

Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority

Board Meeting Minutes

July 12, 2023

Microsoft Teams Meeting

Board members and voting designees in attendance:

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

Designees in attendance:

- Chloe Mandara
- Dr. Laura Dimino
- Rich Pronesti

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

- Brandon Carson
- Brandon Peters
- Kalie Snyder
- Pam Frontino
- Julia Brinjac
- Stephanie Perry
- Kyle Snyder
- Greg Alliger
- Britt Muniz
- Lee Walter
- Colin Parry
- Penny Ickes
- Teresa Wills
- Tree Layton Zuzzio

Guests in attendance:

- Jennifer Steiner, Harmart Twp
- Joe Lorah, BlueRidge Cable
- John Mizerak, Brightspeed
- Laura Condon, Allies for Children

- Bobby Maggio, Senator Fetterman's Office
- Byron Wright, HACP
- Lindsey Ringquist, Adams County
- Elizabeth Crow, MBI
- Elizabeth Lose, Centre County
- Tiffany, Elk Lick Twp
- Renee Robison, Warrington Twp
- Commissioner Tom Kreiner, McKean County
- Karen Virostek
- Chris Taylor, MBI
- Todd Eachus, BCAP
- Deb Frawley, Crawford County
- Jim Warta, Consolidated Communications
- Steven Barber, MBI
- Carl Yastremski, Frontier Communications
- Abigail Roberts, Lockhaven
- Bill Risse, Conxx
- Emme Reiser, PA Realty
- Kyle Lane, CT Enterprises
- Joel Deuterman, VNET
- Rob Troxell, Upward Broadband
- Tobey Dichter, Generations Online
- Owen Pucel, Washington County
- Catharine Conner, Milliron Goodman
- Mike Mrozinski, Pike Pa
- Alex Rahn, Wanner Associates
- Matthew Szuchyt, Senator Tracy Pennycuick's Office
- Teraira Snerling, MBI
- Derek Harris, Berks County
- Julie Kaylor, Breezeline
- Aleeza Langert, Ichor Strategies
- Tom Jennings
- Carter Simcox, Lock Haven
- Steve Warhola, Senator Kane's Office
- Joe Gerdes, PSATS
- Mark VanOuse , Zito Media
- Shannon Munro, PA College of Technology
- Tim Spangler, Carroltown Borough, Cambria County
- Jeff Miller, REA Energy
- Jennifer Sklodowski, SAPDC
- Brian Barno, BCAP
- Barbara Burba Filoreto, PA Wireless Association
- Andrea Verboish, Pa House
- Scott Kramer, SEDA-COG
- Matt Fine, One Strategies
- Evan Rubin, MBI

- Morgan Webb, CCS Energy
- Robert Omberg, Comcast
- Brandon Brenize, Adams County
- Daniel Carpenter
- Roy Hoover
- Ashley Pollard, City of Philadelphia
- Courtney Accurti, MBI
- Anthony Hennen, The Center Square
- Rachel Papuga, Alleghenies Broadband
- Edgar Largaespada, TRWIB
- Tom Beresnyak, PSU Extension
- Brian Cummings, Bucks County
- Dan Huebner, Civis Analytics
- Dwayne Zimmerman, Crowsnest Broadband
- Dustin Bishop, SAPDC
- Andrew Scampone, MBI
- Jason Gillespie, Increditek
- Trent Miller, Delta One
- Michael Zody, Lit Communities
- Casey Fellingner, Milliron Goodman
- Brenda Watson, Perry County
- Grant Dull, Firstlight
- Laura Edinger, Pa Utility Law Project
- Kristen Ritchey, Comcast
- Thomas Musgrove, All Points Broadband
- Kirsten Compitello, MBI
- Carrie Cleary, Office of Commonwealth Libraries
- Debra Wohlin, Pa House
- Bill Perkins, ICCN
- Jeanne Shearer, Windstream
- Jon Peha
- Rick Garces
- Andy Waple, SWPA Corp
- Ron Grutza
- Brian Regli, Governor's Office
- Sheri Collins, CNR LLC
- JJ Hrechun, M:7 Agency
- Travis Stormer
- Julie Schell, E-Rate Coordinator PA
- Kate Rivera, TLC
- Ed Troxell
- Scott Miller, York City
- Gerald Mensah, Global Tranz
- Shannon Sollengberger, PA Senate
- Chris G.
- Dave Niles, Hancock Telephone

- David Kerr, ATT
- Brett Biggica, Saxton Stump
- Melissa Gates, CCAP
- Colton Duke
- Aaron Young, CT Enterprises
- Mary Manhoff
- Kelly Lewis, Lewis Strategic
- Yvonne Hursh, Joint State Government Commission
- Heidi Seymore
- Marshall Manhoff
- Sascha Meinrath, PSU
- Lori A, Schrift, St. Francis University
- JM McCaffret, Cerro Stratus Tech
- Rob Brighter, Hancock telephone
- Kate2
- Leslie Grace
- Aidan McLaughlin, Philadelphia Government
- Shirley Anders, Zito Media
- Sarah Huffman
- Shannon Keim
- Remy Pesimo, Zito Media
- Snow Shoe Borough
- Julie Fink Yates, City of Philadelphia
- Jeff Marshall, Greene County
- Lisa Miller
- Bill Heim
- Kieran Farrell, Beyond Literacy
- Pam Pippin, Increditek
- Colby Hollabaugh, Community Internet
- Randy Ruddek
- Rick Power
- Charles Duncan
- Scott Williams
- Amy
- Richard
- Nick
- Jim
- Carmen
- Liz
- Rick
- Michael Foote

I. Call to Order

Chairman Monson called the meeting to order at 1:31 pm.
Kalie Snyder conducted a roll call of the board members and confirmed quorum.

II. Approval of June 1, 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 Mark Critz. Chairman Monson asked for all Board members to approve or deny the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

III. Status Update on Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Five-Year Action Plan

Chairman Monson called on Chris Taylor of Michael Baker International to provide an update on the status of the 5-Year Action Plan. Chairman Monson reiterated that this plan is required by the NTIA prior to the federal funding being made available for use.

Chris introduced himself as the project manager and stated that he will be reviewing the 5-Year Action Plan, the Digital Equity Plan, as well as the engagement that was included in the report to be delivered to the PBDA.

Chris began by highlighting the team including MBI staff, subconsultants for policy and planning, and survey implementation.

Chris went on to highlight the collaborations, which include weekly meetings with the PBDA, monthly meetings with the PBDA board, biweekly meetings with the Core Planning Team. The engaging discussions, particularly in the monthly subcommittee meetings to review challenges and solutions that will be delivered in the report.

Chris reviewed the timeline noting the delivery of the final Five-Year Action Plan on 7/25 and the delivery of Digital Equity Plan on 10/31. He also noted that input from the ongoing public engagement will be part of the report.

Chris added that the initial draft of Five-Year Action Plan was delivered to PBDA on 6/30, PBDA provided comments which were addressed, and the plan is now being reviewed by PBDA again.

Tereira Snerling of MBI, continued with the public engagement portion of the plan, noting that information gathered from the public and from stakeholders will contribute to the plan, including 11 community conversations and 3 roundtables. The total attendance for roundtables was 249.

Tereira mentioned that concerns shared during these meetings were related to digital literacy, especially for aging populations and pointed to other challenges voiced such as workforce development recruiting and training needs. From the ISP roundtables the importance of diversified approaches was conveyed as well as the importance of partnerships and the challenges posed by regulations.

Tereira also offered maps displaying locations of the roundtables and community conversations. She noted that the input from community conversations included unreliability, affordability as well as anecdotal commentary on the specific challenges for the under and unserved, i.e., interruption to business, inability to access telehealth.

This information was brought back to the PBDA and used to create the goals that will be the backbone of the Five-Year Plan. These goals include ensuring universal availability, widespread adoption and meaningful usage, next generation networks and program stewardship.

Chris added the importance of having the right type of partnerships. He mentioned general partners such as schools, local government, and non-profits as well as specific partnerships such as Skillup and Workforce Innovations Network.

Chris also shared a map illustrating the 279,000+ unserved locations and the 54K+ underserved. He then moved on to workforce shortages and how overcoming that will be a major effort, along with the development of trainings. Chris also highlighted the construction crew calculator.

Tereira then offered more on engagement, reviewing the specific timeline for public engagement including the number of events and types of events, including those that will take place into the fall of '23 and early '24. She continued with a breakdown noting that there were 315 attendees at 11 community conversations. Three roundtables had 249 attendees. There have been over 3,700 surveys completed including online in English, online in Spanish (8) and 37 in person.

Tereira shared an illustration of findings from the survey including data relating to respondents with devices and their access to the internet. Including those that use cellular plans for home internet use, those who have cable service and those using DSL. This slide showed that 40% are customers of Xfinity and Comcast and 23.75 % get their service through Version, Blue Ridge, Frontier, Service Electric, Breezeline, as well as data regarding internet speed as it relates to customer satisfaction. She also shared feedback on customers satisfaction or dissatisfaction with internet speed.

Chris shared a link and QR code to survey and the email address for comments on the 5-Year Action Plan. He added that for the next report required by NTIA there will be a comment period, and concluded by saying they look forward to submitting by 7/25

Chairman Monson asked for comment from the Board. Hearing none, he took the opportunity to acknowledge the announcement of the 1.16 billion allocated to PA under the BEAD program and thanked the staff for their work. He noted that the Governor has been speaking a lot throughout the state on the topic.

IV. Capital Projects Fund (CPF) Program Updates

Chairman Monson invited Grants Manager, Pam Frontino to

Kalie interjected that Joe Witmer has a question.

Joe Witmer asked in reference to the hybrid solution, was that a discussion about what technology would work in high-cost rural areas? Second question was on workforce development numbers. Was there outreach to the PTA and BCAP, as well as Verizon on their experience with workforce development in Pennsylvania? He also asked if board members are part of the bi-weekly stakeholder meetings and requested that Chairman Brown be included.

Chairman Monson offered that staff would follow up on the last question. Chris Taylor will respond to Joe's other questions at a later time.

Pam Frontino provided an overview of the guidelines for the Broadband Infrastructure Program (BIP), noting that as part of the American Rescue Plan Act, Pennsylvania received nearly \$279 million, of which \$200 million is dedicated to BIP. Grant applications opened on May 10th, a 30-day extension was applied, which will then be followed by a 45-day challenge and 30-day adjudication period with the awarding grants scheduled for January 2024.

Eligible applicants, and projects include businesses, non-profit organizations, local governments and last mile, large scale regional projects. She mentioned that resources related to this are available on the PBDA website including an FAQ and a webinar.

She added that the mapping tool is also accessible with the latest FCC data included, as well as a layer with community anchor institutions and an interactive tool that can select project areas and automatically calculate the 80% threshold of unserved and underserved, as is required by Act 96.

Pam also mentioned the other two CPF programs included in the \$279 million which was approved by Treasury are the Multi-purpose Community Facilities Projects (\$45 million) and Digital Connectivity Technology Projects (\$20 million). PBDA anticipates these programs opening later this year. The community facilities project is focused on improvements to Community Anchor Institutions with a requirement of work training, education, and health monitoring. The Digital Connectivity Technology Program, will be used to fund the purchase of devices.

Chairman Monson asked for questions on Pam's presentation or comments on the plan. There were none.

IV. Public Comment

Chairman Monson asked Kalie Snyder to conduct public comment. Kalie reminded the public of the format to provide comments and asked that they remain under 2 minutes.

Juliet Fink-Yates asked where the stakeholder conversations are posted. Kalie offered to follow-up afterwards and clarified that sub-committee meetings are posted for the public.

Mark VanOuse asked if there has been more insight re: prevailing wage requirements?

Chairman Monson stated that there is an updated Q&A on website.

Bill Risse asked if there is any data that supports rural areas that are covered by the fixed wireless providers, and if those providers are included in this discussion? He pointed out that the field experience differs substantially to what's being presented and wondered if the consultants have any research or data that supports the slides they presented or is it an industry given as to what speeds are essential?

Sascha Meinrath asked when MBI will make a draft of the 5 Year Action Plan publicly available for comment.

Brandon Carson offered to touch base.

Senator Philips Hill asked when we anticipate the survey closing? Kalie Snyder said the survey will likely close in September and noted that the survey is online in multiple languages and can be submitted via phone and hard copies are available.

Gerald Mensah asked if the board is going to make provisions for funds to subsidize affordability? Remaining questions were inaudible.

An unidentified caller from Lawrence County, commented that his only provider is T-Mobile. He added that Comcast won't run line down to them and he hopes that this plan will afford him better internet access. Kalie assured him that is the goal of the Authority.

Pam Pippin from Telecom asked where on the website can information regarding Prevailing wage be found. Pam Frontino screenshared showing where information on the Broadband Infrastructure Program is located and supporting FAQs and that those FAQs do address some prevailing wage costs questions. Pam also shared the location for the mapping tool, and the prevailing wage webinar.

Michael Hain thanked the team for the community conversations, noting not only the value of the information gathered but also the opportunity for attendees to be heard.

Liz Zick, a consultant to Zito Media, asked if there any wage determination other than the \$95/hr offered by Davis Bacon.

Having missed roll call, Joe Witmer, requested that he be recorded as being present.

V. Adjournment

Chairman Monson called for a motion to adjourn. Motion made by Senator Phillips Hill and seconded by Senator Kane. Meeting adjourned at 2:19PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Senator Kristin Phillips-Hill
Secretary