

**Nebraska Information Technology Commission  
Community Council  
Wednesday, February 19, 2020  
1:30 P.M. CT – 4:00 P.M. CT  
Atrium, 1200 N St., Lincoln Suite 206**

**MINUTES**

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

**Members Present:** Pam Adams, Jay Anderson, Rod Armstrong, Randy Bretz, Jessica Chamberlain, Shonna Dorsey, Steve Fosselman, Charlotte Narjes, Johnathan Hladik, Allison Hatch, Mary Ridder, and Megan McGown

**Members Absent:** Chris Anderson, Brett Baker, Tim Lindahl, and Holly Woldt

The meeting was called to order by co-chair Rod Armstrong at 1:35. Twelve members were present, making a quorum. Meeting notices were posted on the Public Meeting and NITC websites on Jan. 29, 2020. The agenda was posted on the NITC Website on Jan. 29, 2020. A copy of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act was available on the table by Tom Rolfes.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

**APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 30, 2019 MINUTES**

Jay Anderson made a motion to approve the October 30, 2019 minutes. Randy Bretz seconded the motion.

**Roll call vote: Adams-Yes, C. Anderson-Yes, J. Armstrong-Yes, Bretz-Yes, Chamberlain-Yes; Dorsey-Yes; Fosselman-Yes; Narjes-Yes, Hladik-Yes, Hatch-Yes, Ridder-Yes, McGown-Yes. Results: Yes-12, No-0, Abstained-0. Motion carried.**

**COLLABORATING ON BROADBAND OUTREACH TO COMMUNITIES AND REGIONS**

Ms. Byers welcomed guests to the meeting. She explained that one of the recommendations of the Rural Broadband Task Force was to encourage communities and regions to develop broadband plans. The Community Council has invited other stakeholders to the meeting to explore how the Community Council and other interested stakeholders can collaborate on an outreach effort to help communities and regions develop broadband plans and improve broadband availability. Some communities and regions may also want to address related issues such as IT workforce development and the homework gap.

She also mentioned that the Community Council needs several new members. Those interested in serving on the Community Council should contact Anne Byers. Participants introduced themselves and shared information on broadband-related activities. Those present included:

- Anne Byers, Nebraska Information Technology Commission
- Johnathan Hladik, Center for Rural Affairs
- Charlotte Narjes, University of Nebraska

- Eric Carstenson, Nebraska Telecommunications Association
- David Young, City of Lincoln
- Tom Rolfes, Nebraska Information Technology Commission
- Mary Ridder, Nebraska Public Service Commission
- Dan Spray, Connecting Point
- Cullen Robbins, Nebraska Public Service Commission
- Dusty Vaughn, representing Paige Wireless
- Julie Bushell, Paige Wireless
- Rod Armstrong, AIM Institute
- Randy Bretz
- Jay Anderson, NebraskaLink
- Allison Hatch, Nebraska Department of Economic Development
- Pam Anderson, American Broadband
- Jina Ragland, AARP
- Danny DeLong, AARP
- Greg McKee, University of Nebraska
- Steve Fosselman, Grand Island Public Library
- Judy Peterson, Central Nebraska Economic Development District
- Jessica Chamberlain, Norfolk Public Library
- Megan McGown, Great Plains Health
- Andy Pollack, Rembolt Ludtke, representing the Rural Telecommunications Coalition of Nebraska
- Shonna Dorsey, Mutual of Omaha
- Leigh Ann Spellman, NextLink

Rod Armstrong asked for information about LB 996 which was debated by the Legislature on Tuesday, Feb. 18, 2020. Johnathan Hladik explained that LB 996 would authorize the Nebraska Public Service Commission to collect crowd-sourced information to verify broadband availability. Accurate broadband maps will help correctly identify unserved areas which would be eligible for funding through the second phase of the FCC Rural Digital Opportunity Fund reverse auction.

Cullen Robbins also provided information on LB 992 which would implement several recommendations of the Rural Broadband Task Force. The bill would establish a process for using existing electric utility easements for telecommunications, establish a broadband coordinator position with the Office of the CIO, authorize the Nebraska Public Service Commission to establish an E-Rate Special Construction Matching Program, would modify rules regarding leasing dark fiber by public entities, and would establish term limits for Rural Broadband Task Force members. The bill currently includes language establishing four technicians to provide E-Rate and Technical assistance to libraries. This section is expected to be removed. Other options for providing assistance for libraries are being explored.

Governor Ricketts and Tony Goins, the Director of the Department of Economic Development, have made broadband availability a priority. Dan Curran reached out to Anne Byers while Ms. Byers was on vacation. She will follow up with Dan Curran to learn more about DED's plans to make sure that the Community Council and DED are working together and supporting each other. The group discussed options for helping communities. Ideas discussed included:

- **Developing case studies/best practices.** Participants suggested several communities and initiatives that could be profiled in case studies, including Gothenburg. Charlotte Narjes suggested looking at communities profiled by the Kansas City Federal Reserve Bank. Julie Bushell offered to provide information on how Paige Wireless is working with telecommunications providers, NPPD, and two public power districts on a pilot project
- **Hosting a broadband conference**
- **Establishing a facilitator program**

## **NEXT STEPS**

The group identified several next steps:

**Coordinate with the Department of Economic Development.** Anne Byers will meet with Dan Curran to learn more about DED's plans to address broadband availability and to coordinate efforts.

**Develop Case Studies of Successful Community Broadband Initiatives.** The following individuals volunteered to serve on this work group:

- Mary Ridder
- Randy Bretz
- Charlotte Narjes
- Johnathan Hladik
- Jeremy Lipschultz (nominated by Charlotte Narjes)

**Solicit New Community Council Members.** The Community Council includes 18-24 representatives from:

- Rural/community IT development
- Local government and libraries
- Resource providers
- Other groups

Participants were asked to e-mail Anne Byers if they were interested in serving on the Community Council.

## **COMMUNITY COUNCIL ACTION ITEMS\***

Ms. Byers explained that the NITC is beginning the process of updating the Statewide Technology Plan. Each NITC advisory council is asked to submit one or more action items to be included in the Statewide Technology Plan before the NITC's March 12 meeting. Ms. Byers proposed the following action item:

Work with the Nebraska Department of Economic Development and other stakeholders to explore the development of a collaborative broadband outreach effort.

Commissioner Ridder expressed concerns that the action item was not well-defined. Ms. Byers agreed that the action item should be better defined, but the Community Council doesn't have much time to further define the action item before the March 12 NITC meeting. The action item can be better defined before the NITC adopts the final version of the plan in July.

Jay Anderson made a motion to approve the Community Council action item. Randy Bretz seconded the motion.

**Roll call vote: Adams-Yes, C. Anderson-Yes, J. Bretz-Yes, Chamberlain-Yes; Dorsey-Yes; Fosselman-Yes; Narjes-Yes, Hladik-Yes, Hatch-Yes, Ridder-Yes, Results: Yes-10, No-0, Abstained-0. Motion carried.**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

With no other business, the chair adjourned the meeting at 3:37 p.m.

Meeting minutes were prepared by Lori Lopez Urdiales and Anne Byers.