Technical Sub-Committee

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Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority
Technical Sub-Committee Meeting
November 9, 2022
1:30 PM
Virtual Meeting
Dial-In: +1 267-332-8737
Phone Conference ID: 380 185 533#

I.   Call to Order

II.   Chair Selection

III.   Approval of September 27, 2022 Meeting Minutes & October 19, 2022
        Joint Meeting Minutes

IV.   Authority Updates
        a. Status of Draft State Plan
        b. Update on Proposed Partnership with Penn State Extension
        c. Request for Proposal – DE and BEAD Planning

V.   Broadband Readiness Discussion

VI.   Public Comment

VII.   Adjournment

This meeting will be recorded, and your participation is your consent to being recorded.

Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority
Technical Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 27, 2022
Desert Room – Keystone Building & Microsoft Teams Meeting

Sub-Committee members in attendance:

- Todd Eachus, Broadband Communications Association of PA
- Barb Burba-Filoreto, PA Wireless Association
- Frank Baier PA Office of Administration
- Jim Gardler Communications Workers of America
- Shane Ellis Pennsylvania Utility Contractors Association
- Bill Wiedenheft PA Intermediate Units
- Steve Samara, PA Telephone Units
- Terry Fitzpatrick Energy Association of Pennsylvania

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

- Brandon Carson
- Erin Wachter
- Kalie Snyder

Designees in attendance:

- Nicole Luciano, PA Energy Association

I. Call to Order

Brandon Carson called the meeting to order at 12:30 PM.

Kalie Snyder conducted a roll call of the sub-committee members.

II. **Welcome and Introductions**

Brandon welcomed the members and thanked them for their participation. Brandon briefly touched on the role of each sub-committee and asked members to introduce themselves and discuss their interest and involvement in broadband.

Brandon also mentioned that Joe Witmer, PUC Chairwoman Designee, will be the Board Liaison for this sub-committee.

III. Housekeeping

Brandon notified members that all sub-committee meetings will be sunshined and open to the public. He discussed the role of sub-committee chairs and requested feedback from interested members. He mentioned a tentative 3-week timeline until the next meeting, at which time the sub-committee members will appoint a chairperson.

Todd Eachus asked for clarification on the duration of sub-committee structure and whether it's for the entire duration of the Board's work, to which Brandon confirmed that is correct.

Barb Burba-Filoreto asked if there will be an opportunity to share information across sub-committees to which Brandon confirmed that is an overall goal.

IV. Vision of Meetings and Frequency

Brandon mentioned that the timeline and frequency of meetings will be determined by the tasks and work element requirements of the respective sub-committees at any given time, and it will be a fluid process.

Frank Baier asked if the Keystone Building Meeting Center would be our main meeting location, to which Brandon confirmed it would. Brandon also discussed the option of going to full virtual if the committee members are amenable, but the committee agreed that hybrid would be the best option.

Frank asked if there will be a file share or platform to use to share information with the sub-committee members. Brandon confirmed we are looking into different platforms and asked for feedback from members if they have a preferred platform. Kalie Snyder mentioned the Microsoft Teams functionality could help facilitate the file share across sub-committees. Frank Baier commented on file share policy and the certification process, to which he offered to help with approvals that are necessary.

Brandon then reminded the members that the Authority does not currently have access to the funds we've applied for: Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD), Digital Equity (DE), and Capital Projects Fund CPF). He briefly reviewed each funding stream and further explained that the Authority anticipates deploying the CPF funding first, with an allocated amount of approximately $279 million dollars. He touched on the Authority's requirements to complete a Statewide Digital Equity Plan and the intent of the Authority to hire a consultant to assist with planning efforts.

Brandon outlined the requirements for a 5-Year Action Plan and the Statewide Digital Equity Plan, as outlined in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). He also mentioned that we are actively working on an RFP for a consultant and will ask for

feedback from members on the RFP. He also told them that we'd share the above-mentioned applications.

V. State Plan

Todd Eachus asked to confirm the distinction between draft state plan and the 5-Year Action Plan as is required under BEAD, to which Brandon and Erin provided. This draft state plan is the required plan under the Act 96 legislation.

Erin Wachter presented an overview of the State Broadband Plan (Plan) and timeline for adoption of the plan. Erin asked for feedback on the Plan by Friday, October 7th. The proposed deadline will allow for time to incorporate feedback and send a second draft to the sub-committee ahead of the November 17th Board meeting.

Steve Samara asked for clarification on how much feedback to provide on the plan, Erin stated that she welcomes all feedback and input, regardless of the level of detail.

Barb followed-up by stating the plan is almost purposely vague to allow for a more fluid effort as we move forward. To which Erin confirmed that we looked to broader policy language to allow for flexibility as we continue our efforts. Brandon followed-up by reiterating the timeline for the Digital Equity Plan and 5-Year Action Plans as required under IIJA and that those will be much more robust plans.
Erin also let the members know that she will share the recent applications that were submitted to NTIA and the US Department of Treasury.

Todd Eachus added in that he also will have robust feedback on the plan to include comments from his members, as the current plan is very broad. Bill Wiedenheft also added in that it's good to remain somewhat broad, so we do not box ourselves into specific requirements, but, that we will need to look at becoming more granular so that we aren't too broad and missing milestones.

Frank Baier stressed the importance of an actionable plan and to have collaborative agreements with entities like the Intermediate Units (IUs). The IU's have the ability to share details across the commonwealth to their members. Bill Wiedenheft offered to facilitate discussion between the IUs and a need to maintain sustainability as time goes on and funds start to diminish. Todd acknowledged the need to identify sustainability, as it's his members (ISPs) who usually provide the capital for sustainability and upgrade maintenance.

Jim Gardler added in that he was glad to see large players putting in their own dollars and being a part of this process. Barb Burba-Filoreto added that her members are setting up for un/underserved areas and affordability options. Multiple other members recognized the importance of sustainability and having a plan in place beyond the exhaustion of federal dollars. Steve Samara mentioned the importance of partnering networks to

ensure no overbuilding. Brandon commented on the challenge ahead in securing bulk fiber and that our contract with CostQuest is ongoing. Brandon Carson also mentioned the need for collaboration, to ensure we have a robust asset map that identifies where there are blind spots. Brandon also mentioned that we're looking at working with an entity to assist with the mapping efforts Data & Mapping offered suggestions and resources to avoid supply chain disruption. Barb-Burba-Filoreto mentioned the F.C.C. data may not be accurate when released. Creating our own database for mapping might circumvent incorrect data on the maps.

Bill Wiedenheft mentioned that through the Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF) that a lot of the schools have done their own research and have information on un/underserved areas. He offered to do an introduction to kick-off discussion.

Frank Baier asked if there is a need to think through existing franchising agreements and what roadblocks might be. Todd Eachus and Brandon Carson both added in comments that it shouldn't pose any issue moving forward.

Brandon Carson reviewed action items. Todd asked for clarification on the virtual platform and what would be available for public, to which Brandon and Erin stated that most items are subject to Right-to-Know requests, but that things like NDAs could be put in place. Brandon mentioned we will confirm with legal on that.

Terry Fitzpatrick asked if an alternate is permitted, introduced Nicole Luciano as his alternate, and Brandon confirmed the ability to identify an alternate, but that no formal appointment letter is needed.

VI. Public Comment

Kalie Snyder called for public comment and questions. There were none.

VII. Adjournment

Brandon concluded the meeting at 1:45 PM.

Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority
Joint Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes
October 19, 2022
Virtual - Microsoft Teams Meeting

Sub Committee members in attendance:

All sub-committee members were in attendance

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

- Brandon Carson
- Erin Wachter
- Kalie Snyder
- Lori Butler

Guests in attendance:

- Nicole Ugarte, National Telecommunications and Information Administration

I.   Call to Order

Brandon Carson called the meeting to order at 1:01 PM. He outlined that this is a joint meeting and 32 members in attendance, therefore roll call was not conducted for the sub-committee members.

II.   Draft State Plan - Summary of feedback

Brandon Carson briefly provided an overview of the previous sub-committee meetings and the request for review and feedback on the draft of the state plan. He concluded by stating that the comments/edits provided have been reviewed and implemented into the draft by Erin. He asked Erin to provide an update.

Erin Wachter thanked the Sub-Committee members for their feedback and mentioned that there were 18 different responses that offered comments and edits. She confirmed that most of those were incorporated into the draft and provided examples. Erin provided next steps to include reviewing the remaining feedback and look to incorporate any additional items, then she will provide an updated copy of the draft and an overview of the comments received. The Final Plan will be sent to the Board on or around November 10, 2022, for review prior to a vote at the November 17th Board meeting.

III.   Penn State Extension Presentation - Broadband Availability, Access, Equity, and Utilization Proposal

Brandon Carson provided a brief overview of a proposal given to the Authority from the Penn State Extension team. He commented on the Board presentation given by Penn State Extension, the day before, and the purpose for securing their assistance in our mapping efforts.

Jim Ladlee and Harry Crissy provided an overview of their roles and the focus and goals of Penn State Extension. Jim presented and explained the four categories outlined within the proposal, 1) Broadband Availability, Access, Equity, & Utilization 2) Prioritized Projects 3) Project Timeline 4) Budget Estimation. Harry Crissy provided a broad overview of their data collection process and how it's configured into different data sets that fit strategically into the map.

Brandon Carson added that the Authority has requested the Fabric data from CostQuest, Rob Tepltiz and Lori Irwin are working on how we can share this information with our counties.

Brandon Carson also touched on the timeline in the proposal aligns nicely with when we're required to submit our 5-Year Action Plan for funding. He closed by recognizing that this data will not be proprietary and will be publicly available.

Brandon opened the Q & A section of the meeting for sub-committee members only.

Todd Eachus remarked on the cost analysis process and encouraged incorporating the provider community on this for reference. Harry Crissy followed by acknowledging their ongoing engagement with providers to build out these details.

Bill Wiedenheft asked if environmental disruption, right of way, legal matters or challenges will be included in the data on the map. Jim Ladlee responded that the determination of data to be input into the map was an ongoing discussion while ensuring that too much data doesn't cloud the functionality and understanding of the map.

Mark Critz commented on the threshold for speed testing and asked what the Extension is seeing with national trends in data? What is the balance in terms of accuracy? And the path forward with speed requirements. Harry Crissy acknowledges that the national data is not flawless. The provider is required to be transparent on who they will serve at a granular level. The BEAD money is designed to address those issues. Mark Critz asked how we will determine speed moving forward. Harry responded by confirming the need for ISPs to still submit 477 data, which will be reflected in the fabric shown in the new FCC map. Speed test data will reflect on a granular level the same details of the 477 submissions.

Bill Wiedenheft asked if the data collection is the responsibility of the Extension in the proposal, and how the information will be filtered? Jim Ladlee responded by confirming that through the proposal they do not intend on providing speed test data, but, that the Authority would make the decision on including that into the map. He also mentioned that this will be an ongoing iterative process and will defer to the Authority on the varying data that will be included.

Todd Eachus added in that he understands the caution of speed test data and how it varies based on type of technology. Harry Crissy mentioned there are limitations on services.

Gary Zingaretti remarked on the FCC speed performance measuring and believes the information may be helpful but is not necessarily publicly available. He suggested looking at obtaining that information.

Steve Schwerbel mentioned adding fixed wireless access to the map, specifically for cost analysis. Harry Crissy agreed it would be helpful but mentioned that must be approved by the Authority. Brandon Carson added in that we would like to see that data to better understand the footprint.

IV.   **Public Comment**

Lori Butler called for public comments, there were none.

IV.   **Adjournment**

Brandon thanked everyone for their participation and the meeting adjourned 2:09 PM.