of our grant application. All applications and supporting documents are available for viewing online. Kline reported that information on who received the grants is not yet available. Another round of grants will be available in June. Yuchasz and Kline had received an email from the Public Service Commission grant manager asking for an update on the progress of our past broadband projects.

McKindles had joined the FCC's CAF II Auction Webinar on February 14th about Connect America funding and reported that it is too complicated a process for us to consider. The expertise we would need to complete the application is beyond our means.

Internet Fair / Community Education: Lengthy discussion on educating the community about broadband. Last year the Internet Fair concentrated on economic development. Our program may have been too long and offered too many subjects to keep people there for any length of time. Shouldice suggested we address the needs of the different types of residents – local, summer, families, seniors, etc. The difficulty of getting participants of both counties to one event was considered.

Maybe a website, such as a community calendar, with a listing of presentations or programs area vendors may have available to the public would be a better way of educating the community. Kline said he would contact the 2017 Internet Fair vendors to see what they have scheduled that people might be interested in. We have had participation in the past by ATT, CenturyLink and Frontier but currently these big players do not want to have anything to do with us. Not enough money in it for them.

Next meeting will be on Wednesday March 28th at noon in the Iron County boardroom.

Meeting adjourned at 1:10 pm.

Submitted by Opal Roberts