

Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority

Board Meeting Minutes

January 23, 2024

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
- Secretary Rick Siger, Department of Community and Economic Development
- Cathy Hall on behalf of Secretary Mumin, Department of Education
- Matt Franchak on behalf of Senator Kane
- Rich Pronesti on behalf of Representative Rob Matzie
- Representative Carl Walker Metzgar
- Senator Kristin Phillips-Hill, Secretary
- Joel Cheskis on behalf of Steve DeFrank, PUC Chairman
- Dr. Kyle Kopko, Center for Rural PA

Designees in attendance:

- Chloe Mandara, Legislative Director, Office of Senator Phillips-Hill
- Phil Kirchner, Executive Director, PA House Consumer Protection
- Dr. Laura Dimino, Center for Rural Pennsylvania

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

- Brandon Carson, PBDA Executive Director
- Brandon Peters, PBDA Deputy Executive Director
- Kalie Snyder, PBDA Outreach & Engagement Manager
- Pam Frontino, PBDA Grants Manager
- Jesse Suders, PBDA Infrastructure Program
- Julia Brinjac, PBDA Digital Equity Program Manager
- Kyle Snyder, PBDA Broadband Planning Specialist
- Stephanie Perry, PBDA Digital Equity and Workforce Specialist
- Greg Alliger, PBDA Broadband Project Manager
- Britt Muniz, PBDA Counsel
- Mary Markle, PBDA Executive Assistant
- Theresa Wills, Office of Legislative Affairs

Guests in attendance:

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| • Lydia Hack, JSGC | • Barb Burba-Filoreto, DGS,
Wireless Mgmt. | • Michael Schultz, Global
Tungsten |
| • Brian Kimmett | • Elizabeth Crow, MBI | • Jennifer Blatz, Persad Center |
| • Davin Lamm, Lamm Realty | • Nicole Ugarte, NTIA | • Kristen Ritchey, Comcast |
| • Elizabeth Lose, Centre County | • Jennifer Cloonan, FTR | • Ashley Pollard, City of
Philadelphia |
| • Todd Eachus, BCAP | • Alex Rahn, Wanner Associates | • Kevin Kloehn, Vantage Point |
| • Steven Barber, MBI | • Lindsey Ringquist, Adams
County | • Sheri Collins, CNR LLC |
| • Jack Purcell | • Steve Samara, Pa Telephone
Association | • David Bonsick, Cozen
O'Connor Strategies |
| • Rachel Papuga, Alleghenies,
Broadband | • Casey Fellingner, Milliron
Goodman | • Catherine Conner, Milliron
Goodman |
| • Kevin Cassidy, Ichor Strategies | | |
| • Andrew French, RACF PA | | |

- Rachael Haverstick, Kinber
- Roy Hoover, ITDRC PA
- Michael McDonnell, Liro
- Jacob Murfin
- Brian Regli, Office of Critical Investments
- Matt Fine, One Strategies
- Nick Jacobson, PA, 85th
- Charlotte Keith, Spotlight PA
- Jeanne Shearer, Windstream
- Kate Rivera, Kate Rivera Solutions
- Joe Gerdes, PA Township Supervisors
- Kris Mamula
- Commissioner Qually, Adams County
- Brian Kimmett
- Jeremy Jurick, Armstrong
- Emme Reiser, Pa. Realtors
- John McGrath, Rolka Loube
- Sheridan Barrett PAOCA
- Jennifer Algoe Keaton, BCAP
- Brian Barno, BCAP
- Michael McDonnell, Liro
- Brett Bigica, Saxton Stump
- Kevin Cassidy, Ichor
- Sherri Clayton Williams, Adams County
- Jon Kabel, Keystone REN
- Rob Wrighter, Hancock Telephone
- Thomas Musgrove, Allpoints Broadband
- Brent Jagueneau-Siegel, Ichor Strategies
- Charles Duncan, Comcast
- Yuriy Porytko, Beacon of Hope
- Carl Yastremski, FTR
- Michael Simmonds, IBEW 126
- Philip Jones, FRB
- Al Williams
- John Mizerak, Brightspeed
- Jim Mercante
- Brett Biggica, Saxton Stump
- Rod, Mischke, Brightspeed
- Pedro
- Turk
- Savannah

I. Call to Order

Chairman Monson called the meeting to order at 10:01 AM and asked Mary Markle to conduct housekeeping. Ms. Markle conducted a roll call of the Board members and confirmed quorum.

II. Approval of November 30, 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. Motion was made by Dr. Kyle Kopko and seconded by Secretary Siger. Motion passed unanimously.

III. Board Member Annual Disclosures

Chairman Monson asked PBDA’s Counsel, Britt Muniz, to provide a reminder on the annual disclosure. Ms. Muniz advised that the deadline for submitting annual disclosures to the State Ethics Commission is May 1st. She asked Board Members and designees to email a copy of their disclosure to Mary Markle. She added that she is available for questions.

IV. Financial Update: July-December 2023 Expenditures

Brandon Carson displayed and reviewed the expenditures noting the higher cost items, such as the mapping work with Penn State Extension, contract work with consultant, Michael Baker International, as well as program and staff support. Mr. Carson reminded members that the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlines DCEd’s responsibility to provide an overview of total expenses on at least a quarterly basis. As of 12.30.23 expenditures were on track with the projections in the MOU.

Mr. Carson went on to highlight and clarify other expenses.

Chairman Monson asked for comments. Mark Critz asked for clarification on reimbursement to the DCED. Secretary Siger added that the DCED provides services and is reimbursed by PBDA with federal funds.

V. Update on Capital Projects Fund – Broadband Infrastructure Program

Brandon Peters displayed the proposed project area map and noted that there are currently 206 CPF applications (25 withdrew voluntarily); 147 projects are fiber to the premise, 41 are coaxial/HRC, and 18 are fixed wireless.

He added that the infrastructure team is currently conducting application review, the challenge adjudication process, as well as scoring. Mr. Peters added that curing and development of a list of recommended projects will continue for the next several weeks and months with presentation of awards in March-April. Projects will then kick off and run through 2026.

He also shared that the PBDA will be co-hosting a prevailing wage webinar with Labor and Industry on February 7th.

Chairman Monson asked for questions or comments from the Board.

VI. BEAD Initial Proposal – Update on Status of Volume I and II

Chairman Monson invited Grants Manager, Pam Frontino, to provide an update. Ms. Frontino informed members that Volume I was referred to the Commerce’s Office of Chief Counsel for approval, which is the final step before official approval.

Volume II is under review by NTIA. She informed that the feedback has been very positive and that reviewers have expressed that they are impressed with PBDA’s proposal on several fronts, specifically noting workforce development strategies. Upon official approval the PBDA will have 365 days to make project selections and submit the Final Proposal for BEAD to NTIA.

Chairman Monson entertained questions and comments from the Board.

Joel Cheskis asked about the possibility of the elimination of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), and how PBDA has factored that into their plans.

Ms. Frontino responded that under the low-cost plan section of Volume II it is noted that in the absence of an ACP or ACP replacement plan, providers will have to provide an unsubsidized low-cost option, following federal poverty guidelines.

Mr. Carson added that the possible elimination of ACP is concerning and PBDA is keeping a close eye on it.

VII. Approval of State Digital Equity Plan

Chairman Monson asked Julia Brinjac for an update on the DE Plan. Ms. Brinjac stated the plan draft was open for public comment from November 27th to January 8th. 167 comments were received from community anchor institutions, constituents, stakeholders, providers, residents, etc. The plan was updated in response to many of those comments and is currently available on the PBDA website.

Ms. Brinjac added that approval by the Board will kick off a 30-day period for NTIA to review. Once accepted by NTIA (anticipated acceptance date 2.28.24) the PBDA will implement the plan utilizing resources available through the Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program.

Chairman Monson asked for a motion to approve the Digital Equity Plan. Motion was made by Matt Franchak and seconded by Mark Critz. Chairman Monson then asked for comment from the Board. Senator Phillips-Hill expressed her appreciation to the PBDA staff for incorporating the suggestion to include victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, and human trafficking into one of the targeted populations.

Chairman Monson asked Ms. Markle to conduct a roll call vote.

Chairman Monson - Yes
Mark Critz for Secretary Redding - Yes
Cathy Hall for Secretary Mumin - Yes
Matt Franchack for Senator Kane - Yes
Rich Pronesti for Representative Matzie - Yes
Representative Metzgar - Yes
Senator Phillips-Hill - Yes
Joel Cheskis for Chairman DeFrank - Yes
Dr. Kyle Kopko - Yes
Secretary Siger - Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Update on New PBDA Branding and Website

Kalie Snyder stated that the PBDA collaborated with DCED's Marketing Team to develop a new website. She noted that the new website will include a navigation menu, the addition of a feedback form, as well as more specific navigation to Board and Sub-Committee meetings, webinars and other "open to the public" events. A new logo was also created. Ms. Snyder went on to walk through portions of the proposed site. She noted that the ACP will be highlighted.

Dr. Kopko commended the staff on the improved site.

IX. Broadband Ready Communities Program

Chairman Monson called on Infrastructure Program Manager, Jesse Suders, to provide an update. Mr. Suders stated that the program's objective is to increase opportunity, remove barriers, and to promote municipalities as broadband ready communities. He noted that it is a voluntary program and participation does not affect eligibility within BEAD. Designation as a broadband ready community establishes that a local government has done the work to simplify broadband implementation and that they are ready to collaborate. To receive this designation the municipality establishes a broadband champion, enters into a local government resolution, and completes the Broadband Ready Community worksheet. There are also two optional components: an indication of potential for matching funds and creating an asset inventory. Once a community is designated as broadband ready, they can be promoted on PBDA data dashboards and maps as well as in presentations and the PBDA newsletter.

Mr. Suders indicated that preregistration for the program will open in late January. The application will be posted in March, and PBDA will offer an educational webinar. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis and the program is slated to close in August.

X. Public Comment

Chairman Monson asked Kalie Snyder to conduct the public comment portion of the meeting. Ms. Snyder asked for public comment and reminded all the format to provide comments. .

Todd Eachus, BCAP commended the PBDA staff, Jesse Suders in particular, for their work on Broadband Ready Communities Program.

Jim Mercante from the Chester County Digital Alliance noted that the average broadband bill, with the ACP factored is still not affordable to many households within the covered populations. He urged the Commonwealth to address that.

XI. Adjournment

Chairman Monson called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion was made by Secretary Siger and seconded by Matt Franchak seconded . The meeting was adjourned at 10:35 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Senator Kristin Phillips-Hill
Secretary