Technical Sub-Committee

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Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority
Technical Sub-Committee Meeting
December 1, 2022
3:00 PM
Virtual Meeting
Dial-In: +1 267-332-8737
Phone Conference ID: 814 589 064#

I.   Call to Order

II.   Approval of November 9, 2022, Meeting Minutes

III.   Listserv on Teams

IV.   FCC Mapping Challenge Process

V.   Broadband Preparedness

VI.   Broadband-Ready Communities

VII.   DGS presentation

VIII. Authority Updates
        a. CPF Guidelines
        b. BEAD and DE funding

IX.   Public Comment

X.   Adjournment

Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority
Technical Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, November 9, 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 Wiendenheft, PA Intermediate Units
- Steve Samara, PA Telephone Association
- Terry Fitzpatrick, Energy Association of Pennsylvania

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 1:30 PM.

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

II. Chair Selection

Brandon welcomed the members and thanked them for their participation. He briefly touched on the process of co-chair selection and their work on behalf of the sub-committees and the Authority. Brandon stated that both Todd Eachus and Barb Burba-Filoreto expressed interest in the role. Brandon asked for a nomination. Frank Baier moved to nominate Todd and Barb as co-chairs. Motion was seconded by Jim Gardler. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Barb Barba-Filoreto asked if there were any questions about the minutes. Barb made a motion to approve the meeting minutes for the September 27, 2022 meeting & the October 19, 2022 joint meeting. Jim Gardler moved, and Bill Wiendenheft seconded. The motion pass unanimously.

IV. **Authority Updates**

a. **Status of Draft State Plan**

Erin thanked the sub-committee for their contributions to the draft plan. She shared that a few last-minute edits were incorporated into the plan. The Authority received a draft from the marketing department, and the final version will be shared ahead of the PBDA Board meeting November 17, 2022, when the Authority will seek of approval of the plan. Erin remarked that many substantial comments came from the technical sub-committee. Much of what was not captured will be incorporated into industry roundtables for discussion. Erin also thanked the sub-committee for its feedback. Todd asked if the draft plan can be shared with others. Erin answered yes.

b. **Update on Proposed Partnership with Penn State Extension**

Brandon provided a status update on the Penn State Extension (Extension) contract. He mentioned the special board meeting to vote on Extension's proposal. Brandon explained the commonwealth's master agreement with Penn State University and the amended language being sought. Sub-committees will be involved in advising Extension as they undertake the scope of work. The Extension role will be multifaceted in assisting the Authority with mapping, a bulk fiber challenge, and a service availability challenge.

Kalie Snyder provided an update on a recent FCC webinar. The FCC will release information on the service availability challenge on November 18, 2022. Todd inquired if that would commence the challenge process for the provider community. Kalie Snyder commented that NTIA will be using the specific version of the fabric. Todd asked, at what point are people going to start challenge the map? Kalie will continue to follow up and get answers to the Q & A that was posed to the FCC on the webinar. Nicole Ugarte commented that NTIA does not have a cut-off date for making BEAD allocations, and that the FCC challenge is a fluid process. Nicole advised if someone has a challenge, she recommended to submit early and often.

Todd commented about Penn State Extension's cost estimator for accuracy related to Pennsylvania geography, and acknowledged the difficulty of unknown factors, such as pole attachments and replacement. Todd expressed the need for tabletops

or walkouts and the validity and usefulness of speed test in layers. Brandon thanked Todd for his feedback regarding the speed testing with Extension.

c. Request for Proposal – DE and BEAD Planning

Brandon shared that the Authority received notice from NTIA that it will receive a $1.6 million award for Digital Equity planning funds. The Authority has not announced the funds and is waiting on the full $5 million BEAD planning award before making a joint announcement. He touched on the Authority's requirements to complete a Statewide Digital Equity Plan and a BEAD 5-Year Action Plan and the intent of the Authority to hire a consultant to assist with planning efforts. Brandon remarked that the Authority team has been working on a draft Request for Proposal that is anticipated to be released on November 21st, to competitively select and procure a consultant. In early January, the Authority will onboard the consultants to facilitate that process.

V. Broadband Readiness Discussion

Brandon remarked on the need for communities to prepare and facilitate broadband projects. The Authority wants to engage local communities to better prepare for federal funding and the increase in broadband infrastructure projects. The technical sub-committee can engage and help with a readiness strategy, offering more specifics or tangible strategies for local communities. As part of a tool kit, the Authority can incentivize or allocate additional points to applicants who have participated in the checklist or toolkit planning process.

Barb agreed with the need to standardize the broadband readiness process. Todd commented on the distinctions between communities, saying this is not a "one size fits all" process. Barb added that Pennsylvania has over 2,600 jurisdictions which will involve township, counties, and municipalities that will have to be involved with the zoning process. Barb remarked about coordinating efforts with sister agencies and suggested creating a checklist of potential roadblocks. Bill Wiedenheft suggested a public relations packet be created for the municipalities as a heads up for the process ahead. Brandon mentioned working with CCAP to introduce counties to the Authority. Todd mentioned engagement with the Right-of-Way Authority, PA Borough Association, and Municipal League. He noted that these groups will be important for plan implementation. Brandon also talked about sending a letter of introduction to the all the key stakeholders involved.

Joe Witmer commented on the cost per mile for deployment to the extent that there is deviation, and that knowing whether the cost figure is above or below average is important to this process. He recommended that the Authority stay focused on facility deployment build out, as opposed to delivery of broadband services.

Brandon asked if NTIA could give guidance on a tool kit. Nicole remarked that NTIA is gathering information such as best practices and trends, to share with states.

Barb commented that service providers may need additional assistance navigating regulatory requirements, and Bill Widenheft suggested engaging providers in the development of the toolkit. Barb offered to create a checklist for initial discussion or consideration by the sub-committee.

Todd asked about meetings with the industry roundtables and the frequency of sub-committee meetings. Brandon mentioned that an industry roundtable may happen in December. Brandon advised a regular cadence will need to be established by sub-committees. Todd Eachus advised that the technical sub-committee meet on a bi-weekly basis. Brandon advised polling the sub-committee on the frequency of meetings.

VI. Public Comment

Jennifer Gluman Frontier expressed concerns regarding the meeting link. Kalie Snyder mentioned she will look into the issue.

VII. Adjournment

Todd Eachus motioned to adjourn. Barb-Burba- Filoreto seconded. Meeting adjourned at 2:30 PM.