

**DRAFT Minutes of Beaver Island Telecommunication Advisory Committee Meeting
Peaine and St James Township, Beaver Island**

Meeting in person and videoconference – January 20, 2022, 4:30 pm at BIC Center

Present

Kevin Boyle, Theresa McDonough, Wil Cwikiel, Vicki Smith, Julie Gillespie

Absent

Gary Conant

ON ZOOM

Neal Green, Kitty McNamara, Cynthia Johnson, Dick Mulvihill, Chris Sorenson, Chris Picciolini

Meeting called to order at 4:31 pm. Motion to approve October minutes by Smith, second by McDonough, unanimous. Sorenson has new business to add to agenda.

UP Link Update

The telecom grade equipment for the link has been ordered but we do not know when it will arrive. Boyle is waiting for a call back from Eric at NMU. We will not be charged for the equipment until we receive it. Some island equipment may be need to be ordered. Discussion that the consortium should be notified of the necessary purchases to come.

NTIA Grant

Unfortunately, there are no new announcements. However, Mulvihill is working on a draft to answer NTIA comments. Mulvihill and Boyle will continue to answer the questions and work with the townships on this grant. It would be best if the township boards would authorize NTIA comments. Boyle will send out the comments. Gillespie and Smith will check with township supervisors.

Discussion of a “Plan B” which would involve the continued work with Doug Dawson so we are ready for other grant opportunities. There is a new grant that will be distributed by each state. (The match funds are 25%) A focus on the fiber package would be included but with question as to whether the island will own their own cable under the lake. Still no answer on the Tribe’s grant proposal (where they asked for fiber connection from St. James to Northport).

Cwikiel suggests making our presence known in Lansing. He proposes that a few of us drive down and talk to the representatives especially Gary McDowell, Director of the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development since Governor Whitmer has recently established the office of Rural Development. Cwikiel will reach out to Director McDowell. Also noted, Wayne Schmidt’s term is up at the end of 2022.

New business from Chris Sorenson. Sorenson knows Congresswoman Debbie Dingell, U.S. Representative for Michigan’s 12th congressional district through local events and would like to contact her about our grant and Beaver Island project. One of her passions is broadband. The board agrees that Sorenson should try to connect with her and invite her to a meeting. She would be a valuable contact and hopefully someone that could lobby for us.

Boyle will work on consortium email, Lansing trip and NTIA draft.

Motion to end the meeting, 5:14 p.m. by Gillespie, second by Cwikiel. Unanimous.

Next Meeting Date: February 17, 2022 at the BIC Center, 4:30 pm.