

Science/Technology/Innovation (STI) Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
July 10, 2013

The Science/Technology/Innovation (STI) Committee meeting was held in the Madison-Jefferson County Extension office conference room at 7:00 a.m., Wednesday, July 10th. Participants were Tom Harrington, Tom Phillips, Charmaine Weyer, Marcy Lamb, Lee Good and Sherri Rhodes.

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 AM by Tom H. The minutes of the June 2013 meeting were reviewed and approved.

Lee G. gave project updates on high speed fiber and data center promotional brochure. Items of note are the school is increasing to 30 megabytes internet bandwidth and should be operational by the end of this week. This doubles the capacity into Whitehall. Marcy L. stated that the school will need 40 MB by the 2014-15 academic year, but she doesn't know where funding will come from to attain this. She is hopeful that if the state requires this, they will have a plan to help schools pay for it as well. Tom H. reported there is a possible USDA grant opportunity for small communities that they are researching to see about upgrade conferencing capabilities in the new Borden's building. Video conferencing optimization at the school and Borden's conference room was discussed.

Tom H. gave an update on the Sunlight Business Park. He reported that Ed H. has recently heard from Google that our information has been passed along to the right people, but that we may not hear more for some time. Lee G. distributed a "Top 10 Reasons to Locate a Data Center in Whitehall, MT" and it was reviewed by the committee. Tom and Lee welcome other thoughts to add to this brochure, and will continue its development. Tom H. reported that LGT representatives were unable to make it here in June, but they are planning a trip in July. Tom received a video from LGT explaining their turbine system, which defines their cost per kwh as reasonable. He briefed the committee on the video contents. Todd B. is monitoring the wind turbine at the school.

Tom H. provided an update on the status of the Borden Hotel project. Contractor and architects are working together to refine the project budget. It is believed they are close to finalizing the budget, and renovation is expected to begin by end of July. Alternative energy resources for the building were discussed. The architect is confident they can optimize resources for a net zero energy bill utilizing alternative sources. Any energy overage would be donated back into the power grid for sale by the power company. Perhaps an energy co-op with other block power users can be developed to benefit other businesses.

Tom H. gave an update on the Pipestone/Jefferson Slough projects and water monitoring projects. The Jefferson River Water Study kicked off last week and is expected to be a two year project. The Boulder River Water Study has just been completed. The Pipestone sedimentation study RFQ has been advertised, and the Jefferson Slough weed eradication RFQ is being written. This study is tied to the sedimentation build up. The Pipestone water monitoring with some students and Todd B. this summer is pending. The Piedmont Wetlands group meets again in August. Preliminary work here is tied to the Jefferson River Water study. Ducks Unlimited needs \$30,000 to conduct their study, so a search for funding is being conducted.

Marcy L. reported there are a few small construction projects being completed at the school this summer. The faculty bathrooms are being re-tiled, a few classrooms are moving, and new machines and carpeting are completing the middle school computer lab makeover. The possible school funding shortfalls due to county tax delinquencies were discussed. Tom H. reported that MT Tunnels paid \$250,000 this month in back taxes to the county, and they are expected to pay \$250,000 each quarter until their taxes are caught up. Preliminary enrollment figures look stable, but won't know more until school starts.

Other items: EMT classes are needed for the mine. Tom H. referred them to the school for possible space to do the training; Marcy L. believes space is available to hold their classes there. Tom H. has had an inquiry into the old school gymnasium building. He has forwarded that contact to Sylvia.

The meeting was productive and adjourned at 7:55 a.m. The next meeting will be held in the Extension office conference room Wednesday, August 14th at 7:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sherri Rhodes