Kewaunee County
BROADBAND STUDY COMMITTEE
September 25, 2019 4:30 p.m.
Kewaunee County Administration Center, 810 Lincoln Street, Kewaunee, WI 54216
Human Services Training Room

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Approval of September, 2019 Agenda
4. Approval of August 28, 2019 Minutes
5. Update on Broadband Expansion Grant Status
6. Discussion of the Nobles County. MN Feasibility Study
7. Discussion of Provider Presentations
8. Approve Recommendation for Broadband Feasibility Study
9. Such Other Matters as Authorized by Law
10. Next Meeting – October 30, 2019
11. Adjournment

Committee Mission Statement

"The mission of the Kewaunee County Broadband Study Committee is to research and gather information to educate the County Board and the community as to the various options and their costs required to serve the broadband needs of its citizens and businesses, and to encourage providers to invest and provide those services in Kewaunee County."

The Committee welcomes all visitors to listen and observe, but only Committee members and those invited to speak will be permitted to do so. Persons with disabilities needing special accommodations to attend or participate should contact the County Administrator's Office at (920) 388-7164 prior to the meeting so that accommodations may be arranged.

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MINUTES
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Call to Order: Feldt called the meeting to order at 4:37 p.m.

Roll Call: Members Present: Aaron Augustian, Virginia Haske, Lee Luft, Scott Feldt, Jeff Wisnicky, Richard Baker, Ryan Hoffman, Kim Larson, Frank Mazdarevic, Jason Melotte and August Neverman.

Approval of August 28, 2019 Agenda: Baker moved and Luft seconded to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

Approval of May 22, 2019 Minutes: Augustian moved and Haske seconded to approve the May 22, 2019 minutes. Motion carried.

Update of Wi-Fi Mesh Option: Feldt provided an overview of the information related to proposing a "wi-fi mesh" solution to improve broadband access to the rural areas of the county. Neverman indicated that wi-fi mesh is still an option but it is not as attractive as other options. As the signal jumps from one tower to another the amount of speed available is reduced by half. Therefore if multiple jumps are required, the speed offered becomes problematic. Neverman commented that other option such as CB radio frequencies and TV whitespace are also being explored as potential options.

Discussion of Potential Options/Paths (WE Energies, et. al.): Baker and Feldt gave a summary of the meeting held with WE Energies. Feldt pitched the idea that We Energies enter into the internet provider business. He argued that WE already has the infrastructure in place as it provides electricity and gas to all residents in Kewaunee County. In addition, internet providers are asking to place their equipment on WE towers and poles, they should just eliminate the middle man. Neverman who also attended the meeting agreed while the idea has merit, it might be difficult for WE to look outside the box. Feldt will continue to follow up with WE to see if there is any movement.

Baker summarized his meeting with Door County Broadband (DCB), DCB wants to expand their service into Kewaunee County and is working to do so. DCB continues to work with Kewaunee County employers to expand service.

Discussion of Broadband Feasibility Study: Feldt asked the members as to the progress of the committee and its thoughts on a feasibility study. A number of members voiced their feeling that the study group has progressed as far as it can go and needs additional information and expertise to part of the process. Discussion followed as to cost. Baker stated that when had a feasibility study conducted in Minnesota, it had cost approximately $40,000 to $60,000. More discussion followed as to the usefulness of the report. Concerns were raised whether the report will be used or just sit on a shelf. Why not go straight to the internet providers. Others commented the information collected will be helpful to the County and the internet providers to help determine what service can be provided.

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Additional discussion took place surrounding the cost of moving forward with a broadband projects while other large capital projects (the jail for example) are likely to be done in the next few years. Is there enough public and county board support? Questions were raised as to the funding of the jail and broadband. Feldt indicated that the county will issue debt for construction of a jail. The county could possibly use donated funds from Dominion to finance a broadband project.

Feldt reminded the group that a feasibility study for Nobles County, Minnesota was sent to members. He urged members to read the report as it provides an example of what a feasibility report looks like and that Nobles County is similar in size to Kewaunee County. It was agreed that the study group should decide whether to recommend to the county to move forward with a feasibility study

Such Other Matters as Authorized by Law: Neverman informed the study group that the county should encourage residents to perform data speed tests through a website identified by the Wisconsin Counties Association. The information collected will be useful in determining rural broadband accessibility.

Next Meeting: September 25, 2019 at 4:30 p.m.

Adjournment: Hoffman moved and Augustian seconded to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 5:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Feldt

Scott Feldt, Recording Secretary