

Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority
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Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority
March 10, 2023
11:00 AM

Virtual Meeting
Dial-In: +1 267-332-8737
Phone Conference ID: 193 413 093#

- I. Call to Order
- II. Approval of February 6, 2023, Meeting Minutes
- III. Recommended Consultant - Digital Equity and BEAD 5-Year Action Plan
- IV. Capital Projects Fund – Broadband Infrastructure Program Guidelines
- V. Public Comment
- VI. Adjournment

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

Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority

Board Meeting Minutes

February 6, 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
- Mike Hanna on behalf of 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
- Representative Carl Walker Metzgar
- Matt Franchak on behalf of Senator John Kane, Assistant Secretary
- Representative Rob Matzie
- 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:

- Beth Rosenthal
- Phil Kirchner
- Chloe Mandara
- David Screven
- Zach Reber

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

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

Guests in attendance:

- Brian Regli, Governor's Office

- Pablo Adam, AT&T
- Leanne Doran, Michael Baker International
- Elana Frazier, Ichor Strategies
- Zoe James, Ichor Strategies
- Jeremy Jurick, Michael Baker International
- Steve Warhola, Senator John Kane
- Alexandra Taylor, Hillman Foundation
- Nicole Ugarte, NTIA
- Jim Mercante, Southern Chester County Digital Equity Coalition
- Charlotte Keith, Spotlight PA
- M. Treadway

I. Call to Order

Chairman Monson called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM. Kalie Snyder conducted a roll call of the board members and confirmed quorum.

II. Approval of January 26, 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 Phillips-Hill. Motion was seconded by Mark Critz. Chairman Monson asked for all Board members to approve or deny the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

III. Contract for Approval of Digital Equity and BEAD 5-Year Action Plan

Chairman Monson reviewed the purpose of tabling the vote at the previous meeting, to include allowing new members to become more familiar with the purpose of the consultant as well as evaluate those items within the RFP that could be managed in-house. Chairman Monson asked Executive Director Brandon Carson to provide an update.

Brandon provided an overview of the tasks that could be completed in-house, to include those work elements that need to be completed prior to onboarding a consultant. Those elements include development of a stakeholder engagement strategy for both the Digital Equity and BEAD 5-Year Action Plans, formation of the core planning team, and the collection of available state, federal, and local broadband availability and adoption data. Brandon also provided an estimated timeline that highlighted release of the new RFP though final contract with consultant(s).

Chairman Monson thanked Brandon for the swift action on the new RFP and called for questions and/or comments from Board Members. Joe Witmer asked if we would have current technical staff in DCED to work with the consultant(s) in the 6-month period as outlined in the first RFP as opposed to the new RFP which allows for only 4 months. Brandon confirmed that was considered but the elements that will be removed from the previous RFP will be handled in-house over the next 4-6 weeks and that doesn't alter the original plan time frame. Joe followed up by asking if the new RFP will look at a DEI component or if that is the staff responsibility. Brandon confirmed that it would be a combination of both staff and consultant work. He reiterated the importance of stakeholder engagement that the office will be leading in the coming week but that the consultant will need to bring some expertise in this area.

Mark Critz asked if the update to the RFP and the work elements removed would be handled by current Authority staff or future staff and what is the cost differential between the original contact and the new RFP. Brandon confirmed that the work elements of the RFP that changed will be handled by existing staff. Brandon touched on the cost and that the savings are yet to be determined now that some of the work will be completed in-house.

Matt Bembenick noted that the due date of March 20, 2023, is a holiday and if we want to consider changing that date. Brandon acknowledged that will be taken into consideration.

Chairman Monson asked for a motion to modify the scope of work and rebid the RFP as outlined by staff. Motion made by Mark Critz. Motion seconded by Dr. Kyle Kopko. Chairman Monson asked for a roll call vote. Motion passed unanimously.

VII. Public Comment

Chairman Monson asked Kalie Snyder to conduct public comment and questions. There were none.

VI. Adjournment

Chairman Monson called for a motion to adjourn. Motion made by Matt Franchak. Motion seconded by Matt Bembenick. Meeting adjourned at 10:17 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Senator Kristin Phillips-Hill
Secretary

TO Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority Board of Directors

FROM Brandon Carson, Executive Director

DATE 3/7/2023

RE Digital Equity Plan and BEAD 5-Year Action Plan

MESSAGE:

The Digital Equity Act and Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program require that detailed plans be developed and submitted to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) for review and approval prior to any additional federal funding being released for broadband implementation efforts. Specifically, a BEAD 5-Year Action Plan must be completed by August 12, 2023, and a statewide digital equity plan needs to be developed no later than October 31, 2023.

At a special meeting of the Board held on February 6th, it was determined that certain elements of the scope of work for the completion of the Digital Equity Plan and BEAD 5-Year Action Plan would be completed in-house and the Request for Proposal (RFP) be amended and re-advertised. Specifically, the work elements that were removed from the scope included the development of a stakeholder engagement strategy, formation of the core planning team, and conducting an inventory of existing data.

The amended RFP was advertised on February 7th and proposals were due no later than 4:00 PM on February 20th. Fourteen responses were accepted and reviewed by the Review Committee. The review process included individual scoring based on the technical merits of the proposal, which applied the greatest weight and placed the importance on the Offerors' technical approach. Once individual scores were complete, a group discussion, facilitated by DCED's legal and procurement offices, was used to ensure evaluators had a common understanding of the proposals and to allow evaluators to change their scores based on the committee's understanding of the proposal and discussion. Finally, once the individual and group scoring process for the technical aspect of the proposal was complete, cost was factored into the final score.

The Review Committee is recommending that the Authority contract with Michael Baker International at a cost of \$1,199,744 to complete the scope of work outlined in its proposal. The work plan will include facilitation of roundtable discussions and a strategic planning session for the Board of Directors; facilitation of core planning team meetings; development and deployment of a statewide, community survey; partnering with the Office to host in-person community outreach events to help identify locally specific barriers and inform asset mapping; development of a "Broadband Ready" framework or checklist to prepare local units of government for broadband projects and prepare for partnerships with providers; and the development of a draft framework of the BEAD 5-Year Action Plan and Digital Equity Plan.

Funds for this planning work are budgeted as part of the \$6.6M previously awarded to the Authority by the (NTIA) to, in part, further develop the Commonwealth's broadband plans.

Board approval is contingent on successful negotiation of the terms and conditions in the contract. The term of the contract will commence on the Effective Date (the date the contract has been fully executed by the selected Offeror and by the Commonwealth and all approvals required by Commonwealth contracting procedures have been obtained) and continue for one year.