

Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority
Outreach & Education Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes
Thursday February 23, 2023
Virtual - Microsoft Teams Meeting

Sub-Committee members in attendance:

- Carrie Nace
- Sarah Hammond
- Joseph Gerdes
- Bailey Thumm
- Kevin Sunday
- Mark Critz, Board Liaison

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

- Kalie Snyder
- Julia Brinjac
- Pam Frontino
- Kyle Snyder

Guests in attendance:

- Nicole Ugarte, NTIA
- Brian Barno, Broadband Communications Association of PA
- Jim Mercante, Chester County Digital Equity Coalition
- Emme Reiser, PA Realtors Association
- Elana Frazier, Michael Baker International
- Leanne Doran, Michael Baker International
- Keri Oram, Michael Baker International
- Courtney Accurti, Michael Baker International
- Brenda Salyards, York County Economic Alliance
- David Gonzalez, York County Economic Alliance
- Kate Rivera, Technology Learning Collaborative
- Dr. Joi Spraggins, Legacy Pathways
- Nigel Kaseke, Senator Kane
- Andrea Verobish, Congressman Glenn Thompson
- Jennifer Blatz, Persad Center
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I. Call to Order

Chair Sunday called the meeting to order at 8:31 AM, and asked Kalie Snyder to conduct roll call and housekeeping items.

II. Approval of January 13, 2023, Meeting Minutes

Chair Sunday called for questions or comments on the minutes as presented to the committee. There were none.

Chair Sunday asked for a motion to approve the minutes as presented to the committee. Joe Gerdes motioned the approval. Amy Sturges seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

III. Capital Projects Fund Update

Pam Frontino provided an overview of the three grant programs that will be stood up utilizing CPF funds. She reviewed that the guidelines will be posted for 30 days prior to opening the application period for each of these three programs and highlighted the challenge process, and specifics on eligible applicants and eligible projects.

She also reviewed the recent comment period we had, requesting feedback on some areas of our Broadband Infrastructure Program. Chair Sunday asked for clarification on timing and whether the Board will need to approve prior to opening the application period. Pam confirmed that Board concurrence is required. Chair Sunday also asked if the money is already in hand or if that requires approval of guidelines. Pam confirmed that we need Treasury to approve our program plans, not guidelines, in order to disperse the money. Chair Sunday also asked when the Authority anticipates awarding funds and who are eligible applicants. Pam commented we anticipate deploying funds in quarter four of 2023 and provided an overview of eligible applicants.

IV. Challenge Submission Update

Kyle Snyder provided an overview of the submitted availability challenges FCC map challenges and that they are still under review with the FCC. He shared that the next phase of the challenge process is the adjudication, which means that the FCC has placed the challenges in a pending phase, and it is now incumbent on the state to work with the provider to resolve. Kyle also shared that we are working on a bulk fabric challenge, which is a process to correct inaccurate addresses identified on the FCC map. Kyle also mentioned that we are working on templates/forms that will make the process to submit challenge information to the PBDA more streamlined. All of these efforts will ensure a more accurate map and we encourage feedback. Kyle closed by sharing that we are working on a statewide broadband map that will be forward facing.

Chair Sunday asked what our state looks like in comparison to others. Kyle shared that is hard to answer because a lot of this relies on the quality of data received. Kyle also shared that this will be iterative as the FCC reviews the information submitted to them. Kyle also mentioned the challenge process for BEAD and how that will also help to refine the map details.

Carrie Nace shared her appreciation of the templates/forms that we are working to provide.

V. Digital Equity Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Julia Brinjac provided an overview of the draft Digital Equity Stakeholder Engagement Plan. She highlighted a few of the pieces of the plan, to include how we'll conduct community meetings, roundtables, method for communication, and the duties of a stakeholder advisory panel member – panel members will ensure the PBDA is connecting with all eight of the covered populations outlined by the federal government.

Mark Critz asked if there will be publicity on the stakeholder engagement plan feedback, to which Julia confirmed we would be doing a press release. Mark also suggested we work through the faith community to get the word out, to which Julia agreed we will be sharing with all of our contacts on our distribution list.

Chair Hammond asked that this information be forwarded to the committee as well, to which Julia confirmed that we would. Julia also commented on how important this committee is to ensure we are sharing with as many potential stakeholders as possible.

VI. New Business

Chair Hammond shared that the USDA is seeking feedback from rural communities interested in receiving broadband technical assistance and that they will be hosting two webinars to discuss in more detail.

Chair Hammond offered updated days and times for the committee to reconvene. A few committee members offered up availability. Mark Critz suggested a doodle poll to allow members to review the days/times and respond with their availability. Kalie Snyder offered to facilitate the doodle poll.

Bailey Thumm shared that her Board was concerned about a lack of cell service expansion and wanted to ensure the PBDA was keeping that in mind.

VII. Public Comment

Chair Hammond called for public comments. Elana Fraizer asked Pam to repeat the Capital Projects Fund programs the PBDA is looking to stand up. Pam Frontino provided that quick overview that highlighted our community anchor institution and device access programs. Pam also shared that the funds must be designated by the end of 2024, so we recognize the urgency and importance of getting guidelines completed. Elana asked Julia Brinjac to repeat the eight covered populations required by the federal government. Elana finalized by asking for more information on the USDA webinars, to which Sarah responded.

Jim Mercante asked if the comments and feedback on the CPF BIP program will be shared with the public. Pam Frontino commented that is still under discussion and that is being determined in the coming days/weeks. Jim asked if we are working on county maps as well the statewide map. Kyle Snyder commented that we are working on a statewide broadband map that will be available for all to use but will not be county specific. Jim requested we share the Digital Equity Stakeholder Engagement Plan feedback once complete. Jim finished by

asking if the PBDA will exclude certain areas so that the funds are being deployed to the right areas. Kyle commented that we have very specific regulations in that we must prioritize the unserved and then the underserved, so it will be on a case-by-case basis and would likely require additional information.

VIII. Adjournment

Chair Hammond provided closing remarks.

Carrie Nace made a motion to adjourn. Motion seconded by Bailey Thumm.

Meeting adjourned at 9:27 AM.