

MINUTES
MIFFLIN COUNTY INTERNET ADVISORY COMMITTEE
NOVEMBER 28, 2018
MIFFLIN COUNTY COURTHOUSE, MEETING ROOM B – 3:30 P.M.

ATTENDANCE:

MEMBERS:

Clint Aurand, Armagh Township
Michael Hain, Nittany Media
Kristen Ritchey, Comcast via teleconference
Kay Semler, Mifflin County Planning Commission

OTHERS:

Chastity Fultz, Mifflin County Planning and Development
Bill Gomes, Mifflin County Planning and Development
Robert Postal, Mifflin County Commissioner
Jim Smith, Granville Township
Gene Wolfkill, Geisinger
Alyssa Burd, Sentinel
Doug Cunningham, Mifflin County School District
Lori Comp, Senator Corman's Office

Call to Order: Bill Gomes called the meeting to order at 3:37 p.m. and reminded everyone to sign the attendance sheet.

Approval of Minutes: Approval of October's meeting minutes was postponed due to the lack of a quorum.

Webpage Update: A direct link to the web page, <http://mifflincountyiac.org/>, has been added to the county web page. CJ Bobeck of GME Communications worked added Chastity Fultz as an administrator of the site and worked with her to add the meeting minutes to the page. The site is active although not many people know about it.

Provider Follow-up: Bill reviewed a map showing coverage for Atlantic Broadband and Comcast as well as potential Nittany Media coverage based upon a Facebook announcement. Michael Hain said this only shows part of their DOCSIS (Data Over Cable Service Interface Specification) system and then shared two maps showing coverage areas for Nittany Media. One was previously shared, but is difficult to read. The other map shows Nittany Media's wireless coverage area. Bill mentioned the nondiscrimination clause Nittany Media wanted the county to sign for the map files. It was more involved than what the county was requesting and the county would not sign it. Michael acknowledged the county does not need as much detail as was indicated in the agreement. Bill asked Michael if he can provide us with information that our GIS can overlay onto our maps. Michael thinks there is something he can give us.

Bill recently forwarded an article to the committee regarding a project with an organization called DRIVE in Montour County. Financial assistance was provided from Geisinger to build a wireless system to cover 85% of the county. Bill spoke with the manager of DRIVE, which is an economic development organization. Michael stated that DRIVE is partnering with the 911 system and was able to place wireless with four

towers. They have other towers, but the issue is licensing. Michael has spoken with Phil Lucas about utilizing 911 towers to expand wireless service.

Michael has fiber near Bannerville, but no DOCSIS. He also has fiber to Hedgeapple Drive in Big Valley. Clint Aurand questioned partnering with Huntingdon County to provide service for Menno Township. Michael stated there is an issue in McAlevys Fort that is in Atlantic Broadband territory. He would love to put fiber in this area.

Gene Wolfkill questioned Nittany Media's wireless coverage and the affordability to residents. Michael acknowledged the equipment can be pricey, but is providing 50 mb of service for around \$40 a month, but was unsure of exact costs. He will have to get back to the committee on costs. Michael added that this is not cell phone wireless and Nittany Media does not place limits on their wireless service. The DOCSIS system provides 125 Mb down and 25 Mb up. The fiber lines can provide up to 10 Gb.

Michael provided a small update to the residential survey map to demonstrate Nittany Media's DOCSIS system. Clint questioned whether this was new build because of the dots indicating those who want improved or better service. The question on the survey was whether you were satisfied with your existing service. Discussion concluded there could be many reasons people were not satisfied, including cost and reliability. Clint added that wireless could serve Big Valley well since it is more open with fewer ridges. Michael acknowledged challenges reaching Treaster Valley and eastern Armagh Township. Clint does not think this is a place to expand wireless since there is not a great benefit to many people. Comcast serves New Lancaster Valley the entire way to the county line and Treaster Valley to the end of the paved road. He sees a higher priority in Menno and Decatur Townships. Bill asked Michael to separate the service area maps into three individual maps, wireless, DOCSIS and fiber. The wireless map was provided and Michael will try to get a map of DOCSIS and fiber service areas.

Doug Cunningham noted that if another survey was conducted, the question relating to satisfaction should be drilled down further to find out why residents are not satisfied. Another survey could be conducted of the same respondents to ask them if they completed the first survey and ask more specific questions. The school survey was conducted in January of 2018 and some respondents also filled out the county survey six months prior and indicated different responses.

Jim Smith, Granville Township Supervisor, questioned what kind of service was available off of Route 103 in Granville. He has heard complaints that nothing is available except for dial-up. Michael indicated Nittany Media is in the area Jim questioned. Chastity added that part of the problem is that people do not know what service is available to them.

Noovis Proposal: The KCI proposal had been given to all committee members for review after the October meeting. All proposed questions have been answered satisfactorily and the majority of the committee wanted to pursue the contract. However, further discussions with KCI demonstrated that the general provisions of the contract were unacceptable to the county, such as the ownership of the final document and they were discussing charging for email communications. Bill then outreached to the subcontractor on the contract, Eric Welty at Noovis, LLC. Eric was the one who answered all questions from the committee and was also the reference for Queen Anne's County and actually worked with Noovis. Bill decided to flip the contract and make Noovis the primary consultant and KCI would potentially be the subcontractor. Since Noovis is a smaller company, Bill found them to be more flexible. The new proposal was forwarded to the committee members and the county solicitor for review and for the solicitor to provide some general provisions. Clint reviewed the proposal and thought it was very straight forward with very plain language

that spelled out exactly what we were looking for. Noovis will help develop pilot project locations for potential broadband expansion. The project would begin in January and end in April or May.

Commissioner Rob Postal wants to make sure Noovis knows the county does not want to own the infrastructure. Bill assured him that Noovis is aware of this and hopes the county will support this proposal.

Bill has funding assistance from the school district, hospital, MCIDC, the water authority and eight or nine municipalities for a total of \$9,250 – \$9,500. The total cost for the study is \$13,000. Bill thanked Clint for working directly with the townships to encourage support of the study. Only two townships were not responsive to supporting the study because they were looking at what was in it for them. This study will benefit the overall county. Bill will notify the committee if we get a signed contract.

Next Meeting: Bill proposes having a meeting in January and will notify everyone when it will occur.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.