Koochiching Technology Initiative

Regular Meeting Minutes

6/3/2026

Attendance: Members- Tim Gerlach, Paul Nevanen, Jaci Nagle, Jason Sjoblom, Holly Hoy (V), Wayne Fuller, Veronica Bistadeau (V). Others present- Cori Horton and Kyle McCallum

Guest Speaker: Bryon Bistadeau

Bryon spoke to the group about his experience working on the construction of a data center in Ellendale, North Dakota. The data center was one of several being built by Applied Digital. Bryon spoke to what changes he noticed in Ellendale, though he only was on the project for one year. He said the influx of construction workers was a benefit to local businesses but also a drain on local services and traffic. He talked about sound and light pollution from the data center complex, as one data center was already finished. The one he was working on was three stories tall. He was able to explain the type of cooling systems installed where meant to be less of a burden on local water. He didn't know what the permanent employee situation would look like once the complex is finished, Applied Digital did not publicly put out that information while he was working on the project.

Regular meeting called to order at 9:45am

Administrative Business

1. Agenda approved on a Jaci/Tim motion.
2. May minutes approved on a Tim/Paul motion.
3. Financials- not much activity, just some grant money coming in and regular expenses coming out; $5000 from the Knutson Foundation to support ewaste collection and the ACC member projects. The $1500 from Midco is not shown in this month's report; Reimbursement for Kyle's trip to the cities to pick up the laptops. Payment to Jodi for doing the strategic planning meeting. And monthly admin payments. Financials approved on a Paul/Tim motion
4. Grant thank you letters- motion by Jaci to write letters to the agencies who awarded us grants. Seconded by Wayne, motion passed.
5. Strategic planning update- 30 day update- Tim has reached out to Professor Cara Santeli and has asked her to be a future guest speaker to speak about data centers. Jaci and Holly put together a list of all the municipalities in the county and possible contacts for them to try and bring in more members.
6. Roberts rules suspended on a Paul/Holly motion

Ongoing Business

1. Ewaste- Wayne reminded the group how PCs for People backtracked on the agreement for the last shipment of ewaste to their facility. They have also informed Wayne that any future shipments would be subject to significantly larger costs, so Wayne recommends we no longer try to partner with PCs for People for ewaste collections. He thinks Dynamic, who he has worked with before and has provided previous grant money, would be the better option for partnership. He also informed the group that late summer would be a better time to try and schedule an ewaste event at the Transfer Station.
2. Area broadband- Frontier is doing work out towards the lake and in Ranier.
3. Cell infrastructure- no updates
4. LFA/ACC- Kyle picked up laptops and now has 20 of them to distribute.
5. Member updates
    - Paul- he sat in a webinar about water use and data centers. Jonathan Noble with Microsoft was someone who spoke during the webinar and mentioned that Microsoft is no longer requiring NDAs because of the push back. And they are trying to be more transparent with their data center usage and are updating their plans and policies to be more environmentally and publicly friendly. Paul also talked to someone with MN Power about potential sound pollution at the Hermantown data center, and they said 40 decibels would be the loudest in can be, per building requirements.
    - Tim- He talked with Cara Santeli, who is involved with data centers in Minnesota. She said some 50-60 data centers have been proposed in Minnesota but most likely only about 10 would ever be accepted. She told Tim that a lot of information about data centers making the rounds online is outdated. She says she would be willing to be a guest speaker at a future meeting.
6. Publicity/outreach- Kyle is working on an introductory article for the newspaper.
7. Future guest speakers- both Paul and Tim are reaching out to contacts about being speakers.

Next Meeting: July 1, 2026 @ 9:00am

Next guest speaker: Cara Santeli