

**Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority**  
Board Meeting Minutes  
April 19, 2022  
Microsoft Teams Meeting

Board members and designees in attendance:

- Senator John Kane
- Dr. Kyle Kopko, Center for Rural PA
- Representative Carl Walker Metzgar
- Secretary Noe Ortega, Secretary of Education
- Senator Kristin Phillips-Hill
- Secretary Russell Redding, Secretary of Agriculture
- Chairwoman Gladys Brown-Dutrieuille
- Representative Pam Snyder
- Secretary Greg Thall, Chair
- Secretary Curt Topper, Secretary of General Services
- Secretary Neil Weaver, Secretary of Community and Economic Development
- Sheri Collins, Interim Executive Director

Governor's Office staff in attendance:

- Erin Wachter
- Zach Reber

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

- Kalie Snyder
- Lori Irwin
- Rob Teplitz
- Greg Welker

Guests in attendance:

- Stephen Bruder
- Michael Deery
- Elizabeth Rosentel
- Matthew Franchak
- Julie Tritt-Schell
- Melissa Gates
- Steve Warhola
- Yesenia Bane
- Ryan Gonder
- Jennifer Blatz

## **I. Call to Order**

Chairman Greg Thall called the meeting to order at 1:31 PM.

Sheri Collins announced her retirement from the Commonwealth and expressed gratitude and appreciation for the support she's received from the Board, Governor's Office, and DCED.

## **II. General Updates**

Sheri Collins announced the creation of the Authority's website and noted that updates to the site will continue as information becomes available. She encouraged Board members to review the and to provide feedback.

Sheri also informed the Board that the Annual Report was submitted on March 31, 2022 as required by Act 96. Sheri further noted that the first report had limited information and that the report submitted in 2023 will provide more detailed information.

Sheri also noted that the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), as amended, has been executed by Chairman Thall and Secretary Weaver. The MOU is currently moving through the Commonwealth's signatory process.

Zach Reber continues to monitor the activity surrounding the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act (IIJA) legislation, including the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) from NTIA. Zach noted that the NOFO is scheduled to be released in mid-May. Additional information will be made available at the May meeting.

Zach encouraged Board members to follow this activity at [broadbandusa.ntia.gov](http://broadbandusa.ntia.gov).

Erin Wachter provided the Board with an update on the required submission of the state's Letter of Intent (LOI). Erin also provided details on the state's ability to request planning funds. These funds are capped at 5% of the \$100MM available to Pennsylvania under the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program (BEAD). These funds can be used for research and data collection for activities such as mapping, publications, outreach, tech assistance, and increasing staff capacity.

Erin also referenced Act 96 and the requirement for the Authority to adopt a statewide broadband plan. Erin noted that the State Plan is presently being drafted and seeks to have a final draft to share with the Authority and for public input within the next few weeks. This plan will be broader as opposed to the 5-year action plan that is associated with the BEAD program. Our state plan will help to shape our approach to the BEAD program and help to inform the 5-year actions plan.

The current draft outlines four (4) core challenges as identified below:

- Service Infrastructure and Availability
- Device and Tech Access
- Affordability
- Digital Literacy and Tech Support

The draft also outlines some suggested goals/action steps to address the above challenges.

Senator Phillips-Hill asked for an update regarding the engagement that has been had with entities who actually deploy broadband service, while drafting this proposed plan to put out for comment. Erin said that we'd like to get subcommittees up and running soon after the new Executive Director is on board. That this initial step of plan development is for the board to react to and to then disperse to stakeholders for input. Chief Counsel, Lori Irwin, reminded the board that the establishment of the subcommittees will require input and approval from the board.

**III. Executive Session**

At 1:49PM Chairman Thall called for Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter.

At 2:07PM Chairman Thall and Authority members rejoined general session.

Upon return to general session, Sheri Collins conducted another roll call and confirmed that all Authority members had returned.

**IV. New Business**

Chairman Thall made a motion to hire Brandon Carson as the Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority effective May 16, 2022 pending completion of all the necessary Commonwealth employment requirements. Senator Kane seconded the motion. Motion passed.

**V. Public Comment**

There were no public comments at this meeting.

Representative Snyder took a moment to thank Sheri for her service and offered well wishes.

**V. Adjournment**

Chairman Thall made a motion to adjourn. Representative Snyder seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 2:14 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kalie Snyder  
Executive Assistant