

NORTHEAST MICHIGAN FIBER CONSORTIUM MEETING
Wednesday, February 10, 2021, 1:00 pm
Alpena Community College, WebEx meeting
MINUTES

Present: Dennis Bannon (NEMCMH), Vicky Kropp (NEMiFC), Katie Jensen (Merit), Paul Mancine (APS), Jack Wierzbicki (NEMCSA), Steve Mousseau (Alpena County), Jeff Blumenthal (ACC), Liz Fagel (Michigan Works), Deb Kozlowski (ACC), Chuck Bennett (Thunder Bay Marine Sanctuary), Paul Diamond (Omni), Katie Jensen (Merit), Chad Baily (MidMichigan)

Guest: Jim Selby, President of Aspen Wireless Technology, Mike Reen (Aspen Wireless)

1. Dennis Bannon called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.
2. Introductions
3. Approval of minutes from December 9, 2020. Dennis bannon asked for a motion to accept the minutes. Liz Fagel made the motion, Jeff Blumenthal seconded. Unanimously approved.
4. Additions to the Agenda – None
5. Public Comment – None
6. Consent Agenda
 - a. New Correspondence – Vicky Kropp received correspondence regarding the Merit Advisory Council election nominations. The purpose of the council is to provide advice and recommendations to Merit staff and the board and the collaboration and facilitation of opportunities to software and programs of interest for Merit Members. This is normally a three-year term. They meet quarterly and membership is comprised of all different industries as listed on the email you received from Marketing.
 - b. Financial Report – Vicky Kropp presented the financial report. Invoicing was sent to accounts payable for members for the total of 31,500. Current balance total is 29,728.17. This includes payments of contracted services; Thunder Bay Electric, Merit Port Management fees, Merit DDOS, finale payment for Amazon web services and payment to Intricate Security. Once we receive total funds from member invoicing balance will be 61,228.00. Dennis Bannon asked for a motion to accept the financial report, Liz Fagel made the motion, seconded by Jeff Blumenthal. Unanimously approved.

7. New Business – none reported.

8. Current Business

- a. Consortium Update. Vicky Kropp shared that she is working on the ring engineering and is in touch with Merit. Reaching out to different perspective members, which includes IOSCO county. Conversations regarding community of practice with Liz Fagel and also input on the CISO scanner. Spoke to Ron Seigal, Allband, regarding the new round of funding. They have added 500 new customers within their area served and they are planning on servicing a corridor that would run north of Hubbard lake to Werth Road, including Spruce, Black River, Mikado and Hubbard Lake areas using wireless LTE and CBRS technology.
- b. NEMiFC Ring/Engineering update. Vicky Kropp said that we have two areas to finish. The connection at the Alpena High School which Paul Mancine agreed to take the lead on getting that connection updated from the Public Schools by Hunan to 32. Paul reported that he has worked with Thunder Bay Electric and hopeful to get the project started next week. Steve Weiland is working with Brian Robertson (MidMichigan) to complete the connection at that location. We have the 10Gig completed for the city, DNR, Alpena Oxygen and Michigan Works. The work has been completed at Alpena Power. Vicky asked the Thunder Bay Electric give us a better drawing on the work between power company and the city. Looking for completion update from Bob Stoval and Steve Weiland at the April meeting.
- c. Merit Update – Katie Jensen said a link has been sent out to members regarding the community of practice. Cost would be 239.00 per each COP/per year. A member would be allowed to attend one of the COP's meetings for free to see if that COP would be a good fit.

CISO scanner has special pricing offer for members. 2 years for the price of 1 and members can also do a 30 day trial. Reminder that each member gets 2 free hours with Kevin Hayes. Some of the topics that we have Kevin talk about are border connections, business continuity, vulnerability measurements and security awareness. Please coordinate with Katie if interested. Liz asked about end user training. Katie will also talk to Kevin about an ROI for funds if attacked.

Katie has been in contact with Adam Poll, Exec. Director of the Chamber of Commerce, in regards to introduction of Merit and the consortium.

Presque Isle Electric and Gas released information with regards to providing broadband in their nine-county service area (RDOF funding). Merit would provide the backhaul. Katie will keep us informed as they move ahead.

Vicky Kropp indicated that the only other company that is touching us in this round of RDOF funding is Mercury Wireless. Chery Capitol RDOF funding only has a plan to service an area on the west side of the state and they also have sent

correspondence to Presque Isle area that currently they would not be continuing to invest in growth in PI because of cost. Starlink is being tested in Presque Isle and apparently is working well other than under BETA there might be temporary down times. Liz Fagel has signed up for another carrier called NOMAD internet. They are third party provider of Verizon and AT&T. They are less expensive and it is working very well. She previously used AT&T and started having issues. She was paying a lot of money and limited to 100G. She tried T-Mobile and it was adequate but NOMAD is providing a better service.

- d. ASPEN Wireless Presentation – Jim Selby, Pres. Of Aspen Wireless Technology. 85% of their business today is bringing fiber to communities. Presented to members examples of their service in assisting communities in building fiber to the home, including City of Marshall and also Coldwater Board of Public Utilities with their electric footprint. Anyone who wants to build out fiber to the home has to go through the rules of the Metro Act. The Metro Act itself is a 12 Step Process that you go through with the State of Michigan. It usually takes about a half year for communities to complete the Metro Act. Aspen’s goal is to help a community in finding the right technologies to meet their needs and decisions to provide the most cost effective means possible. If you want a copy of the slides presented, please contact Katie.

9. Roundtable

- a. Vicky said that in conversation with Katie they talked about starting a member highlight at each meeting. It would give members a true understanding of its member base and also the idea of having a speaker come in regarding certain subjects that consortium members might be interested in.
- b. Vicky is also looking at development of web site and brochure with updated information. Looking into how we can get our members to become involved.
- c. Liz Fagel talked about down time they experienced in January. Merit did not realize that the effect of a maintenance window for the City of Alpena and how it affected Michigan works. They were taken down for a full afternoon. This has happened in the past when the city has had work done or a reboot. She needs a way to communicate directly with the city when this happens. Katie will look into communication issues with this and how we can correct moving forward. Liz also mentioned that when she does call NOC they do not always enter a ticket and she has to request one to be opened.

Dennis Bannon asked for a motion to adjourn. Liz Fagel made a motion, seconded by Chuck Bennet, unanimously approved. Meeting adjourned at 2:25 pm.

Reminder – Consortium website is www.nemifc.org; email address is arfc@nemifc.org.

