Technical Sub-Committee

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Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority
Technical Sub-Committee Meeting
Thursday, January 12, 2023
3:00 PM- 4:00 PM

Virtual Meeting
Dial-In: +1 267-332-8737
Phone conference ID: 669 192 704

I.   Call to Order

II.   Approval of December 15, 2022 meeting minutes

III.   Broadband Ready Communities

IV.   Permit streamlining within state agencies

V.   Setting a recurring meeting day/time

VI.   Authority updates
     a. New staff
     b. Listening session- Thursday at the Farm Show
     c. FCC Map Challenge deadline- this Friday, January 13th
     d. Other

VII.   Sub-committee member updates/comments

VIII.   Public comments

Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority
Technical Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes
Thursday, December 15, 2022
Virtual: Microsoft Teams

Sub-committee members in attendance:

- Todd Eachus, Broadband Communications Association of PA
- Chris Schubert, on behalf of Barb Burba-Filoreto, Pennsylvania Wireless Association
- Frank Baier, Pennsylvania Office of Administration
- Jim Gardler, Communications Workers of America
- Shane Ellis, Pennsylvania Utility Contractors Association
- Bill Wiendenheft, Pennsylvania Intermediate Units
- Steve Samara, Pennsylvania Telephone Association
- Terry Fitzpatrick, Energy Association of Pennsylvania
- Joe Witmer, Sub-Committee Board Liaison

Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) staff in attendance:

- Pam Frontino
- Lori Butler

Guests in attendance:

- Nicole Ugarte, National Telecommunications and Information Administration
- Shawn Bloomfield, BloomIt
- Brian Barno, Broadband Communications Association of PA
- Harry Walter, Office of General Counsel
- Matt Bembenick, Department of General Services
- Timothy Lonsway, Agile Network
- John Conley, Agile Network
- Stacy McNew, Agile Networks

I. Call to Order

Todd Eachus called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM.

Lori Butler conducted a roll call of the sub-committee members.

II. Approval of December 1, 2022, meeting minutes

Todd Eachus motioned to approve minutes from the December 1, 2022 meeting.

III. DGS presentation

Matt Bembenick presented Department of General Services' potential role in supporting and collaborating with the Authority by encouraging grant applicants to utilize commonwealth-owned assets for broadband projects. Tim Lonsway presented on behalf of Agile Networks (the firm that manages assets for the commonwealth) and their scope of work as it relates to mechanical components, instrumentation, land use, rooftops, and airspace rights. Matt and Tim urged the subcommittee to consider recommending that grantees include use of commonwealth-owned assets in broadband infrastructure projects.

IV. Discussion topics

a. **Broadband Ready Communities**
Todd reminded the subcommittee that meaningful engagement between municipalities, providers, and other stakeholders is key for the grant process. He also mentioned that the subcommittee should create a grant checklist of best practices and top steps to consider before applying, to be distributed to communities to help with the engagement process.

b. **Pole Attachment matters**
Todd commented on the need for a uniform and meaningful grant making process to adequately stretch federal funding. He also mentioned Terry Fitzpatrick's knowledge of pole attachment issues.

V. Authority Updates

a. **Listening Session**
Pam commented on the listening sessions that the Authority held over the past few weeks. She encouraged sub-committee members to attend one of the remaining sessions, if they have not already, and to encourage networks to join as well. She briefly walked through what information is being discussed in those sessions.

b. **Industry Roundtable**
Pam mentioned the Industry Roundtable and recapped the information from the event. She asked that sub-committee members contact her or members of the Authority if they have suggestions or comments about the Capital Projects Fund guidelines.

c. **Other**
There were none.

VI. Public Comment

Shawn Bloomfield from BloomIT in NE Pennsylvania inquired about the DGS presentation. Shawn asked where the commonwealth-owned assets recommendation came from, and whether that was a legislative suggestion. Pam commented she will follow up.

VII. Adjournment

Todd Eachus motioned to adjourn. Terry Fitzpatrick seconded. Meeting adjourned 4:03 PM.

Broadband Ready Communities Certification

Reducing barriers to broadband deployment will help stretch program funds as far as possible and will also aid avoiding costly delays in deployment. One critical area that will go along way to reducing deployment barriers is close coordination with local governments, who have control over access to public rights-of-way. BCAP strongly supports a Broadband Ready Communities Plan that will reduce these barriers at the local level as follows:

A Broadband Ready Communities Certification will provide some certainty to providers that a local government entity has taken the necessary steps to reduce barriers to broadband investment. Reducing regulatory barriers that could deter investment is a key element in creating an environment that will allow for success. Some elements of a broadband ready commnunity program should include:

- The identification of a single point of contact for all matters related to broadband development
- If control over siting locations and processing is desired, establish clear, unambigous regulations, maps and processing fees for applicants to follow
- Identify municipal infrastructure (towers, water tanks, silos, utility poles, etc.) which could be made available for broadbnd expnsion projects
- Identify municipal and school land which could be made available for construction of broadband facilities
- Identify municipal, county and state rights-of-way, and utility and railroad rights-of-way which could be available for deployment of broadband facilities
- Provide names and contact information for local utility operators within the municipality
- Provide names and contact information for skilled labor in the local market
- Identify existing underground conduits and dark fiber that may be available
- Identify existing or near-term municipal capital improvements or public/private land development projects in the municipality which may be open to allowing new fiber placement or easement grants
- Establishment of procedures to allow for electronic submission of all forms, applications and other required documentation for a broadband project
- Require that permit applications are reviewed for completeness within 10 days of submission, and within 30 days for all other kinds of siting applications.
- Require that for small cell permit applications, final decisions are made within 60 days if locating wireless facilities on existing structures or within 90 days if a new support structure is proposed.
- Require that for all other types of wireless siting application, final decision are made within 90 days if locating wireless facilities on existing structures or within 150 days if a new support structure is proposed.
- Once construction permits are approved, require that all required inspections are completed in an expeditious and timely manner
- Create a process for waiving any street cut moratoria
- If control over the design of small cell wireless facilities is desired, create and publish design guidelines

In addition, procedures shall be etablished so as to prohibit any unit of local government from:

- Requiring designation of a final contractor to complete a broadband project
- iImposing a fee to review an application or to issue a permit for a broadbnad project
- Iimposing seasonal moratorium on the issuance of permits
- Discriminating among service providers
- Requiring Certified Professional Engineer stamps for broadband designs and plans
- Requiring formal land development review and approval of siting applications