

**DRAFT Minutes of Beaver Island Telecommunication Advisory Committee Meeting  
Peaine and St James Township, Beaver Island  
Meeting by videoconference – January 21, 2021, 4:30 pm**

**Present**

Kevin Boyle, Kathleen McNamara, Theresa McDonough, Gary Conant, Vicki Smith, Neal Boyle, Wil Cwikiel

**Others**

Doug Dawson, Dick Mulvihill, Cynthia Johnson, Nathan Altman, Paul Cole, Bob Pritchett, Chris Sorenson

McNamara motions to approve agenda and minutes. Conant seconds. Unanimous.

Presentation by Doug Dawson, President of CCG Consulting begins. Dawson has been working with Mulvihill on how to bring fiber to the island. CCG Consulting is in its 25<sup>th</sup> year of business and is a full service company. Dawson's goal is to do a Feasibility Engineering Study for us, if we choose to hire him. It is essential that the study be accurate for when we raise money.

Dawson's procedures are this:

1 – Engineers would gather info and visit the island. They would develop a real design with what they see and what size fiber they think is needed. The engineers could also consider wireless solutions as well as other technologies. Dawson would go deeper into the Quick Study info that we have however his engineers are on the ground and will gather their own info.

2 – Dawson would create a detailed Financial Model. There are lots of options and variables however his main focus would be presenting these scenarios:

- a. our own ISP
- b. Someone to operate
- c. Partnership options

His plan will be 5-10% of the cost with a contingency number added in.

Dawson has worked with 400 municipal clients and is familiar with bond financing and co-ops. Dawson could advise if our plan is financially feasible (for the island). He recommends a survey – and he can help develop this as well – that could be sent out to see if people will buy. (Dawson even has people that will make phone calls to people on the survey) Dawson will review speed tests but those will only reflect TDS (but this is good info to have for grant writing to show how slow our speeds are!)

Relating to speeds, interesting info: New FCC Chairwoman, Jessica Rosenworcel – favorable information for Beaver Island.

Millions of Americans, in part because of net neutrality's teardown, don't have access to broadband internet. According to the [FCC's 2020 Broadband Deployment Report](#), 21.3 million rural Americans don't have access to internet download speeds of at least 25 Mbps, which is the recommended speed for working from home and online schooling. The real numbers are much worse. [BroadbandNow Research](#) using the FCC's own data found almost twice that number, [42 million, don't have broadband access](#).

Discussed other projects being financed out of property taxes (Cook County, Minnesota)

Also Dawson mentioned Lyndon Township – they held referendum, it passed, raised millage rate and it completely pays for fiber network. They also partnered with co-op which runs the business.

3 – Finally, Dawson would present a set of recommendations and anticipates that he could have this done within 90 days

Other items that Dawson will consider. He would contact GLE and TDS. He will want them to be part of the study. Dawson is aware that we have had conversations with both TDS and GLE already and believes that we should continue conversations. His belief is that joining with a co-op would be a feasible partnership (rather than TDS which would likely charge us rates if we were able to partner with them)

One person could operate an ISP and some business could be outsourced. Fiber to the home could also be maintained by one person since the system is incredibly reliable. Dawson has lots of small businesses doing this. Another item - It is not uncommon for blown-in fiber to be used.

Information shared on CBRS (Citizen Broadband Radio Services). This is a fairly new service only out 6-9 months. This services has the largest band of frequencies and it can beam a signal at 100 mbps with 20 up but the limitation is based on physics - the speed will never get any faster. There are also aesthetic issues since multiple telephone poles need to be used. Not to mention foliage issues and maintenance costs that could be a problem.

GLE update. GLE has not made any formal commitment. McNamara and Boyle have spoken with Brady Faber who works on GLE TrueStream. He was tasked with getting a signal to the island to get broadband to the 4 corners office. He discussed bringing a signal from Cross Village to town by using the Green's Lake tower and then to the office. He was interested in our UP connection but he was not aware of the conversation with upper management. Could we share in the cost of bringing another tower to the island? He is intrigued about sharing info and sharing a tower. McNamara would like to pursue the discussion. Board agrees that McNamara and Boyle should continue more conversation with GLE.

UP LINK – We do not have any commitment to NMU either. Boyle has continued conversations with Eric Smith. Equipment concerns, tested SFA products and their link would work across the lake and we would have enough bandwidth to provide to our pools of service. New goal is May/June

**BITAC Goals:**

- Focus on Pools of Service, to be operational by summer.
- Boyle and McNamara continue discussions with GLE to see if work with them is possible compared to working with NMU, or maybe a hybrid?
- Engineering study which the committee recognizes the need for the study, but would like to know about GLE long-term commitment before determining how to proceed with the study.

**Next Meeting Date** The next BITAC Meeting will be February 19, 2021 at 4:30 pm.