

**DRAFT Minutes of Beaver Island Telecommunication Advisory Committee Meeting
Peaine and St James Township, Beaver Island
Meeting in person and videoconference – May 27, 2021 4:30 pm**

Present

Kevin Boyle, Kathleen McNamara, Theresa McDonough, Gary Conant

Absent

Neal Green, Wil Cwikiel, Vicki Smith

Others

Dick Mulvihill, Chris Sorensen, Nathan Altman, Paul Cole

Motion to approve agenda and minutes by McNamara, second by Conant, all approve.

GLE Update

McNamara, Boyle and Cwikiel had further discussion with Shaun Lamp at GLE. They received positive feedback however GLE has no desire to provide wireless service at this time. GLE does seem to be interested in fiber as well as working with MERIT in a long term plan. There was conversation about working together on a study since GLE also has limited data. GLE seems interested in sharing the information that they do have. Board discusses that our study people could contact GLE.

American Rescue Plan, Charlevoix County and MI Township Associations

Encouraging information and discussion.

Charlevoix County has money allocated towards broadband. McNamara would like to contact Chris Christensen, Charlevoix Board of Commissioners and Kevin Sheppard, Charlevoix County Administrator.

SJT is expected to receive up to \$40,000 in federal ARPA funds, further research on the timeline for receipt and criteria for use is required. Possible application towards Pools of Service? Peaine Township will also receive funds.

McNamara and Boyle met with former State Senator Jason Allen, former Secretary of Agriculture, Sonny Purdue and Bill McDonough about possible funding sources for broadband and other infrastructure needs. Both Allen and Purdue were very interested and thoughtful of our island needs.

Jason Allen suggested that a meeting be set up between Island folks and current State Senator Wayne Schmidt who chairs the appropriations committee to discuss needs. McNamara will pursue such a meeting.

U.P. Link

NMU has sent the final link study and it passes. They will plan on a 3' dish and they will have 1 GB going both ways. BITAC has a draft lease agreement and would like the consortium to review it. If the Broadband Consortium could gather and vote to proceed? The library and community center link could get built first along with the school.

Boyle will speak with Cwikiel about calling a Consortium meeting and reviewing the draft lease.

There is a gap of about \$22,000 that needs to be filled. Boyle will run some number scenarios. Would Consortium contribute any more money? Would the County consider joining (again)? Possibly GLE?

If there is enough capacity, and we have extra bandwidth, it may be possible to invite others to join Consortium.

Doug Dawson cannot start until November (on a study) however he could assist us with marketing.
McNamara will forward her SJT info to him.
McNamara will ask the SJT board if they are willing to put any funds towards the project and/or a study.
She will also give them an update.

Discussion also that Merit Moonshot has tools on their website that we can use ourselves.
Mulvihill will contact Katie, his contact at Merit Network to further discuss possible grants and assistance. McNamara and Boyle expressed interest in joining on phone call.
Further discussion about phone call with Bob Anderson who brought to our attention the South Fox Islands in Maine and their approved bond to run fiber to the homes. I looked into this, here is the link to their task force:
<https://www.townofvinalhaven.org/fox-islands-broadband-task-force>

Meeting closes at 5:32 pm.

Next Meeting Date The next BITAC Meeting will be June 17, 2021.