



July 5, 2018

Kitty McNamara, Supervisor
St. James Township

Bill Kohls, Supervisor
Peaine Township

Dear Kitty and Bill:

Last summer a meeting was held at the school to discuss the about the problems we were having with service from TDS and our desire to take control of our community communications destiny. We were told that Lansing would prefer a “public/private” solution. We expressed the view that such a project was not likely to deliver the service levels we need to be competitive as a community, but said we would investigate. There was quite a bit of discussion of the future needs of Beaver Island regarding both internet and wireless communication and our ability to attract and retain residents dependent on these technologies. There was general consensus that an advisory group should be formed to pursue these on behalf of the townships, to assure any efforts by providers was truly directed to improving service to the island and consistent with our long-term needs.

GLE has since announced plans to provide service to their Charlevoix and Emmet electrical service areas, and last summer they sent crews to the island to investigate service conditions. We hoped this might be a solution to the problem, but last fall GLE said that the method of providing service to Beaver Island is yet to be determined. While they recently stated they will offer 1 gigabit service in their service areas in Emmet and Charlevoix counties on the mainland, they still have not committed to any service date or offerings for the island. TDS continues their limited improvements on the island, which they say may take up to ten years to complete. The maximum unbonded service they will deliver is 25 mbps. They are offering bonded 50 and 100 mbps service in town, but the maximum throughput on any link is 25 mbps. They have been unwilling to discuss issues with their service or any sort of public/private solution.

Accordingly, it appears that the island must take the matter into its own hands. Rather than the BIA continuing to work this issue on its own, we think the township governments should be involved through the formation of a joint committee to explore the options that GLE plans might present and, depending on what develops with GLE, the option of a municipally operated broadband service on the

island. We also believe the wireless educational broadband option in cooperation with Northern Michigan University should be pursued as an interim solution and as a long-term option for lower cost, wireless broadband.

The purpose of this letter is to request the townships to form an advisory committee on internet and wireless communication that can communicate with existing and potential providers on behalf of the island to get the best service possible. Kevin Boyle, Alan Vicstein and Dick Muhlvihill have been involved or over a year and would be excellent candidates. The townships could post for additional interested candidates....there are several other active and retired technology experts on Beaver Island that would be excellent resources.

The NMU initiative will likely continue because of interest in the university to provide its educational opportunities to the community. The TDS changes are probably too late to influence, but the Great Lakes Energy project is definitely still in a planning stage with the potential to influence design to meet both our current need of high seasonal tourist demand as well as long term business demands. In addition, our wireless service is an increasing concern, as more tourists arrive and pursue birding, waterways, and interior trails activities with the expectation that their ever-present cell phones will work "like everywhere else." Our critical tower space needs to be prioritized by our need, not just provider desires. An advisory committee speaking with the voice of our local governments can provide interaction with our communication providers to assure our island needs are being considered in investments made by our providers.

We hope we can pursue these issues in cooperation with the townships because they are among those on the top of the concerns of our members.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Bob Anderson, President
Beaver Island Association