

**Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority**

Board Meeting Minutes

March 10, 2023

Microsoft Teams Meeting

Board members and voting designees in attendance:

- Secretary Uri Monson, Office of the Budget, Chairman
- Mark Critz on behalf of Acting Secretary Russell Redding, Department of Agriculture
- Acting Secretary Rick Siger, Department of Community and Economic Development
- Dr. David Volkman on behalf of Acting Secretary Khalid Mumin, Department of Education
- Matt Bembenick on behalf of Acting Secretary Reggie McNeil, Department of General Services
- Senator John Kane, Assistant Secretary
- Rich Pronesti on behalf of Representative Rob Matzie
- Representative Carl Walker Metzgar
- Senator Kristin Phillips-Hill, Secretary
- Joe Witmer on behalf of Chairwoman Gladys Brown Dutrieuille, PUC
- Dr. Kyle Kopko, Center for Rural PA

Designees in attendance:

- Phil Kirchner
- Chloe Mandara
- David Screven
- Zach Reber
- Dr. Laura Dimino
- Matt Franchak

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

- Brandon Carson
- Erin Wachter
- Paul Opiyo
- Kalie Snyder
- Leigh Walter
- Lori Irwin
- Rob Teplitz
- Pam Frontino
- Kyle Snyder
- Julia Brinjac
- Greg Alliger
- Allison Brubaker
- Britt Muniz
- Britte Earp
- Sarah Souder

Guests in attendance:

- Brian Regli, Governor's Office
- Barno, Broadband Communications Association of PA
- Todd Eachus, Broadband Communications Association of PA
- Pablo Adam, AT&T
- Dr. Joi Spraggins, Legacy Pathways
- Jim D'Innocenzo, Comcast
- Emme Reiser, PA Realtors
- Bill Risse, Conxx NE/SkyPacket
- Ross Henzel, DQE
- Ed Matts, North Central Regional Planning
- Michelle Jaggi, Erie Area COG
- Jessica Horan-Kunco, Erie Area COG
- Elana Frazier, Ichor Strategies
- Zoe James, Ichor Strategies
- Jeremy Jurick, Michael Baker International
- Keri Oram, Michael Baker International
- Sam Garfinkel, Michael Baker International
- Casey Fellingner, Milliron Goodman
- Elizabeth Lose, Centre County
- David Ashton, Graybar Associates
- Carolyn Rumbarger, Sand Cherry Associates
- Juliet Fink-Yates, City of Philadelphia
- Lori Noonan, BlueRidge Communications
- Curt Kosko, Shentel
- David Turner, Data Axle
- Laura Grassia, Temple University
- Janice Sahady Crile, Temple University
- Sandra McNally, Temple University
- Barrett Sheridan, PA Office of Consumer Advocates
- Jan VaDeCarr, Greenlight Networks
- Jeremiah Holmes-Ploor, Frontier Communications
- Jennifer Cloonan, Frontier Communications
- Carl Yastremski, Frontier Communications
- Erik Garr, Consolidated Communications
- Brian Lim, Consolidated Communications
- Justin Zagorski, ECC Technology
- Cameron Beck, ECC Technology
- Any Lukasiewicz, ECC Technology
- Jeff Holtmann, ECC Technology
- Kris Anderson, IBEW
- Sascha Meinrath, Penn State University
- Kate Rivera, Technology Learning Collaborative
- Kristen Ritchey, Comcast
- Nate Regotti, Comcast
- Jennifer Halaszynski, Comcast
- Marcie Callan, Comcast

- Joe Kearns, ACD Telecom
- Matt Wiertel, Velocity Networks
- Philip Jones, Philadelphia Federal Reserve Bank
- Curt Williams, Government Accountability Office
- Corey Block, Westmoreland County
- Steve Warhola, Senator John Kane
- Alexandra Taylor, Hillman Foundation
- Kate Ulreich, University of Pittsburgh
- Jim Mercante, Southern Chester County Digital Equity Coalition
- Brent Jagueneau-Siegel, Ichor Strategies
- Jeanne Shearer, Windstream/Kinetic
- Jeremy Jurick, Michael Baker International
- Alexandra Taylor, Hillman Company
- Dan Huebner, Civis Analytics
- Morgan Webb, CCS Energy
- Matt Leonard, CCS Energy/PA Rural Electric Association
- Cathleen Schultz, Davis Wright Tremaine
- Carl Marrara, PA Manufacturers Association
- Jen Blatz, Greater Pittsburgh Digital Inclusion Alliance
- John Highward, ET Communications
- Michael Zody
- Jennifer Keaton
- Rick G
- John Mercuri
- Melinda Meyer
- Jeremy K
- Bill
- April
- Roy Hoover
- John Pulver
- Steve Ertle
- Christine

**I. Call to Order**

Chairman Monson called the meeting to order at 11:00 AM.  
Kalie Snyder conducted a roll call of the board members and confirmed quorum.

**II. Approval of February 6, 2023, Meeting Minutes**

Chairman Monson asked for questions and comments on the minutes as presented to the Board. Seeing none he asked for a motion to approve the minutes as presented to the Board. Motion made by Senator Kane. Motion was seconded by Secretary Siger. Chairman Monson asked for all Board members to approve or deny the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**III. Recommended Consultant – Digital Equity and BEAD 5-Year Action Plan**

Chairman Monson asked Executive Director Brandon Carson to provide an overview before a motion is made. Brandon outlined the National Telecommunications and Information

Administration's (NTIA) requirement to complete a 5-Year Action Plan (due 8/12/23) and State Digital Equity Plan (due 10/31/23). He also reviewed the purpose for adjusting the original scope of work (SOW) to include removal of some elements to be completed in house. An amended Request for Proposal was advertised on 2/7/23, to which 14 proposals were accepted and reviewed. The review team is recommending the Authority contract with Michael Baker International, at a cost of \$1,199,744, to complete the SOW. Some of those items include facilitation of roundtable discussions and a strategic planning session for the Board, facilitation of the Core Planning Team meetings, various outreach and engagement activities, development of a Broadband Ready framework, and developing the framework for the Digital Equity and 5-Year Action Plans. He confirmed that this is part of the planning funds previously awarded through NTIA and identified for purposes of contracting with a consultant(s).

Chairman Monson thanked Brandon for the overview as well as the expedited review of these proposals. Chairman Monson asked for a motion to consider the contract as recommended.. Motion was made by Senator Phillips-Hill. Motion seconded by Senator Kane. Chairman Monson asked for questions or comments from the Board as it relates to the contract. There were none.

Chairman Monson asked Kalie Snyder to conduct a roll call vote for the motion presented to approve the contract with Michael Baker International. Kalie Snyder conducted roll call vote. Motion passed unanimously.

#### **IV. Capital Projects Fund – Broadband Infrastructure Program Guidelines**

Chairman Monson shared that the guidelines are still in progress and asked Brandon Carson for additional context. Brandon shared that work has been ongoing to draft the guidelines, but that there is not consensus to approve.

Chairman Monson asked for a motion to table consideration of the guidelines. Representative Metzgar made a motion to table and asked that this be reconsidered in the very near future. Motion was seconded by Senator Kane. Chairman Monson recognized that we're close to consensus and recommends we revisit at a Special Board Meeting the following week. Chairman Monson asked for comments from the Board regarding the motion to table the guidelines at this time.

Senator Phillips-Hill provided comments regarding the urgency to continue this work and that she has advocated for expeditious attention to all priorities and timelines. She also recognized the importance of ensuring that these dollars are being handled in a fiduciary manner. Recognizing the difference between CPF and BEAD dollars, but we need to be mindful that we're not imposing regulatory barriers that will disrupt the deployment of broadband service. She also commented on the importance of a skilled workforce and the need to ensure that is a priority. She referenced and asked that the Authority be mindful of section 6123 (g) of Act 96, which states no additional regulatory obligations should be imposed unless applicable under Federal and State law.

Joe Witmer commented on the two Chapter 30 versions in 1993 and then reenacted, relied exclusively upon local rate increases and basic local telephone service to provide resources and underscore the deployment of broadband infrastructure. He also shared that these rate increases are approved on an annual basis. He highlighted that the US Internet Association considered this one of the most aggressive rural broadband deployment programs.

Chairman Monson asked for all Board members to approve or deny the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**V. Public Comment**

Chairman Monson asked Kalie Snyder to conduct public comment and questions.

Todd Eachus thanked the Board for the discussion today and for Senator Phillips-Hills comments regarding the guidelines. He touched on the importance of being fiduciary in our efforts with taxpayer dollars. He recognizes that any additional undue hardship throughout this process will not allow this to be as successful.

Jim Mercante thanked Senator Phillips-Hill for her comments. He shared some of the barriers in the Chester County area in regard to access and equity. He also thanked the Authority staff for the work and efforts.

Bill Risse shared that while at the Wireless Service Providers Convention, and FCC representative commented that fixed wireless is essential to serve the rural areas of the nation. He also offered some recommendations on how to combat some of the impediments that come with broadband infrastructure deployment.

Matt Wiertel shared his concerns regarding prevailing wage. He stated that his firm uses a union contractor to do installation work, they have shared with Matt that the prevailing wage rate for lineman work is about 40-50% higher than in Ohio and New York for the same work in the same Union. He's shared this with the Wolf Administration and Shapiro Administration and recognizes this will need to be addressed at the Executive level. He asks that this be discussed/reviewed by the Authority. He also commented on railroad permits and if railroad permit reform is in discussion and shared that they had to pay \$20,000 to cross a rail line in Summit Township and that was to connect only one home. He asked that this also be considered by Authority members. He finished by asking that the Authority think about how we are considering RDOF awardees.

John Highward shared details on his company ET Communications and his interest in Pennsylvania and to meet with the Authority.

**VI. Adjournment**

Chairman Monson called for a motion to adjourn. Motion made by Senator Kane. Motion seconded by Mark Critz. Meeting adjourned at 11:37 AM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Senator Kristin Phillips-Hill  
Secretary