

Gogebic Range Broadband Committee
February 26 2020 meeting notes

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

Participants: Kelly Kline (Iron Co. Economic Development), Joe Bonovetz (Gogebic County), Jim Lundberg (Merit), Charley Loper (Bessemer), George Kivi (Ironwood Township), Neil Klemme (UW-Ext.), Amy Nosal (UW-Ext.), Richard Thiede (Oma Township), Mike Shouldice (Mercer Township), and Opal Roberts (Iron County Supervisor). Also Rich Jenkins (Daily Globe). Absent: Norm McKindles and Brandon Yuchasz (Gogebic Range.net).

Gogebic County update: Lundberg handed out information on the Michigan Moonshot Webinar series. The next event will be on March 4th from noon to 1:00 pm. This webinar will share information about the publicly available datasets and tools from Measurement Lab (M-Lab), and how they can be used for planning. A number of webinar's being held during the year was listed.

The Michigan Broadband Summit in Traverse City MI will be held on November 10, 2020. The 2019 Summit was well attended.

Lundberg said some of the areas in the UP were receiving 10 gig service. The new IRU (Indivisible Right to Use) fiber will allow the upgrading to 100 gigs in other areas.

Bonovetz stated that there will be a 15 county meeting where broadband will be discussed.

Iron County update: Tower updates: Saxon Harbor will be online this spring. Spider Lake tower has been started but has no access in the winter. Fisher Lake property has been prepped and ready for concrete. The private property owner backed out of the verbal agreement to use his property for the Lake of the Falls tower. We will need to look for another location. Discussion was held about the internet service in the area. CenturyLink has been offering internet service. At least one person said they would not change from CenturyLink to another service. Several people intend to switch from Hughesnet to CenturyLink. So the question is if a tower in that area is feasible.

Internet Access Survey: Regional Planning Commission in Spooner applied to the EDA in January for a grant to do a thorough survey of broadband use. This will answer the question of what people are looking for in their service.

People need a better understanding of the benefits of higher internet speeds. One of the benefits would be the availability of telehealth. Shouldice suggested one of the questions should be whether or not students are getting the broadband service they need to do homework.

Community Resources: Amy Nosal reported they are using 906 Web Design. The list of organizations and events using the site has doubled during the year. A new feature is the opportunity for organizations to offer tickets online for their events.

Neil Klemme explained the \$6,500 Tech Change grant. Three classes have been offered in Mercer and three in Hurley. He has plans for the remaining four sessions. This partnership between Microsoft and the 4-H Council may continue. The 4-H spoke with legislators at Superior Days about the rural broadband issue.

Other: Kline is in communication with Advancing AI (Artificial Intelligence) WI whose focus is on all the new technology available now and in the future.

He also asked about opinions on another Internet Fair this year.

Meeting adjourned at 1:00 pm.

Submitted by Opal Roberts