

## **Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority**

Board Meeting Minutes

September 15, 2022

Microsoft Teams Meeting

Board members and voting designees in attendance:

- Representative Pam Snyder, Chair
- Dr. Kyle Kopko, Center for Rural Pennsylvania
- Joe Witmer, PUC, on behalf of Gladys Brown-Dutrieuille
- Senator Kristin Phillips-Hill, Secretary
- Matt Franchak, on behalf of Senator John Kane
- Phil Kirchner, on behalf of Representative Carl Walker Metzgar
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- Mark Critz, Department of Agriculture, on behalf of Secretary Russell Redding
- Dr. David Volkman, Department of Education, on behalf of Acting Secretary Eric Hagarty
- Matt Bembenick, Department of General Services, on behalf of Acting Secretary Joe Lee
- Zach Reber, Office of the Budget, on behalf of Secretary Ben Lukens
- Mike Hanna, Department of Community and Economic Development, on behalf of Acting Secretary Neil Weaver

Designees in attendance:

- Beth Rosentel, Office of Representative Pam Snyder
- Pam Frontino, Center for Rural Pennsylvania

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

- Brandon Carson
- Erin Wachter
- Kalie Snyder
- Lori A. Butler
- Leigh Walter
- Terri Wills
- Paul Opiyo
- Lori Irwin
- Rob Teplitz
- Colin Parry

Guests in attendance:

- Nicole Ugarte, National Telecommunications and Information Administration
- Eric Epstein, Rock the Capital
- Todd Eachus, Broadband Communications Association of Pennsylvania
- Jim Mercante, Southern Chester County Digital Coalition
- Jim Skjeveland, Rolka Loube
- Allison Kotzowitz
- Bryan DeWalt
- Kim Sukoloski
- Charlotte Keith, Spotlight PA

**I. Call to Order**

Chairwoman Snyder 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 August 22, 2022, Meeting Minutes**

Chairwoman Snyder called for a motion to approve the minutes as presented to the board. Motion made by Phil Kirchner. Motion was seconded by Dr. Kopko. Chairwoman Snyder asked for all Board members to approve or deny the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**III. Election of Assistant Secretary**

Chairwoman Snyder recognized her appointment to Chair of the Authority and asked for a motion to nominate a new Assistant Secretary. Dr. Kopko made a motion to appoint Senator Kane as Assistant Secretary. Motion was seconded by Matt Bembenick. Chairwoman Snyder asked for all Board members to approve or deny the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**IV. Sub-Committee Membership Updates and Next Steps**

Brandon Carson provided an update of the sub-committee member changes and an overview of the process to fill future vacancies. Brandon suggested that the Chair of the Board approve appointments for future vacant sub-committee seats. Chairwoman Snyder called for questions on the member changes and the vacancy process, there were none. Chairwoman Snyder called for a motion to approve the sub-committees as presented. Matt Franchak made a motion to approve the members. Motion was seconded by Dr. Kopko. Chairwoman Snyder asked for all Board members to approve or deny the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Chairwoman Snyder asked for a motion to allow the Chair of the Board to approve sub-committee member changes. Dr. Kopko made a motion to allow the Chair to approve sub-committee member changes. Motion was seconded by Matt Franchak. Chairwoman Snyder asked for Board members to approve or deny the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**V. Approval of Capital Projects Fund Grant Plan**

Erin Wachter provided an overview of the Capital Projects Fund Grant Program (CPF). She also provided an overview of the Commonwealth's CPF Program Plans, to include three (3) separate sub-grant programs; 1) PA Broadband Infrastructure Program (\$200 million), Digital Anchor Institution Grant Program (\$45 million), 3) Digital Access and Opportunity Grant Program (\$20 million). The remaining \$13 million will be used for administrative costs, 2.5% for the Broadband office and 2.5% for grantees. Timeline for these programs depends on approval from Treasury, but the office anticipates a quarter 1, 2023 roll out of the \$200 million Broadband Infrastructure Program and \$45 million Digital Anchor Institution Grant Program and a quarter 4, 2023 roll out of the \$20 million Digital Access and Opportunity Grant Program, to align with the timing of the State's Digital Equity Plan.

The Chairwoman called for questions on the CPF Program Plans. Joe Witmer asked if the Authority has thought about the RDOF areas that are no longer considered served due to contract termination and the remaining awardees, and how these areas will be identified. Brandon acknowledged that BEAD and CPF dollars could be used in those areas and indicated that staff is looking at ways to incentivize RDOF awardees to shorten their project timelines.

Mark Critz asked for confirmation that there will be dedicated Authority staff supported through CPF administration dollars, to which Erin confirmed yes.

Matt Franchak asked for the definition of “quickly” as used in the Infrastructure Program. Brandon said its relative but his idea of quickly is 18 months, for complete project build out.

Chairwoman Snyder asked for a motion to approve the Capital Projects Fund Program Plans as presented to the Board. Motion made by Representative Metzgar. Motion seconded by Matt Franchak. Chairwoman Snyder asked for Kalie Snyder to do a roll call vote of each Board member for concurrence. Motion passed unanimously.

## **VI. Public Comment**

Eric Epstein, Rock the Capital, discussed a recent PUC meeting and comments made about interconnectivity. He also requested a legal opinion if the Authority chooses not to sunshine the sub-committee meetings.

Todd Eachus, Broadband Cable Association, asked for clarity on the amount of administrative funds available for sub-grantees, to which Erin provided clarity that it’s an even split of 5%. He also mentioned the Emergency Connectivity Funds, a program that focuses on devices, and PA received \$100 million, so to ensure coordination with those funds. Lastly, he understands the need to define the term “quickly” but requests consideration of workforce and supply chain issues that may prevent delays.

Jim Mercante, Southern Chester County Digital Coalition, added comments about the ACP requirements under CPF and that there are currently some concerns regarding the program being misused by providers and suggested establishing a process for accountability.

## **VII. Adjournment**

Chairwoman Snyder called for a motion to adjourn. Motion to adjourn was made by Matt Franchak. Motion seconded by Dr. Kyle Kopko. Meeting adjourned at 10:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Senator Kristin Phillips-Hill  
Secretary