

**DRAFT Minutes of Beaver Island Telecommunication Advisory Committee Meeting
Peaine and St James Township, Beaver Island
Meeting by videoconference – February 18, 2021 4:30 pm**

Present

Kevin Boyle, Kathleen McNamara, Theresa McDonough, Wil Cwikiel, Gary Conant

Absent

Vicki Smith, Neal Green

Others

Dick Mulvihill, Kate Leese, Chris Sorensen, Kevin Shepard

Consortium members

Don Spencer, Frank D'Andraia, Alan Vicstein, Doug Tilly (Kevin Boyle, Kathleen McNamara, Wil Cwikiel)

Cwikiel motions to approve agenda and minutes. McDonough seconds. Unanimous.

Review of additional agenda topics submitted by Mulvihill.

- Doug Dawson present CGG Consulting Feasibility Study at the March Township board meetings
- Reach out to township boards, Broadband Consortium and Charlevoix County to ascertain their contribution to \$40k feasibility study.
- Launching co-working space at the township hall

Great Lakes Energy Update

Boyle and McNamara have had several conversations with GLE representative, Brady Faber who works on GLE TrueStream. Faber has been assigned with bringing wireless to the island mainly to the 4 corners office but in doing so it has been discussed as to whether the island could share in the signal. GLE hopes to have their build complete in the early summer. GLE is investigating whether they could use the Green's Lake tower, which if this worked, the signal could be distributed to customers on the west side and south end. GLE is also looking into the Font Lake tower however any equipment used would take up the remaining space on the tower. Boyle mentions that the equipment GLE would be using is similar to what was discussed for the NMU site. One last note, GLE recognizes there is room for both GLE and the NMU U.P. link and liked the diversity of the connections.

GLE Pros

It would be GLE responsibility to maintain and manage the signal and equipment

GLE owns equipment so less start-up cost

GLE has high speed

GLE would meet or beat Merit's price

Beaver Island could private partner with GLE

GLE would be operational by summer

Strong connectivity at the location

GLE Cons

Beaver Island would connect to Northern Michigan rather than the U.P.

Beaver Island may need more backhaul, however, GLE is interested in working with us

NMU and U.P. Link

NMU is still interested in working with the island. If we used NMU, there would not be any installation costs. Concern that NMU has their hands full with all of their own projects.

Thoughts from the Consortium

D. Spencer/BIRHC: Believes that this is an opportunity that should be explored with GLE.

W. Cwikiel/BICS: Says yes to partner with GLE. They already have an investment on the island and we would show ourselves to be a good partner if we moved forward and made a commitment with them.

K. McNamara/SJT: St. James Township board would like to get this going. She will present option to partner with GLE but feels the board will support.

K. Boyle/PABI: Also feels that the board will move forward to partner with GLE.

D. Tilly/Peaine: Agrees that something needs to happen quickly. He will also inform his board but feels they will support a partnership with GLE.

F. D'Andraia/BIRHC: Feels this is prudent and a sound direction to partner with GLE.

A. Vicstein/BIHS: Says yes and agrees a partnership with GLE would be a win for the island

Both options are good options to have. Both NMU and GLE would like to see the island with better service rather than make money.

Some items to further investigate:

Can GLE commit to the feasibility study?

Will GLE share their information with CCG Consultant, Doug Dawson?

(could decrease D. Dawson time and fee)

Are there private donors to help with feasibility study cost?

What is the long term goal of GLE?

Aspen Wireless

Aspen has a good track record and comes recommended by NLEA and Merit. Aspen could do the local installation. They are interested in the project however they are not fans of the Ubiquiti equipment so they would make a proposal for new gear.

Interestingly, they have also worked with installing community fiber and are another option as a potential partner. Aspen has our info but if we pursue GLE, they may not be needed.

Starlink

Service may be available in the Fall. Some on the island have signed up – K. Boyle has signed up. One downfall is that there is no room for expansion bringing concerns to the equipment.

2021 Goals

1. Pools of Service to be built
2. Evaluate/investigate shared work spaces on Beaver Island
3. Completing the feasibility study. Whether we are partners with GLE or on our own, we need to do the study and survey (this summer)so we would own the information

Shared Work Space

Conversation with Kate Leese and her experiences using shared work space throughout the country. Her island experience has shown that the Marina had fast enough speeds for her business, at least 50 Mbps download speed is needed. We would need at least that speed at the townships. Spaces considered should have areas that can be dedicated to quiet conference space as well individual group areas (like Peaine Township with large open area but also has private conference room). Leese's experience notes that workers usually have their own equipment so tables and chairs are all that is needed in a space. She mentions that an online reservation system is helpful for workers that need to schedule meetings/conference calls. Leese has appreciated extended hours offered at spaces she has used.

Leese has seen pricing all over the spectrum, anything from \$20 a day to \$60 a day for coworker space; video conferencing could be charged by the hour, for instance, \$40 an hour. Possibility of membership cards for high usage individuals.

Next Meeting Date The next BITAC Meeting will be March 18, 2021.