

**Nebraska Information Technology Commission
COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

Wednesday, February 28, 2018

1:30 P.M. CT – 4:00 P.M. CT

1526 K Street, 4th Floor, Room 4D, Lincoln, NE

Desk Top Video Sites:

Nebraska Extension, 920 Jackson St, Sidney, NE

MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Pam Adams, Jay Anderson, Rod Armstrong, Brett Baker (phone), Randy Bretz, Shonna Dorsey (desktop video), Steve Fosselman (desktop video—arrived late), Phil Green, Connie Hancock (desktop video), Cullen Robbins for Mary Ridder, and Holly Woldt

Members Absent: Chris Anderson, Jessica Chamberlain, Steve Henderson, Jacob Knutson, Tim Lindahl, David Lofdahl, and Megan McGown,

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

The meeting was called to order by co-chair Phil Green at 1:35. Nine members were present via video or in person, making a quorum. The meeting announcement was posted on the NITC Website and Nebraska Public Meeting Website on Feb 22, 2018. The agenda was posted on the NITC Website on Feb. 22, 2018. A copy of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act was on the table by Lori Lopez Urdiales.

APPROVAL OF [MAY 12, 2017 MINUTES](#)*

Tom Rolfes noted a correction to the minutes. The number of students in Nebraska without internet access should be 35,000, not 350,000.

Jay Anderson made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Cullen Robbins seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by voice vote.

APPROVAL OF [OCT. 4, 2017 MINUTES](#)

Rod Armstrong made a motion to approve the minutes. Pam Adams seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by voice vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

UPDATES

BROADBAND REPORTS

Ms. Byers gave updates on several new reports from the FCC.

Broadband availability in Nebraska improved in 2016 with 88.9% of Nebraskans and 65.5% of rural Nebraskans having access to broadband at 25 Mbps down and 3 Mbps up. Nebraska lags the U.S. with 92.3% of Americans and 69.3% of rural Americans having broadband access according to the FCC's [2018 Broadband Deployment Report](#).

In 2016, 82% of U.S. households and 78% of Nebraska households subscribed to fixed internet service of at least 200 kbps according to the FCC's newly released [Internet Access Services Report](#). At higher speed tiers, the gap in subscription rates between Nebraska and the U.S. average widens. In 2016, 50% of U.S. households, but only 38% of Nebraska households subscribed to broadband of at least 25 Mbps down and 3 Mbps up. Nebraska ranked in the middle of our neighboring state on this measure—behind Colorado (60%), South Dakota (47%) and Wyoming (45%) but tightly clustered with Iowa (38%), Missouri (37%), and Kansas (36%).

The FCC recently announced the release of a new broadband map with 2016 data. The map is available at <https://broadbandmap.fcc.gov>. Commissioner Rosenworcel has set up a mailbox, BROADBANDFAIL@FCC.GOV, to report inaccuracies in the map.

Phi Green commented that the county level data still shows a number of counties with less than 10% of the population having broadband at 25 Mbps down/3 Mbps up available. He said that it would be interesting to see the county info overlaid with service provider data. Ms. Byers commented that the FCC's broadband map can be searched by provider.

LEGISLATION

Ms Byers is following the bills listed below. As individual citizens, members were encouraged to contact their senators if they felt strongly about any of these bills. LB 994 directly mentions the NITC and is the bill Ms. Byers is following the most closely. It would create a Rural Broadband Study Task Force and would direct the NITC and PSC to provide assistance to the task force. The bill received widespread support during its hearing. Only the mobile wireless industry opposed sections of the bill. The bill was not out of committee.

LB 389 Adopt the Small Wireless Facilities Act (Lowe Priority Bill)

LR 701 Provide for telehealth practice by physicians and physician assistants

LB 856 Adopt the Internet Neutrality Act, change communications provider requirements under the Nebraska Telecommunications Regulation Act, and change financial assistance provisions relating to the Nebraska Internet Enhancement Fund

LB 966 Provide a sales and use tax exemption relating to dark fiber

LB 989 Authorize testing of autonomous vehicles by a city of the primary class on its roadways (Wishart Priority Bill)

LB 993 Create the 911 Service System Advisory Committee and change the 911 Service System Act and eliminate the act's termination date (Geist Priority Bill)

LB 994 Create the Rural Broadband Study Task Force, change provisions relating to the Nebraska Telecommunications Universal Service Fund, and change powers and duties of the Public Service Commission as prescribed (Transportation and Telecommunications Committee Priority Bill).

LB 1031 Change excavation notification and marking requirements and provide for large project planning meetings, rulemaking authority, and cost allocation under the One-Call Notification System Act

LB 1057 Change provisions relating to prescription drug monitoring

LB 1113 Provide an exception for leasing dark fiber or providing broadband, Internet, telecommunications, or video services by an agency or political subdivision of the state (Walz Priority Bill)

LB 1114 Provide for creation and maintenance of a statewide geographic information system map under the Nebraska Telecommunications Regulation Act

LB 1122 Authorize testing of automated motor vehicles as prescribed

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

Holly Woldt, Nebraska Library Commission and Tom Rolfes, NITC, shared information about an innovative project to improve internet access at five rural libraries by partnering with local schools. The Nebraska Library Commission, in collaboration with the State Office of the Chief Information Officer, has submitted a Sparks grant application to the Institute of Museum and Library Services to partner with, and incentivize five rural public school districts and five rural public libraries to work together to increase the internet speeds at the public library. Participating schools and libraries interested in establishing a terrestrial connection between the school and library could file a mini-consortium E-rate filing in 2019-2020, leveraging available federal support through a novel model for E-rate filing. The expected timeframe for this project will be from May 1, 2018-April 30, 2019, with pre-applications submitted and evaluated between January and March, 2018.

Steve Fosselman joined the meeting during this presentation.

Mr. Rolfes also shared that the Education Council has approved their action items, including broadband, and wants to work the Community Council on issues related to broadband.

NEBRASKA BROADBAND PARTNERSHIP DISCUSSION

The Nebraska Broadband Initiative was originally formed to implement the planning piece of the Nebraska Public Service Commission's broadband mapping and planning grant. After the grant ended, the group continued to meet. Activities included the *Nebraska Broadband* newsletter and partnering with the Nebraska Telecommunications Association to host the Nebraska Broadband Today conference. It may be time to re-energize and broaden the group. Ms. Byers asked council members for their thoughts on this. Rod Armstrong suggested waiting to see what happens with LB944. Connie Hancock and Randy Bretz expressed interest in moving the partnership forward. The group agreed to move an expanded Nebraska Broadband Partnership forward. The proposed task force and the broadband partnership would have different audiences and focuses. The Nebraska Broadband Partnership would be focused on outreach to communities. The task force would be focused on policy recommendations.

Randy Bretz made a motion in favor of re-energizing the Nebraska Broadband Partnership. Pam Adams seconded the motion. All were in favor.

MEMBERSHIP*

Ms. Byers introduced Johnathan Hladik, the policy director of the Center for Rural Affairs, who had been nominated to serve on the Community Council. Phil Green made a motion to move his nomination forward to the NITC. Randy Bretz seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Mr. Hladik's nomination will be brought to the NITC for their approval on March 8.

RURAL BROADBAND AND COMMUNITY IT DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC INITIATIVE AND ACTION ITEM *

Ms. Byers presented slightly modified action items for the Community Council's approval.

1. **Action:** Support the efforts of communities to address broadband-related development by sharing broadband-related news and highlighting exemplary programs through the Broadband Nebraska newsletter, social media, and other activities through an expanded Nebraska Broadband Initiative.
2. **Action:** Expand awareness and address the need for digital inclusion and equitable broadband access through educational materials, best practices and community outreach.
3. **Action:** Support the efforts of Network Nebraska and the Education Council to address digital equity and to explore partnerships to improve library broadband access.

Rod Armstrong moved to approve the strategic initiatives and action items. Randy Bretz seconded the motion. All were in favor.

OTHER UPDATES

Roberto Gallardo has moved to Purdue University. He is working now for Purdue University and is developing a multi-state survey of broadband users on the economic impact of broadband.

Steve Fosselman shared live video of the Grand Island Northwest Band playing for the library's Book Bop celebration. Anne Byers and Tom Rolfes shared that NITC will be celebrating its 20th anniversary this year.

Ms. Byers also congratulated Shonna Dorsey on her appointment to the Nebraska Information Technology Commission. Her appointment will begin in April.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Phil Green adjourned the meeting at 3:04 p.m.