

Gogebic Range Broadband Committee
June 24 2020 meeting notes

Norman McKindles opened the meeting with the online Zoom meeting at 12:00 pm.

Participants: Norm McKindles (primary/secondary education), Kelly Kline (Iron Co. Economic Development), Brandon Yuchasz (Gogebic Range.net), Joe Bonovetz (Gogebic County), Glen Ackerman-Behr (Gogebic Community College), Richard Thiede (Oma Township), Mike Shouldice (Mercer Township), Marlene Saari-Mieloszyk (Ironwood Township Board), George Kivi (Ironwood Township), Amy Nosal (UW Extension), and Opal Roberts (Iron County Supervisor).

Gogebic County update: McKindles thanked Gogebic Community College for hosting the online meeting.

Update on K12 – many districts are putting together plans as to how they might open. Options being considered are to remain with online classes, have students return to school, or a combination of both. Budgeting will be a primary concern for any choice.

Glen talked about the Business Center/Shared Workspace. The space is already available and is underutilized. Businesses or individuals would make appointments to use the workspace. Kline commented that tele-workers will increase and this is a great natural space for remote work. The private sector in Spooner is setting up a similar center. Glen asked if this person might be willing to attend one of our meetings. Thiede said the old DNR station in Mercer is a possible sight but the town would need to agree to acquire the building, otherwise the DNR will tear it down.

Bonovetz reported MI has a \$300,000 Economic Development grant and this is being applied for. This would create a position that may be housed at the college.

It was stated that the incubator in Manitowish waters was not very successful. Kline replied that this was a different concept than the shared workspace.

Iron County update: Brandon reported that Saxon Harbor was online and serving customers. The service may reach to Little Girls Point. Spider Lake tower is online and accepting service requests. Fisher Lake tower footings will be poured next week and service may be available sometime in August. Nothing new on Lake of the Falls. Trying to contact the owner of Musky Point to see if they would consider a micro-pop tower on their property. Roberts volunteered to contact the owners. Brandon still hasn't heard from the Mercer Sanitary District about space on the water tower.

Internet Access Survey: Kline reported that confirmation has come from Senator Baldwin's office that the grant is a go. Committee needs to be set up to get the project rolling.

Thiede had drafted a list of internet providers which McKindles distributed by email. He said third party providers were difficult to contact and usually no replies when he did manage to contact them. Satellite providers were keeping their prices down and Hughes Net is having a problem supplying broadband due to so many people using the service. He did not have any success with answers from Dish and Direct TV.

Community Resources: FeLiveLife.org has not had a lot of events posted so had time to think of regional networking. She has been working with Chambers, the Health Department, and municipalities on the creation of COVID posters featuring local art. Partnership letters will be sent out shortly. The summer assistants will be working on getting kids interested in technology.

Other: none

Meeting adjourned at 12:45 pm.

Submitted by Opal Roberts