Koochiching Technology Initiative

Regular Meeting Minutes

7/1/2026

Attendance: Members- Tim Gerlach, Paul Nevanen, Jaci Nagle, Jason Sjoblom, Veronica Bistadeau (V), Todd Ojala (V). Others present- Cori Horton and Christine Anderson.

Guest Speaker: Cara Santeli, UMD

Cara spoke to the group and answered questions concerning water usage in data centers. MN is considered a desirable location for data centers because of the abundance of water and the cooler climate. A lot of concerns around data centers and excessive water usage are usually around the hyperscale centers, the ones that are massive. But most data centers are smaller structures, and a lot of companies are steering away from hyper scaling. Still, water usage depends on a lot of variables: size, cooling tech, local climate, computing demand, etc. Numbers released on water usage are estimated and do not include water usage for power production. It is important for communities to ask companies questions when a data center is proposed in their communities: where is the water coming from? Will the water be recycled? Can our watershed sustain it? What data will be publicly reported.

Regular meeting called to order at 9:48am

Administrative Business

1. Agenda approved on a Tim/Jaci motion
2. June minutes approved on a Tim/Paul motion.
3. Financials- not much activity, just some grant money coming in and regular expenses coming out; Financials approved on a Paul/Tim motion
4. County Budget Request- the county gives KTI our ask of $5K every year. Jason suggests that we ask for more this time. After discussion, Jason makes the motion to increase the ask from the county to $12.5K, motion seconded by Paul. Motion carries.
5. Strategic planning update- There is a focus on getting a data center seminar organized. Jason will reach out to the Freshwater society through Cara. Holly and Jaci have a list of people to reach out to in the county to try and get more KTI members and involve more municipalities in the county.
6. Roberts rules suspended on a Paul/Jaci motion

Ongoing Business

1. Ewaste- Wayne not present to give updates.
2. Area broadband- Frontier is doing work out towards the lake and in Ranier.
3. Cell infrastructure- no updates
4. LFA/ACC- Kyle not present to give updates, but he will be at the Falls Public Library one hour a week to help people with computer needs.
5. Member updates
    - Paul- Spoke to Laurel Beager at the Rainy Lake Gazette about a potential data center seminar. And it is his last day of work!
    - Christine- she is taking over Paul's position as the KEDA director. She would like to become a KTI member.
    - Jaci- "I'm on a boat!"
    - Cori- will share the links Cara shared to the KTI Facebook.
    - Todd- Busy with his new roll at Backus
    - Tim- No.
    - Jason- running again for commissioner.
6. Publicity/outreach-see Cori's update above.
7. Future guest speakers- Jason will reach out to the Fresh Water Society

Next Meeting: Aug 5, 2026 @ 9:00am

Next guest speaker: TBD