

Telecommunications Committee Meeting – December 5, 2016

Posted November 30, 2016 at 4 p.m. at the Town of Russell Garage, Town Clerk's Office and Town website. Notices sent via e-mail to the Ashland Daily Press and Bayfield County Journal.

The meeting was called to order by Committee Chairman Mark Bugher at 8:03 a.m. at the Town of Russell Garage. Roll call was taken as follows; present Supervisor Larry Meierotto and committee member Mike Cariveau. Clerk/Treasurer David L. Good was also present.

Theron Rutna representing the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa was also present.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those present.

Approval of the agenda – A motion was made by Cariveau and seconded by Meierotto to approve the agenda. The motion carried.

PUBLIC INPUT – No members of the public were present and no public input was offered.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – A motion was made by Meierotto and seconded by Cariveau to approve the minutes of the November 15, 2016 meeting. The motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

Discussion Regarding Contact with Communications Companies Providing Telecommunications Services in the Town of Russell – A brief discussion was held. Bugher has reached out to Verizon and has had an initial contact. However, it was not the individual he needed to speak with. He is awaiting another response from them. Discussion was held regarding cellphone users in the Town. It was agreed that most residents have cellphones they use when away from their residence even if they do not have service at their residence. Cariveau felt data on potential numbers of cellphone users that come to the area for Apple Festival, Ice Caves, Dog Sled Races, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Red Cliff Pow Wow, etc. The value of this type of data was discussed. The value of these users needing to access data on their mobile devices was also discussed. The providing of data services by cellular providers may be of more interest to them than voice services. Bugher agreed to make contacts to collect visitor data. Cariveau felt we need to try and collect the data on a time of use basis, dates and months, etc. Meierotto also agreed that visitor data will be important since “new customer” potential will be minimal. Rutna felt we should discuss our interests with Norvado. They currently have fiber to the Bayfield Ferry Dock and serve Madeline Island. The Norvado fiber network was discussed. Rutna will contact information for Norvado. He also stated the Charter/Time Warner merger resulted in them creating a division that specifically deals with local and Federal governments and he will provide the committee with contact information for them also. survey in the mailing of the property tax bills, and/or an on-line survey on the Town's website. Possible questions for a survey were discussed.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion regarding developing a “Vision Statement” – Bugher offered the following as a draft.

“To create an environment where residents of the Town of Russell have seamless, uninterrupted access to cellphone service and support policies that facilitate an infrastructure that allows for wireless internet service for home and business.”

Discussion followed that the Town is not a provider of these services. Cariveau was concerned that a provider may want financial support from the Town. Bugher felt the Town is not financially able to do this. Good stated the Town could borrow money for this type of project providing it generated a cash flow to cover the debt service. Discussion followed that the Town could own telecommunications infrastructure but that it does not want to operate it. A provider could lease these facilities from the Town. Support for this would be up to the Town Board.

After much discussion and deliberation, a motion was made by Cariveau and seconded by Meierotto to adopt the following vision statement:

“To create an environment and partnerships where residents and visitors of the Town of Russell have seamless, uninterrupted access to voice, data and broadband service and where it is prudent financially and strategically relevant, support policies that facilitate an infrastructure that allows for voice, data and broadband services for home, business and government.”

The motion carried.

Discussion regarding developing a “Strategic Plan” – Bugher suggested the following as key points of a strategic plan:

1. Convene a committee
2. Reach out to collaborators including the Tribe, NPS, etc.
3. Identify existing infrastructure needs of residents and visitors
4. Make contact with service providers
5. Access needs for infrastructure improvements
6. Enact policies to facilitate voice, broadband, data and wireless expansion
7. Identify costs associated with executing a plan
8. Execute the plan

Bugher agreed to refine the plan. It was suggested to add a timeline. Cariveau suggested a business aspect be included. Discussion followed. It was agreed that business is a consideration.

Discussion regarding identifying additional customers for telecommunications services and development of survey methodology regarding telecommunications customer needs – Bugher discussed the proposed survey. He indicated the Bayfield Chamber did a similar survey to what this committee is proposing. He requested a copy of the results from the Chamber survey. The survey will be mailed with property tax bills in December. Who will receive the survey and who will not receive the survey was discussed. The draft of the proposed survey was reviewed and changes recommended.

Town of Russell

35900 State Highway 13
Bayfield, Wisconsin 54814

e-mail townofrussell@centurytel.net

website www.townofrussell.org

Dear Town of Russell Taxpayer:

Your Town Board has established a telecommunications committee. The purpose of the committee is to measure town resident needs with respect to broad band (wifi/internet) service and cellular phone service. We have heard from residents who believe our cellular phone service as well as internet speeds and service are insufficient to handle the modern needs of residential and business users. It is with that in mind that we ask that you complete the survey below to help your Town Board make decisions and pursue initiatives to improve cell phone and internet service to our residents.

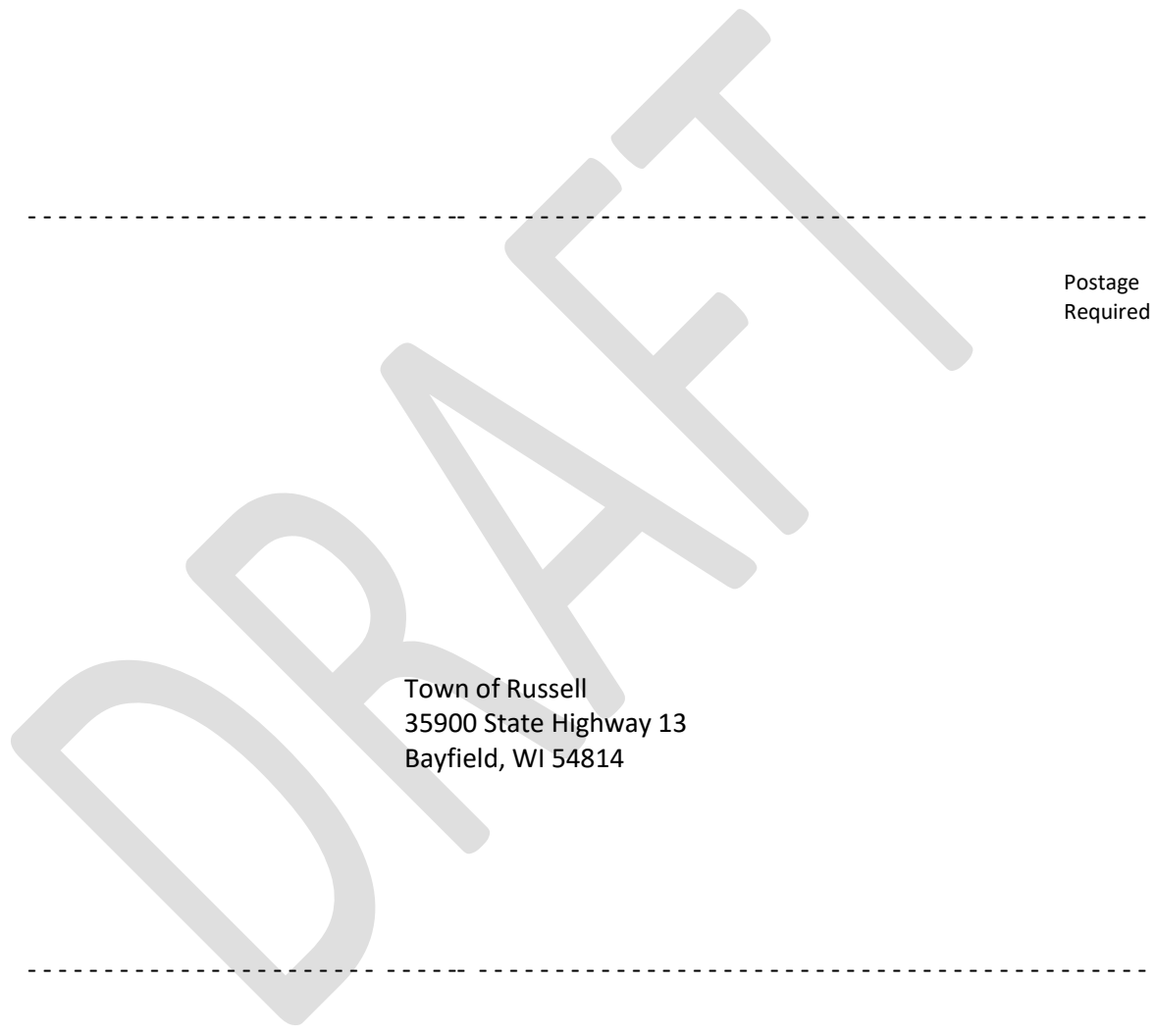
The survey is voluntary and confidential. We ask that you return the survey with you property tax payment or mail the survey to, Town Clerk/Treasurer; 35900 State Highway 13; Bayfield, WI 54814 or drop it off at the Town Garage. The survey is pre-addressed to the Town. You may also refold and tape this survey, add postage and return it to the Town. We ask that you complete this survey and return it before January 31, 2017. Thank you!

- 1) Do you currently have a landline (traditional phone) in your home? No Yes If yes, who is your service provider? (For example, CenturyLink, Norvado, Charter, other)
Current landline provider _____
- 2) Do you currently own and use a smart phone or cell phone? (For example, Apple I Phone, Samsung, LG)
No Yes
- 3) What company provides your smart phone/cell phone service? (For example, Verizon, AT&T, T-Mobile, Sprint, other) _____
- 4) Do you have cell service or coverage at your local residence? No Yes
- 5) Do you current have and use internet service in your home? No Yes If yes, what is the name of the company that provides this service to you? (For example, Charter, CenturyLink, Norvado, AT&T, other) _____
- 6) Are you satisfied with your cell phone service in our area? No Yes
- 7) Are you satisfied with your internet service to your home? No Yes

Add comment area:

Name and local address (optional – your individual information will not be shared)

Fold this section in first on the dotted line



Postage
Required

Town of Russell
35900 State Highway 13
Bayfield, WI 54814

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Here

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Tape

A motion was made by Meierotto and seconded by Cariveau to approve the survey above as revised. The motion carried.

Next Steps and Assignments – Nothing other than those items identified in the minutes. Good will provide preliminary survey results.

The next Telecommunications Committee Meeting – It was agreed to meet on at 8:00 a.m. on Monday, January 16, 2017 at the Town Garage. Bugher will attend by telephone.

A motion to adjourn at 9:18 p.m. was made by Meierotto and seconded by Cariveau. The motion carried.

The minutes respectfully submitted by:

David L. Good – Clerk/Treasurer

DRAFT