

NIOBRARA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' SPECIAL MEETING

NIOBRARA COUNTY, WYOMING

February 8, 2019

The Special Meeting of the Niobrara County Commissioners was called to order on this date at 1:05 p.m. with Chairman Patrick H. Wade, Vice-Chairman John Midkiff, Commissioner Elaine Griffith and County Clerk Becky L. Freeman, present. Also in attendance were Town of Lusk Council members Dean Nelson, Tom Dooper, and Calvin Carstensen, Doug Lytle, Town of Lusk Mayor, Todd Skrukrud, Town of Lusk Public Works, Lori Himes, Editor of *The Lusk Herald*, Dell Atkinson, Long Term Recovery Manager, Kim Rightmer, Wyoming Business Council and interested parties Ron and Alice Carter, Dan Ritter, Bruce Schuler, Richard Ladwig, Delores Mitchell, Jackie Powell, Claudetta Tollman, Matt Dockery, Terry Chapman,

The purpose of the meeting was to meet with Russ Elliott, State of Wyoming Broadband Manager to inform the council, mayor, and landowners and interested parties on what is happening with broadband in Niobrara County.

Chairman Wade gave background information on why broadband is becoming a necessity in this area. CenturyLink is providing little to no service for residents in the Hat Creek area and landowners have experienced issues with the phone lines such as ghost 911 calls, lack of service, and/or no service for days.

The idea behind using broadband would allow residents affected by CenturyLink's lack of service to be able to use Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP).

Russ Elliott, State of Wyoming Broadband Manager, gave information on his background and what he now does for the State. He discussed broadband, steps to implement broadband in Niobrara County and funding availability. He talked about state funds and explained that in order for him to use state funding, he has to prove that these areas are considered unserved. Unserved, according to the state guidelines, means that the download/upload speeds are 10/1. Current speeds here appear to be 25/3. He would like to have the State consider this area unserved.

There was also discussion about possibly forming a joint powers board with Goshen and Platte Counties to better help our efforts in getting fiber in and creating a redundant system. By having a joint powers board with the three counties, this would increase the numbers of people served and offer a better chance of obtaining services sooner.

All parties present were glad to receive this information and thanked the Commissioners and Mr. Elliott for their time.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

NIOBRARA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Patrick Wade, Chairman



Becky L. Freeman, County Clerk