

**Nebraska Information Technology Commission  
COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

Wednesday, November 14, 2018, 1:30 p.m. CT – 4:00 p.m. CT  
Nebraska Public Service Commission  
1200 N St, Ste 300, Lincoln, Nebraska

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Members Present:** Pam Adams, Chris Anderson, Jay Anderson, Rod Armstrong, Randy Bretz, Jessica Chamberlain, Phil Green, Charlotte Narjes for Connie Hancock, Johnathan Hladik, Tim Lindahl, and Cullen Robbins for Mary Ridder

**Members Absent:** Brett Baker, Steve Henderson, Jacob Knutson, David Lofdahl, Megan McGown, Holly Woldt

**Members Using Video/Phone (Public Participation):** Shonna Dorsey, Connie Hancock, and Steve Fosselman

**ROLL CALL, NOTICE OF POSTING OF AGENDA, NOTICE OF NEBRASKA OPEN MEETINGS ACT POSTING**

The meeting was called to order by co-chair Rod Armstrong at 1:35. Eleven members were present, making a quorum. The meeting announcement was posted on the NITC Website and Nebraska Public Meeting Website on Sept. 28, 2018. The agenda was posted on the NITC Website on Nov. 9, 2018. A copy of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act was on the wall.

**APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 28, 2018 MINUTES\***

Jay Anderson made a motion to approve the minutes. Tim Lindahl seconded the motion.

**Roll call vote: Adams-Yes, C. Anderson-Yes, J. Anderson-Yes, Armstrong-Yes, Bretz-Yes, Chamberlain-Yes, Narjes-Yes, Hladik-Yes, Lindahl-Yes, Robbins-Yes. Results: Yes-11, No-0, Abstained-0. Motion carried.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

**REMOTE PROGRAMMING CLASSES INITIATIVE**

*Emily Kenney, Mutual of Omaha Rural Tech Education Pilot Program*

Ms. Kinney provided information on a proposed Mutual of Omaha Rural Tech Education pilot program. The program would provide training on using Java to high school students via a flipped, virtual classroom with volunteer instructors from Mutual of Omaha. Ms. Kenney asked council members for their recommendations. Chris Anderson said Central City may be interested in being a pilot site. Members also suggested that she contact Tom Rolfes, Education IT Manager, Greg Christiansen at the Nebraska Department of Education and Brad Barker and Allison Hatch at the University of Nebraska Lincoln.

## BROADBAND TASK FORCE UPDATE

Ms. Byers reported that the Rural Broadband Task Force has met three times. Two Community Council members, Tim Lindahl and Mary Ridder, are members of the task force. The last task force meeting was on Nov. 7. Tom Shoemaker from Pinpoint Communications, Dan Spray from Connecting Point, Greg Baltzer from Geneva Broadband, Matt Larson from Vista Beam, and Dr. Mehmet Can Vuran participated in a panel discussion of broadband technologies. Gary Warren from Hamilton Telecommunications and Dan Spray shared information on the rural broadband business case. Anne Byers shared information on what other states are doing. The Broadband Manager for Wyoming, Russ Elliott, also shared information on Wyoming's broadband plan and activities.

Three subcommittees have been formed. The subcommittees are addressing the Nebraska Universal Service Fund, broadband data, and broadband technologies. Tim Lindahl commented that he appreciates the work of the Rural Broadband Task Force. Information on the task force is available at <https://ruralbroadband.nebraska.gov>.

Mr. Bretz left the meeting.

## NEBRASKA SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES—SPARKS GRANT: BREAKING THE ICE AND IGNITING INTERNET RELATIONSHIPS —Anne Byers

Ms. Byers shared information on the Sparks grant project on behalf of Holly Woldt and Tom Rolfes. The Nebraska Library Commission partnered with the State Office of the CIO to submit a grant proposal, ***Nebraska Schools and Libraries—Breaking the Ice and Igniting Internet Relationships***, which was funded for \$25,000 by the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

All five grant projects and an additional site funded through the Nebraska Library Commission have fixed base wireless connections between schools and libraries, causing their ***Homework Hotspot*** internet speeds to be 400%-3,000% higher than the library's ISP internet. For Bancroft, Bayard, Genoa, Imperial, Verdigre, and Wymore, the project has caused community conversations to occur and internet relationships to be formed. A \$249,000 grant proposal was submitted to IMLS in September to expand this effort.

## UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA PROJECTS/PARTNERSHIPS

**Rural Poll.** The latest Nebraska Rural Poll included questions on broadband subscription and use. Eighty-four percent of rural Nebraskans report subscribing to high-speed Internet service at home, about the same as in 2016. Seven percent say they only use their cell phone data plan. At least one in ten report being limited significantly or not being able to play real time video games or stream online video content such as Netflix.

**Digital Readiness Survey.** Roberto Gallardo worked with the Nebraska Broadband Initiative and other interested stakeholders to share invitations to complete a digital readiness survey via e-mail, newsletters, and social media. The survey showed that those in rural areas are more challenged in accessing the internet, but use the internet in ways that are very similar to those in metropolitan areas.

**Train the Trainer Grant.** The University of Nebraska Lincoln is participating in a grant to work with two communities, Ashland and Ravenna, on developing a technology plan.

## **CAF II AND NUSF UPDATES**

*Cullen Robbins*

The Nebraska Public Service Commission has taken steps to implement contribution reform for the Nebraska Universal Service Fund. The size of the fund has been diminishing as the contribution base has diminished. PSC is making an effort to stabilize the fund. The residential surcharge will transition to a connection basis.

The Nebraska Public Service Commission has also changed how the funds are collected. The amount of funding price cap carriers, which include Windstream, CenturyLink and Frontier, receive for support has been reduced. To receive additional funding for broadband deployment, the price cap carriers are now required to submit project proposals. Carriers can be reimbursed for their expenses for approved projects.

The Nebraska Public Service Commission is also taking steps to make changes to the way funds are distributed to rate of return carriers. The major issue is that some companies have already built out the infrastructure.

The FCC recently made awards through the Connect America Fund II reverse auction. Four bidders were awarded \$ 41,117,139 over 10 years to provide broadband to 8,900 locations. The bulk of the locations were awarded to AMG Technology Group/NextLink. They will be providing service of 100 Mbps down/20 Mbps up using fixed wireless.

## **OTHER UPDATES**

Rod Armstrong shared information on the Lincoln Hour of Code event on Saturday, Dec. 8 from 9 a.m. to noon at Innovation Campus.

Johnathan Hladik shared that the Center for Rural Affairs released a new report on broadband, *Map to Prosperity*.

Members also discussed the need for cybersecurity training for small businesses.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business, the chair adjourned the meeting at 3:25 p.m.