

MINUTES
MIFFLIN COUNTY INTERNET SUMMIT
FEBRUARY 15, 2017
MIFFLIN COUNTY COURTHOUSE, MEETING ROOM B – 3:30 P.M.

ATTENDANCE:

MEMBERS:

Michael Hain, Nittany Media
Barbara Harer, South Hills School of Business and Technology
Matthew Moore, Lewistown Borough
John Rhone, Wayne Township
Kristen Ritchey, Comcast
Kay Semler, Mifflin County Planning Commission
Nathan Smith, FoxPro and Fame
Michael Tate, GME

OTHERS:

Scott Kramer, SEDA-COG
Bill Gomes, Mifflin County Planning and Development
Chastity Fultz, Mifflin County Planning and Development
Lauren Kershner, Sentinel
John Breneman, Senator Corman's Office
Doug Smith, Verizon via teleconference
Kevin Kodish, Mifflin County Commissioner
Lisa Nancollas, Mifflin County Commissioner

Call to Order: Bill Gomes called the meeting to order at 3:36 p.m. and reminded everyone to sign the attendance sheet.

Approval of Minutes: John Rhone made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 26, 2017 meeting. The motion was seconded by Matt Moore. All members voted aye.

Survey Follow-up:

Walt Whitmer was unable to attend the meeting, but did forward copies of the proposed business and residential surveys along with a memo listing issues to be discussed and addressed by the committee. Michael Hain questioned using a Net Promoter Score feature on the surveys to ask how likely the responder would be to recommend their internet provider. The Net Promoter Score is an index ranging from -100 to 100 that measures the willingness of customers to recommend a company's products or services to others. It is used as a proxy for gauging the customer's overall satisfaction with a company's product or service and the customer's loyalty to the brand. This question could possibly be added to the business survey and may provide feedback to the individual providers. Upon further review however, it was decided that this question is similar to questions already in the survey.

After reviewing Walt's memo, it was decided that the surveys are sufficient in gathering the information the committee is seeking. Mike Tate will work with the Chamber of Commerce on sending out the

business survey. Discussion on the residential survey included whether or not to allow responses via the internet. Some residents may respond to the survey at their place of employment. Walt can add a disclaimer to the residential survey to be able to show who completes the survey online. It was also suggested to use social media to advertise the survey. The mailed version of the residential survey is still the preference. Bill asked Barb Harer if South Hills School of Business would consider allowing interns from the school to assist with the surveys and data entry.

The committee also reviewed a cover letter for the business survey drafted by Walt. The contact, if any, needs to be decided. Further discussion included obtaining a separate email address for the survey with a separate inbox to review comments. It could also include an auto response thanking individuals for their inquiry. The letter could also instruct the respondent to enter any comments directly in the boxes provided in the survey instead of providing an email or contact.

The committee decided to try to have the business survey distributed via email by the end of February with responses due by the end of March. The residential survey should wait to be sent out by the end of April or beginning of May through regular mail. The residential survey can be returned through the mail or a link included in the survey. Lauren Kershner of The Sentinel will write a story in the paper on the survey and can include a link to the survey as well. Once the committee portion of the county web page is set up, the minutes, mission statement and link to the surveys can be added.

Update on Facebook group:

Doug Smith of Verizon and Mike Tate have spoken with a woman, Amy, who started a Facebook group addressing internet issues in the Vira, Maitland and McClure areas. This page has generated interest from various providers. Amy has gathered a lot of information and spreadsheets and has shared this information with Verizon and Comcast. Mike Tate and Doug will work together to help Amy. However, Doug also wants to go further and review other issues and see what the copper wires look like. He has identified some issues that will clean up some speeds once they are addressed. He also has some funds available to replace copper. Doug has been active on Verizon's behalf since he first met with the group in January.

Map Follow-up:

There are no new updates available on the maps. However, Nittany Media has files to forward to Scott Kramer to update the Nittany Media maps.

Other Business:

Michael Hain shared that his company recently received a grant to cover 40% of the build-up costs to extend fiber to Union Mills in Belleville.

Bill Gomes shared that the application for the Cool and Connected Grant was unsuccessful.

Further discussion questioned Atlantic Broadband coverage in Mifflin County. Kristen Ritchey of Comcast reached out to Atlantic Broadband and discovered they have plans to upgrade their lines in the third quarter of this year that will add internet service in the Vira, McClure and Maitland areas. Every customer who can get video will have access to their internet. Atlantic Broadband is faster than Verizon. Atlantic Broadband does not currently offer internet access in Mifflin County. Verizon DSL service will improve if copper is fixed, but it still won't have the bandwidth capabilities.

Scott Kramer of SEDA-COG shared that previous grants that helped fund projects such as the Municipal Authority connecting with fiber in the amount of \$6,600 are no longer available. The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) does not have any grants for Mifflin County at this time. Two applications were submitted and declined. ARC did, however, just award the Northwest Commission for a feasibility study despite stating they were not interested in funding surveys. Once the committee is further along in the survey process, an application may be funded through ARC.

Michael Hain stated that the new FCC Chairman recently announced the formation of a new committee, the Broadband Deployment Advisory Committee. He is seeking a nomination to be a member and requested a letter of support from the Internet Advisory Committee. Bill will write the letter on behalf of the committee.

Next Meeting: March 15, 2017 at 3:30 p.m.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.