Koochiching Technology Initiative

Regular Meeting Minutes

8/2026

Attendance: Members- Jaci Nagle, Jason Sjoblom, Justin O'Bert (V), Philip Nolan, Veronica Bistadeau (V)

Others present- Cori Horton, Christine Anderson, Austin Schaaf, and Ryan Tomczak

Guest Speaker: Stacey Green & Michael Scharenbroich, MN Power

Stacey and Michael are part of MN Power's regional development team. Stacey gave an overview of the electrical load in Minnesota. MN Power load is mostly industrial, 70-75%, which is why their system is already so robust. But there are three major things that are driving MN Power to expand/improve their system even more: The last 30 years have shown a fairly stagnant demand for electricity, but the last five years that demand has increased significantly due to more electrical appliances in homes, electric cars, data centers, etc.; MN Power's infrastructure is aging and is in need up upgrades; and the State of Minnesota plans to be carbon free by 2040.

On the question of how data centers affect electrical costs, Stacey explains there are very strict guidelines about how MN Power can charge customers. Those guidelines are made and regulated by the Public Utility Commission, and it legally prevents MN Power from charging customers more when a new client comes onto their system with large electrical demands. Any new client that would need infrastructure to be built to support their electrical load is responsible for all the costs incurred in the planning and installation of said infrastructure. So large load clients, like data centers, do not inherently cause an increase in rates. Rates can increase for other reasons, however, and large load clients can actually help disperse increased operational costs.

Stacey and Michael explained that many large load companies, like data centers, don't just look at the cost of new infrastructure needed to establish themselves in an area, but they also look at the communities themselves. So, if a community does not seem to be supportive of said company, they are less likely to want to build there. And a lot of cons people claim about data centers are subjective, there are a lot of variables involved in each individual case. They also spoke briefly about the Herman town data center. Google proposed the project to be done in three phases, so three buildings as part of the data center complex, with each building providing 40, 30, and 30 jobs respectively. The proposed jobs are a minimum number, so there could be more.

Meeting called to order at 10:30 am

Administrative Business

1. Agenda approved on a Jaci/Philip motion
2. August 5th minutes acknowledged since there was no formal meeting to approve.
3. Financial review from Jaci- August financials were accidentally left out of the report provided by the county, but Jaci knows there are not any new transactions, just the regular monthly activity. July financials approved on a Philip/Jaci motion
4. New members- Christine and Ryan (Austin will act as a secondary to Ryan) were suggested as new members. They both agreed to join. Motion by Jaci to add Christine and Ryan as members and remove Paul Nevenan as a member, seconded by Justin. Motion carries
5. Strategic planning- Membership building: going well, two new members have joined, and Ryan (and Austin) represent the City of International Falls. Data center panel: going well, Stacey Green has agreed to be part of a future panel and will provide contacts for other speakers.
6. Roberts Rules suspended on a Philip/Jaci motion.

Ongoing Business

1. Ewaste- Wayne not present to give updates.
2. Area broadband- Frontier finally connected Jaci's house with fiber after 4 months of waiting
3. Cell infrastructure- no new info
4. LFA/ACC- Kyle not present to give updates. Jaci spoke with Kyle about the situation with Northland Counseling wanting laptops. There had been some miscommunication but the situation is resolved. Questions have been made about Kyles contributions/activity as an ACC fellow. Justin reports that Kyle is still submitting timesheets, though he does not know what Kyle is doing as he does not provide much info during their meetings. Jason suggests to terminate Kyle's contract. Justin will reach out to LFA/ACC to see if there are steps that can be taken to do so. Termination will be brought to a vote at the October meeting if there is enough info from LFA.
5. Member updates
    - Christine- she is working on some projects (very mysterious)
    - Jaci- no KTI related updates, but she is trying to sell a house!!
    - Cori- keeping the Facebook page active, will work on updating the website.
    - Philip- Reports he has a normal amount of county work
    - Justin- working on updating the county's phone system
    - Ryan/Austin- working on switching over city emails
6. Publicity/outreach-see Cori's update above.
7. Future guest speakers- Jaci reached out to Mike Hanson and was provided contact info to Mac McLean. Jaci thinks having someone from NorthStar Electric as a guest speaker would be good so we can see their perspective now that we

have heard from MN Power. Jason and Christine are working on reaching out to people as speakers.

Next Meeting: October 7, 2026 @ 9:00am

Next guest speaker: TBD