

**Gogebic Range Broadband Committee**  
**September 30 2020 meeting notes**

**Norman McKindles** opened the online Zoom meeting at 12:05 pm.

**Participants:** Norm McKindles (primary/secondary education), Kelly Kline (Iron Co. Economic Development), Brandon Yuchasz (Gogebic Range.net), Joe Bonovetz (Gogebic County), Rachel Hedges (Gogebic Community College), Maria Graser (Ironwood Twp. Treasurer), Jerry Wuorenmaa (WUPPDR), Mike Shouldice (Mercer resident), Dean Gustafson (Mercer resident) and Opal Roberts (Iron County Supervisor).

**Regional Planning Commission Survey:** This survey of all property owners will be sent out sometime in October. There will be an online version but hard copies will also be available. With this survey we are hoping to get a better idea as to internet coverage and the economic effect this access, or lack of it, has on the area. Press releases will be sent out to the media.

WEDC's Office of Rural Prosperity is introducing a Broadband Connectors Pilot initiative to help communities in Wisconsin better identify and capitalize upon opportunities to increase broadband availability in their areas. Through this initiative, WEDC will work with six communities throughout the state to foster a better understanding of the type(s) of technical assistance they need most to apply for state, federal or private broadband programs. The lessons learned from this initiative will be shared with communities throughout the state through incorporation in Wisconsin's *Playbook for Broadband Progress*.

**Business Center Discussion:** Kline reported there hasn't been any movement on this. The Mercer Library has space for people to work using the library's broadband connection.

**Tower Updates:** Brandon Yuchasz reported: Wakefield tower is complete and online. His company will be doing updates of older technology in their homes. Brandon reported that there may be interest in a micro-pop tower in the Little Girl's Point area.

Fisher Lake site: The holdup there is power. The power company cannot guarantee getting it in this year. Other options to bring it online will be used until then.

Mercer Water Tower project will be happening. This item is on the Sanitary District's meeting agenda for October 14<sup>th</sup>. Brandon cannot attend but it would be beneficial if someone from the committee would be there.

Lake of the Falls: The owners of the property are excited about the project. He will meet with them to discuss the tower location. After that he will attempt to get the concrete in this fall. Will need to discuss the grant funding for this project to see how it will be covered.

**LTE Technology:** Brandon's goal is to finish all current projects involving the grants. Next year he will work on this in the appropriate areas. Gustafson reported that a member of his family, whose residence is on Rice Lake, are now able to use broadband from their location through Gogebic Range.Net and are very pleased with the service.

McKindles reported that the MI Moonshot program is mainly geared towards larger groups and organizations. They mainly offer technical assistance and resources.

Bonovetz reported that the MMI House Bill 4288 will not allow for any local public entities to apply for broadband infrastructure grants. Several groups are opposing this legislation for this reason.

Next meeting will be online October 28 at noon

Meeting adjourned at 12:36 pm.

Submitted by Opal Roberts