Approved Minutes of Beaver Island
Telecommunication Advisory Committee Meeting
Peaine and St James Township, Beaver Island
Beaver Island Community School | April 16, 2019 5:00PM

<u>Present</u>
Kevin Boyle, Kathleen McNamara, Paul Welke, Theresa McDonough, Neal Green, Gary Conant, Paul Cole and Dick Mulvihill

<u>Absent</u>
Wil Cwikiel

Meeting began at 5:01 pm.
March 19, 2019 minutes are approved without objection.

McNamara review of the committee's draft objectives. Minutes will also be emailed to township board officials. Boyle and McNamara will present draft objectives to the townships.
Updates from Boyle. See attachment.
Kevin Shepard: Boyle would like to meet with him again in the next month and/or have a representative in Charlevoix so that Beaver Island can be represented during the grant process.
Mulvihill shared this email from the USDA on Beaver Island's eligibility for the ReConnect program:

For our other Broadband Loan & Grant Programs, Beaver Island, MI is off limits simply due to the fact that it is already served by existing RUS Awardee, Island Telephone Company; however, under ReConnect, that is not the case. As you indicated, the Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) says, "*service areas that received a 100 percent grant under the RUS Broadband Initiatives Program (BIP) are eligible if they do not have sufficient access to broadband. However, if the applicant is the same BIP grantee, then the applicant may only request a 100 percent loan.*" Since the BIP award made to Island Telephone Company was 100% grant, the area may be eligible if it lacks sufficient access to 10/1 service. If Island Telephone Company were to apply under ReConnect to upgrade their broadband facilities on the island, then they would only be eligible to apply for the 100% Loan category. Any other eligible applicant would be able to apply for any of the three funding categories.

Regarding determining service area eligibility: unfortunately, there is no single, reliable source that may be used to determine if a proposed funded service area (PFSA) lacks sufficient access to broadband. If the Agency gets to the point where we are considering making an award under ReConnect, we will not rely on State or National Broadband Maps, or on advertised service provider speeds, or on applicant-provided data, to determine if a PFSA is eligible for funding. Rather, we will be putting boots on the ground in every PFSA to validate or refute the claims of an applicant that the area lacks 10/1 service. We highly recommend that potential applicants conduct a similar exercise as part of their own due diligence.

Kevin Shepard and his grant writer need to be informed of Mulvihill's information. Beaver Island could only be eligible if it was proved by 90% that TDS was not compliant and this would be validated by putting "feet on the ground". Mulvihill will follow up with what needs to be proved as he has done his own speed tests and they are not good.

How is eligibility determined and proved? Boyle and McNamara will fine tune Boyle's update to present to the township and will meet with K. Shepard. Just in case it's needed, McDonough and Green will develop a survey to send out. "In an effort to prove eligibility and to increase our speed coverage and improve our Beaver Island internet service…" We could have residents test their speed at the same time every day for a series of 5 days. We would send instructions on how to load the speed test as well as record results which may be through a screen shot.

Update on the NMU connection. See Kevin Boyle attachment. The more users we could have, the less the monthly price would be (page 3C). The user would have an additional cost in getting the equipment to their site. This route would help the summer crowd of visitors and workers (at the library, community center, etc.)
The earliest that Eric Smith and tower crews could be to island is the end of July, maybe earlier, but definitely this summer.

Next steps:
1. Inform the township boards
2. Have discussion with possible participants, see page 3C&D. Is it possible that the townships and the county could split costs, at least to begin? (Proposal format to townships: how does it benefit the constituent, what does constituent receive and what is the cost?
3. Other entities could join and pay a fee later

Page 3, F – a fiber connection in the UP could help GLE along with another tower – this could be a critical path item for further work on Beaver Island.

McNamara was able to connect with Next Century Cities. There is no cost and she will continue with the process. McNamara will copy Mulvihill on the conversations. The information could benefit the ReConnect program.

McNamara will update Bill Kohls with Peaine Township.

May 21, 2019 is the next meeting.
Adjourned at 6:26 pm

Next Meeting Date
The next BITAC Meeting will be on Tuesday, May 21, 2019 at 5:00PM at the Beaver Island Community School conference room.