

**Gogebic Range Broadband Committee**  
**July 31 2019 meeting notes**

**McKindles** opened the meeting in the Iron County Board Room at 12:00 pm.

**Participants:** Norm McKindles (primary/secondary education), Kelly Kline (Iron Co. Economic Development), Brandon Yuchasz (Gogebic Range.net), Jim Lundberg (Merit Network), Joe Bonovetz (Gogebic County), Amy Nosal (UW-Extension), Anne Kretschmann (MSU Extension), Richard Thiede (Oma Township), Bob Lepper (Sherman Township), and Opal Roberts (Iron County Supervisor).

**Gogebic County update:** McKindles gave a handout of the article about the \$20 million grant available to expand internet access in unserved areas of Michigan. The grant scoring criteria includes community and economic development, readiness to build, operate, and maintain the project, and the long-term viability of the project. The type of technology is not one of the considerations. Bonovetz stated this is geared more to the big guys with the grant monies going to the providers. Yuchasz is applying for a grant for the Wakefield Industrial Park and in Watersmeet in the Cisco chain area.

Gogebic County through Connect MI, WUPPDR and the Community College will try an Internet Access survey again since there were few returns from the last attempted survey.

Lundberg presented a handout of the September 24<sup>th</sup> Michigan Broadband Summit to be held at the Treetops Resort in Gaylord MI. There will be a roll out of the "Moonshot" program. They will use surveys completed by families in the school district creating better data.

Yuchasz said Wakefield is surveying residents on several different aspects of service and one question is about internet access.

**Iron County update:** Tower updates: Yuchasz reported the towers have been delivered to Chicago. Saxon Harbor and Spider Lake will be available in early September. The Fisher Lake site is still in the hands of the DNR. Having difficulty finding a site for Lake of the Falls. It was suggested Yuchasz contact the lake association there to see what may be available.

**Internet Access Survey:** The distribution of the Iron County survey may not be until next year after GogebicRange.net has completed construction of the towers and has had the opportunity to bring clients online. Start in May and run the survey through the summer in order to catch the summer residents.

**Community Resources:** Amy Nosal reported that the FeLiveLife.org project is going well. They are trying to align resources instead of creating redundant ones. Wakefield has joined them as a new Chamber partner.

Kretschmann: Community College is training youth in digital skills and focusing on digital technology.

**Other:** Thiede talked about 5G technology coming to the area and its limitations.

The Karban cable company will discontinue service to Mercer in October. GogebicRange.net will be available to provide internet service to the residents.

The Broadband Deployment Accuracy and Technological Availability Act was approved by a Senate committee. This is US Senator Tammy Baldwin's bill aimed at improving access to broadband internet in rural areas. Up to 20% of WI residents have limited or no access to high-speed internet.

Next meeting will be on Wednesday August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at noon in the Iron County boardroom.

Meeting adjourned at 12:53 pm.

Submitted by Opal Roberts