

**Nebraska Information Technology Commission
Community Council**

**Thursday, Nov. 12, 2020
1:30 P.M. CT**

**1526 Building, Second Floor Conference Room B, 1526 K Street, Lincoln, NE
Zoom Videoconferencing**

MINUTES

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

Members Present via Zoom: Pam Adams, Jay Anderson, Rod Armstrong (joined late), Randy Bretz, Jessica Chamberlain, Connie Hancock (joined late), Johnathan Hladik, Nichole Reiner, Tim Lindahl, Judy Petersen, Cullen Robbins for Mary Ridder, Danny Rockhill, Mehmet Can Vuran, Holly Woldt and David Young.

Members Absent: Chris Anderson, Shonna Dorsey and Megan McGown

The meeting was called to order by Anne Byers at 1:30 p.m. Thirteen members were present via videoconferencing. A quorum was not present.

Meeting notices were posted on the Public Meeting and NITC websites on Oct. 28, 2020. The agenda was posted on the NITC website on Oct. 28, 2020. A copy of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act was available on the table next to Anne Byers and at https://nitc.nebraska.gov/documents/statutes/NebraskaOpenMeetingsAct_current.pdf.

REVIEW OF MINUTES

Members had no revisions to the minutes. Minutes will be approved at the next meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

DISCUSSION ITEMS AND UPDATES

NROC and Economic Development Districts Broadband Planning—*Tom Bliss*

Tom Bliss from the Southeast Nebraska Economic Development District shared information on the broadband planning grant that the Nebraska Regional Officials Council (NROC) and the regional economic development districts received from the Economic Development Administration. An RFP for a crowdsourcing broadband mapping initiative was sent out to consultants. GeoPartners responded and was selected. GeoPartners has worked with Ohio, Kentucky, Washington, and Minnesota to collect and analyze information from crowd-sourced broadband speed tests. Information collected by GeoPartners will be used to determine which areas have had the greatest participation in the speedtest project and would be good sites to collect additional information through UNK's Rural Measures project. Each district is responsible for encouraging residents to do speed tests. Can Vuran asked how the University of Nebraska could help. Anne Byers suggested setting up a meeting with members of the University of Nebraska's Rural Prosperity team to see if there were opportunities for collaboration.

A member asked if 5G will benefit rural areas. Can Vuran explained that 5G is not designed for rural areas.

Anne Byers also shared information on the precision ag demo held on Oct. 15 in Arnold and Sutherland. LoRaWAN which is a low bandwidth technology for sensors or other internet of things devices was one of the technologies featured.

Rural Broadband Remote Access Grants Update—*Nichole Reiner*

On October 8, Governor Ricketts announced the award of over \$29.5 million in funding for broadband projects which will connect 17,600 households. The total cost of the projects funded is \$41.5 million. Projects must be completed by Dec. 30, 2020.

Rural Measures—*Tim Obermier and Angela Hollman*

Tim Obermier shared information on the Rural Measures project which distributes Raspberry Pi devices to households to do speed tests. The devices are connected directly to the network and provide for more accurate speed tests than speed tests done by going to a website or using an app. They have found that speed decreases as distance from town increases. Several organizations are interested in partnering with the Rural Measures team including the University of Nebraska's Rural Prosperity initiative, Purdue University, and the Nebraska Department of Economic Development.

PSC Update—*Cullen Robbins*

Cullen Robbins provided an update on the Public Service Commission's activities:

- The PSC's wireless fund received applications for funding for 20 towers from two providers.
- The PSC has opened a docket to update the contribution method for businesses services to a per connection fee.
- The Rules and Regulations for a reverse auction were reviewed by the Attorney General's Office. The Attorney General's Office recommended removing the community-based option. The rules and regulations have been revised and have been resubmitted to the Attorney General's Office.
- The PSC also approved an order (NUSF 99 P.O. 2) which reformed the distribution method for price cap carriers.

Homework Gap and Library Broadband Update —*Tom Rolfes and Holly Woldt*

Tom Rolfes reported that he has worked with the Nebraska Department of Education on the Digital Learning Guidance document, September's Digital Equity Month, and the Request For Information (RFI) to document providers' best residential education internet service. He has also worked with the Nebraska Rural Community Schools Association to co-develop a "playbook" for superintendents to collect and map student address data, and then increase the level of student home internet to help mitigate the Homework Gap.

Holly Woldt shared that libraries in Nebraska average a 70% E-Rate discount. Only 16% of libraries apply for E-Rate. The Nebraska Library Commission conducted 10 hours of training on using E-Rate and applying for the PSC's new special construction matching program. Four libraries are taking the first step and issuing RFPs for fiber construction.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.