

WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS BROADBAND EQUITY SUBCOMMITTEE  
UNAPPROVED MEETING MINUTES FEBRUARY 12, 2018

**RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS:**

A session of the Broadband Equity Subcommittee was held at 200 N. Main St, Lower Level Conference Room, Ann Arbor, Michigan on Monday, February 12, 2018

The meeting was called to order by Barb Fuller at 2:02 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Kyle Mazurek, Comcast and serving as Industry broadband liaison

Scott Wooster, Chelsea Schools representing secondary education/IT expert

Ben Fineman, Sub-Committee Vice-Chair, President of the Michigan Broadband Cooperative and Broadband Expert

Theresa Herron, Manchester Schools representing secondary education

Teresa Gillotti, Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development

Barb Fuller, Sub-Committee Chair, Sharon Township and citizen representative

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Alicia Ping, Washtenaw County Commissioner

Karen Domino, WISD and Education/Technology Expert

Kent Martinez-Kratz, Washtenaw County Commissioner

Michelle Deatrick, Washtenaw County Commissioner

Conan Smith, Washtenaw County Commissioner

Andy Brush, Washtenaw County IT

**GUEST PANELISTS:**

Ray Berg - Manchester Victorians, LLC, Freedom Twp resident and former Manchester Chamber & DDA President

Amy Cell – Amy Cell Talent, talent attraction and retention consultant

Len Chockly – Home based computer consultant, Northfield Twp

Phil Santer – Sr. V-Pres & Chief Of Staff, Ann Arbor SPARK

Kathy Speigel – Ph.D. Grass Lake Resident, Certified Medical Writer, President American Medical Writers Association

Matt Shane – Michigan State University Extension

**CITIZEN PARTICIPATION:**

No citizen participation

WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS BROADBAND EQUITY SUBCOMMITTEE  
UNAPPROVED MEETING MINUTES FEBRUARY 12, 2018

**Business Owners', Economic Development Leaders' & Stakeholders' Perspective:**

The Broadband Subcommittee was joined by Kathy Speigel, Ray Berg, Len Chockly, Matt Shane, Phil Santer and Amy Cell.

**Kathy Speigel:** Kathy is a former Pfizer employee. Currently she is employed by AMGEN and works from home as a Medical Regulatory Writer. Until recently she had to do a majority of her work away from home at café's where she could access a broadband connection. This turns into an issue because AMGEN is located in California with clients in the UK, India, Australia and China. Her work day can span from 8 am to 10 pm. When she started her current job they had 38 employees. 30 of them worked at the office and 8 worked remotely now 30 work remotely and 8 work from the office. The environment is changing very quickly in her industry. Kathy currently uses Verizon 4G for her at home internet connection and her bill is around \$450 per month. She stated she has better service at her cabin on the Au Sable River in Northern Michigan. Kathy stated that her biggest concern is the cost for internet service along with speed and bandwidth.

**Ray Berg:** In 2003 Ray Berg moved to Freedom Township from Rochester Hills. AT that time he had 24g dial-up internet and then became involved in Wireless Washtenaw representing the four townships in the SW corner of Washtenaw County. Ray lobbied for Manchester to be the pilot for Wireless Washtenaw and was successful. Around this time Wireless Washtenaw began declining new customers. Ray stayed with Wireless Washtenaw for 9 years which is now Air Advantage. Ray switched to Verizon because Air Advantage would not service the equipment and Verizon was also cheaper. He is satisfied with his current internet service. Ray observed that in 2007 Washtenaw County convened One Washtenaw to regularly gather stakeholders from across the County. That meeting no longer takes place. Furthermore, Washtenaw County IT used to support and help with web sites for local units of government. That no longer is the case either. As the President of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce Ray pointed out that it is a totally volunteer organization with no office. All the Chamber business is transacted online. Not surprisingly the uneven internet access makes it challenging to promote the Village and the greater Manchester, coordinate activities and keep members updated. He has personally experienced businesses walk away from considering locating in Manchester because fiber is not available despite the availability of fixed wireless service.

**Len Chockly:** Formerly a Pittsfield Township resident, Len now lives in Northfield Township where he runs his IT consulting business from home. In 1997 Len moved to Northfield Township counting on Wireless Washtenaw coverage in the near future. That coverage never materialized. Had he known there would be no high speed internet access, he would not have moved to Northfield Township. After 6-8 months of trying, he finally got a representative from Charter to tell him the cost to run fiber to his home would be \$42,000. Len now uses Verizon 4G for internet. Len has to go to the library or the local Panera if he has something big to do for work.

**Matt Shane:** Matt works for Michigan State University Extension and is responsible for a 6-county region that includes Washtenaw County. Matt stated that the Government Public Policy team could help local units of government shape policies about broadband. MSU extension has not spent a lot of

WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS BROADBAND EQUITY SUBCOMMITTEE  
UNAPPROVED MEETING MINUTES FEBRUARY 12, 2018

time on the issue of Broadband coverage. Personally, Matt is an Air Advantage customer and he has had no service issues at his home.

**Phil Santer:** SPARK has done work with ACM (American Center for Mobility) to help turn Willow Run into a test facility for autonomous cars. The facility opened on December 17, 2018 to car testing. AT&T wanted to become the sole provider of services for the facility and has been designated as such. Aside from ACM, SPARK has seen in the site selection process that the issue of broadband coverage is right there with the questions on sewer and water availability. Phil also remarked that the current strategy has shifted from identifying where the talent is needed to where the talent can be found. The goal is to find the alumni from Michigan Universities and lure them back. He made the observation that people often don't realize how much they need high speed internet access until they have it and discover what they had been missing.

**Amy Cell:** Amy has a consulting business that assists employers in finding talent for their companies. She noted that Linked In is the primary search engine for higher knowledge job seekers. Amy's biggest concern is for low income people who don't have access to broadband. For job seekers looking to improve their situations, lack of internet access is a barrier in the job search and application process. Amy also stated that most jobs postings now require online application and skills assessment.

**DELIVERABLE UPDATES:**

Scott Wooster: Education Day is set for April 16, 2018

Zach Neal: BOC Leadership would welcome an update from Subcommittee at a March Working Session

**DISCUSSION:**

Scott plans to send a survey to all of the school districts in the county regarding Education Day

Ben stated that universities have increasingly offered online degrees but university professors are resistant to online classes.

Scott said that libraries are becoming packed after school because of the students needing to complete homework where internet access is available.

**NEXT STEPS**

Zach will provide committee with route to find subcommittee page on county website

March 19<sup>th</sup> meeting will be a working session for the subcommittee with no guest panelists

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting ended at 3:38 p.m.

Next meeting: Monday, March 19<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 – 3:30 p.m. – 200 N. Main St, Ann Arbor, MI, Lower Large Conference Room (same building as the County Clerk & County Treasurer's offices).