

Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority (PBDA)

Board Meeting Minutes

April 18, 2024

Keystone Building

PUC Hearing Room #1

Microsoft Teams Meeting

Board members and voting designees in attendance:

- Secretary Uri Monson, Office of the Budget, Chairman
- Mike Hanna on behalf of Secretary Rick Siger, Department of Community & Economic Development
- Cathy Hall on behalf of Secretary Khalid Mumin, Department of Education
- Barb Burba-Filoreto on behalf of Secretary Reggie McNeil, Department of General Services
- Secretary Russell Redding, Department of Agriculture
- Matt Franchak on behalf of Senator Kane, Assistant Secretary
- Representative Rob Matzie
- Representative Clint Owlett
- Senator Kristin Phillips-Hill, Secretary
- Steve DeFrank, Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission
- Dr. Kyle Kopko, Center for Rural Pennsylvania

Designees in attendance:

- Zach Reber, Office of the Budget
- Mark Critz, Department of Agriculture
- Chloe Mandara, Legislative Director, Office of Senator Phillips-Hill
- Rich Pronesti, PA House Consumer Protection, Technology and Utilities Committee
- Joel Cheskis, Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission
- 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 Director
- Kalie Snyder, PBDA Outreach & Engagement Manager
- Pam Frontino, PBDA Grants Manager
- Jesse Suders, PBDA Infrastructure Program Manager
- Julia Brinjac, PBDA Digital Equity Program Manager
- Kyle Snyder, PBDA Broadband Planning Specialist
- Dr. Stephanie Perry, PBDA Digital Equity and Workforce Specialist
- Greg Alliger, PBDA Broadband Project Manager
- Britt Muniz, PBDA Counsel
- Mary Markle, PBDA Executive Assistant
- Ted Ritsick, PBDA Project Manager
- Terri Wills, Legislative Affairs
- Leigh Walter, Legislative Affairs
- Kathy Bozinski, Communications

In- Person Guests:

- Kim Barrow, PUC

- John Timney, Washington County
- Nicole Ugarte, NTIA
- Sarah Hammond, PA, AFL-CIO
- Jennifer Algoe-Keaton, BCAP
- Brett Biggica
- Saxton Stump
- Tracey Vernon, Vernon Land Use
- Kaitlyn Good, Center for Rural Pennsylvania
- Catharine Conner, Milliron Goodman
- Lisa Gabler, BIPC
- Kristen Ritchey, Comcast
- Todd Eachus, BCAP
- Sheri Collins, McNees, Wallace & Nurick
- Kayla Rost, PUC
- Phil Macres, Klein Law

Guests Joining Virtually;

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| • Doug Friend, Vitalink USA | • Jennifer Cloonan, Frontier Communications | • Justin Edwards, Comcast |
| • Joseph W. Taylor, AGOC | • Nate Regotti, McNees, LLC | • Steve Warhola, PA Senate |
| • Carrie Cleary, PA Libraries | • Noah Glattke, PA Senate | • Duncan Ackerman, Comcast |
| • Jayden Demmy, OneStrategies | • Richie Rambarran, Ichor Strategies | • Daniel Burke, Comcast |
| • Sandra R. Williams, Charter | • Beth Crow, Michael Baker & Associates | • Keith Jenkins, Mercer County |
| • Aaron Young, CT Enterprises | • Christine Verdier, PA Senate | • Brian Frazee, Vitalink |
| • Daniel Carpenter, Westmoreland County | • Michael Stecker, Comcast | • Caitlin Ganley, Comcast |
| • Lindsey Ringquist, Adams County | • Elizabeth Lose, Centre County | • Dwayne Zimmerman, Crowsnest Broadband |
| • Andre' DeMattia, Talkie Fiber | • Jeanne Shearer, Windstream | • Mike Roberts |
| • Rod Mischke, Brightspeed | • Aaron Margolis, PUC | • April Brumfield |
| • Carl Yastemski, Frontier Communications | • William Shirhall, Comcast | • Timothy Beiler, Upward Broadband |
| • Dave Glass, Clearfield County | • Andrew French, RACF PA | • Dia Hoffrage |
| • Alex Naveiro, Comcast | • Alicia Matthews, Comcast | • Charles Duncan, Comcast |
| • Alexandra Taylor, Hillman | • Marty Qually, Adams County | • Kris Mamula, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette |
| • Chris Schubert, PA Wireless Association | • Stephanie Clevenstine, Bedford County | • Samantha Travis |
| • Gwen Dando, PA Senate | • Erin Wachter, PSU | • Charlotte Keith, Spotlight PA |
| • Mark Critz, Pa House of Representatives | • Eric Wilden, Comcast | • Suzan Paiva |
| • Sarb Bassi, HCI Energy | • John Walker, Comcast | • Mike Roberts |
| • Lori Noonan, Blue Ridge Communications | • Marcie Callan, Comcast | • Robert S Carl Jr. |
| • Zach Norwood, Crawford County | • Owen Pucel, Washington County | • Elaine Bailey |
| | • Eric Grose, Comcast | • Jabari Young |
| | • Jamie Gay, Comcast | • Jason Kershner |
| | | • Paul Gibbons |
| | | • Jo Ann Fabrizio |
| | | • Jay Brown |

- Joe Lorah
- Kara Bailey
- B. Parker
- Austin
- Justin C
- Julian S
- Rudy Y
- Katie
- Eric
- Savannah
- Christine
- Art
- Ben
- Dave

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. Chairman Monson thanked Representative Carl Walker Metzgar for serving on the board and welcomed Representative Clint Owlett.

II. Approval of January 23rd, 2024, Meeting Minutes

Chairman Monson asked for questions and comments on the January 23, 2024, minutes as presented to the Board. Seeing none, he asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Motion was made by Secretary Redding and seconded by Dr. Kyle Kopko. Motion passed unanimously.

III. Election of Secretary and Assistant Secretary

Chairman Monson noted the requirement of bringing to the Board, nominations of Secretary and Assistant Secretary. Matt Franchak nominated Senator Kristin Phillips-Hill for Secretary. Senator Phillips-Hill's nomination was seconded by Dr. Kopko. The Board voted unanimously to elect Senator Phillips-Hill Secretary.

Chairman Monson asked for nominations for Assistant Secretary. Senator Phillips-Hill nominated Senator John Kane. Senator Kane's nomination was seconded by Chair DeFrank. The Board voted unanimously to elect Senator Kane Assistant Secretary.

IV. Financial Update: January- March 2024 Expenditures

Chairman Monson invited Brandon Carson to provide an overview of expenditures. Mr. Carson explained that the expenditures are broken down by program and noted expenses for the Capital Projects Fund to include the Broadband Infrastructure Program, the Multipurpose Community Facilities Program as well as the Technology Program, and Digital Equity planning funds. He added that all are outlined in the expenditure report provided to the Board in the meeting packet.

V. MOU Extension and FY 2024-2025 Estimate of Expenditures

Chairman Monson invited PBDA Counsel, Britt Muniz to provide an update on the MOU. Ms. Muniz explained that the MOU between the PBDA and the DCED allows for the DCED to provide administrative services to PBDA for which they are reimbursed. The current MOU is due to expire

at the end of this fiscal year and DCED requests that it be extended to the end of the next fiscal year.

Chairman Monson asked for a motion to approve the extension. Motion was made by Chair DeFrank and seconded by Mr. Franchak.

Roll call vote followed.

Chairman Monson - Yes
Secretary Redding - Yes
Mike Hanna for Secretary Siger - Yes
Cathy Hall for Secretary Mumin - Yes
Barb Burba-Filoreto for Secretary McNeil - Yes
Matt Franchak for Senator Kane - Yes
Representative Matzie - Yes
Representative Owlet - Yes
Senator Phillips-Hill - Yes
Chairman DeFrank - Yes
Dr. Kopko - Yes

VI. Request for Proposal – BEAD and CPF Consulting Services

Deputy Director, Brandon Peters advised that the PBDA is currently working on a request for proposal to engage a consultant to assist with grant management activities associated with BEAD, CPF and DE programs. The consultant will assist with compliance and monitoring. Mr. Peters expressed that the PBDA wants to assure its due diligence with federal reporting requirements. Mr. Peters added that Board approval of the selected consultant is anticipated at the July 25th meeting.

In response to Secretary Redding’s question, Mr. Peters confirmed that the consultant will be involved in both award selection and in the post-award phase.

VII. Capital Projects Fund – Broadband Infrastructure Program Subgrantee Approval

Chairman Monson stated that more than 200 applications were received and evaluated by the PBDA and that a list of recommended projects are ready for presentation to the Board. He invited Greg Alliger and Jesse Suders to provide an overview of the process.

Mr. Suders reminded everyone of the mission to distribute the available funding to projects targeting locations that do not have access to reliable internet. He discussed the eligibility and program requirements. He presented the breakdown of applications, noting specifics of 231 applications submitted by 47 individual applicants, requesting approximately \$1 billion. He then explained what guided the application evaluation process, mentioning data and mission. Mr. Suders then presented the 12 recommended awardees, noting that 53 projects are recommended for funding. Those 53 projects will impact 42 counties and over 40,000 unserved or underserved locations. The amount to be awarded is \$204.1 million in grant funds. With matching funds, the total investment for all 53 projects exceeds \$400 million.

The recommended awardees are:

Adams CATV Inc.
Alleghenies Broadband Inc.
Armstrong Telecommunications, Inc.
Blue Ridge Communications
Claverack Communications
Comcast Cable Communications, LLC
Connect Holding II LLC d/b/a Brightspeed
Frontier Communications Parent, Inc.
Upward Broadband, LLC
Verizon North LLC/Verizon Pennsylvania LLC
Windstream Pennsylvania, LLC
Zito West Holding, LLC

Mr. Suders also offered lessons learned by the PBDA, including a better understanding of demand and the importance of defined project areas. He concluded by presenting the timeline for next steps including dates for contracting and groundbreaking.

Chairman Monson asked for questions.

Representative Matzie asked if unsuccessful applicants would be eligible for future BEAD funding. Mr. Carson affirmed that they would be and added that unsuccessful applicants would be well positioned for future funding and encouraged them to look at those opportunities.

Representative Matzie then asked for clarification on the awarded areas and enforceable funding commitments. Mr. Carson explained that the PBDA was mindful to not duplicate efforts with other federal partners. He added that proposed locations that would result in a duplication of efforts were reviewed and removed.

Representative Matzie asked about guidance from U.S. Treasury on the program. Mr. Carson responded that the PBDA has worked diligently throughout the process to ensure that they are meeting all U.S. Treasury requirements.

Representative Matzie reiterated that part of the mission when the Board was created was to not to overbuild and for unserved locations to be the top priority. He expressed appreciation for the work that went into adhering to that mission.

Senator Phillips-Hill asked if unsuccessful applicants will be able to get feedback as to why their application was not selected. Mr. Carson confirmed that unselected applicants will have that opportunity and that the PBDA will be presenting a debrief webinar as well as offer one on one debriefs as requested by applicants.

Secretary Redding asked what reasons were given for the withdrawn applications. Mr. Carson responded that reasons varied but some were regarding concerns with the red tape and requirements associated with federal funding.

Chairman Monson called for a motion to approve the projects as presented to the Board. Motion was made by Mike Hanna and seconded by Chair DeFrank.

Roll call vote followed.

Chairman Monson - Yes
Secretary Redding - Yes
Mike Hanna for Secretary Siger - Yes
Cathy Hall for Secretary Mumin - Yes
Barb Burba-Filoreto for Secretary McNeil - Yes
Matt Franchak for Senator Kane - Yes
Representative Matzie - Yes
Representative Owlet - Yes
Senator Phillips-Hill - Yes
Chairman DeFrank - Yes
Dr. Kopko - Yes

Motion to approve recommended CPF BIP projects as presented passed unanimously.

VIII. Capital Projects Fund – Multipurpose Community Facilities Program Update

Julia Brinjac provided the update on the status of the Multipurpose Community Facilities Program, noting that 775 applications had been created with 74 completed and that the application deadline is April 20, 2024. She announced that since the last Board meeting, the Digital Equity plan was approved by the NTIA. She explained that this approval allows PA to apply for the NTIA Capacity Grant. It is with that grant that Pennsylvania will implement the Digital Equity plan. The Capacity Grant will be awarded in 3 tranches with the first being \$25 million. PBDA's application will be submitted by the May 28th deadline.

IX. Capital Projects Fund – Digital Connectivity Technology Program Guidelines Approval

Chairman Monson mentioned that he and Mr. Carson attended the U.S. Treasury announcement of the Digital Technology Connectivity Grant which is the final piece of the ARPA funding available through Capital Projects Fund. He asked Pam Frontino to present the guidelines for this \$20 million funding opportunity.

Ms. Frontino stated that the program will provide digital devices to facilitate internet access. She presented U.S. Treasury's requirements including applicants must show that the program will meet a critical need in their community and that affordability is identified as a barrier to broadband use. She added that applicants must be public facing institutions who will promote digital literacy and provide digital skills and training programs.

She stated that awardees can request a minimum of 20 and a maximum of 200 devices. No monies will be awarded. She added that the PBDA is currently evaluating vendors and laptop models and noted that a board vote will be needed to approve the vendor. The timeline showed that program guidelines are to be posted in May with applications opening in June, and awards being approved in November.

Representative Matzie asked if the devices will be laptops or tablets. Ms. Frontino responded that a hybrid device is being researched.

Chairman Monson asked for a motion to approve the guidelines as presented. Motion was made by Dr. Kopko and seconded by Representative Matzie.

Roll call vote followed.

Chairman Monson - Yes
Secretary Redding - Yes
Mike Hanna for Secretary Siger - Yes
Cathy Hall for Secretary Mumin - Yes
Barb Burba-Filoreto for Secretary McNeil - Yes
Matt Franchak for Senator Kane - Yes
Representative Matzie - Yes
Representative Owlet - Yes
Senator Phillips-Hill - Yes
Chairman DeFrank - Yes
Dr. Kopko - Yes

The Digital Connectivity Technology Program Guidelines passed unanimously.

X. Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) Update

Nicole Ugarte provided an update on BEAD and offered her congratulations on the approval of the Initial Proposal - Volume I. She added that the Initial Proposal - Volume II is in curing, and she anticipates that it will move to acceptance quickly. Once accepted the PBDA has 365 days to submit their final proposal to NTIA.

She added that a key component to this program is the challenge process, which allows local governments, non-profit organizations, and industry partners to verify eligible locations as served or underserved, as well as requiring states to evaluate where there are enforceable commitments. Ms. Ugarte advised that following the challenge process and de-duplication, Pennsylvania's map for the BEAD Program will have been created and cannot be changed. She commended the PBDA for being excellent collaborators and noted that they have been a model for other states.

Kyle Snyder then provided a deeper explanation of the challenge process, noting that it is the inaugural step to selecting subgrantees for BEAD funds. He stated the purpose of the challenge is to audit the FCC's National Broadband Map to determine which broadband serviceable locations (BSLs) and community anchor institutions (CAIs) are eligible to be served by BEAD. The outcome will allow the PBDA to capture more data, leading to a more accurate map. He explained that challenges can be submitted based on provider service level (availability), enforceable commitments, planned service deployments and the identification of CAIs. He added that information has been made available via the PBDA website, a webinar and a resource guide.

Mr. Snyder went on to project areas development, noting that under NTIA guidelines, project areas will be defined by the PBDA. The timeline and next steps presented by Mr. Snyder included office hours dates, the challenge and rebuttal period, the posting of challenges, adjudication, submission of challenge outcomes to NTIA and the opening of applications. The timeline runs from April through September, 2024.

Senator Phillips-Hill asked how the public will be educated about census blocks. Mr. Snyder replied that while census blocks will be used as a defined best practice, the PBDA will be looking to

aggregate them into meaningful project areas constrained by county boundaries. Mr. Snyder replied to Senator Phillis-Hill next question, confirming that the maps will be shown to the board before they are made public.

Secretary Redding asked for clarification on the relationship between the decisions made today on the CPF BIP grants, and the Volume II submission versus this installment. Mr. Carson replied that the CPF BIP locations approved today will be accounted for when considering BEAD investments.

XI. Subcommittee Updates

- a. Data & Mapping – Dr. Kyle Kopko
- b. Technical – Todd Eachus
- c. Outreach & Education – Sarah Hammond
- d. Workforce & Supply Chain – Stephanie Perry for Russ McDaid

Dr. Kopko reported for the Data & Mapping Subcommittee. He recognized the committee members and informed that their meetings have moved to a quarterly cadence. He stated that this committee has provided input on the Capital Projects Fund and how the maps are viewed on the website. The committee has shared feedback from stakeholders on BIP applications, the 5-year-action plan, and the BEAD Initial Proposal. Dr. Kopko added that the committee met jointly with the Technical Subcommittee to provide input on the defined project areas. Dr. Kopko commended Kyle Snyder for his efforts in creating a great map.

Todd Eachus, chair of the Technical Subcommittee, thanked Barb Burba-Filoreto and Frank Baier for their time serving on the committee. Chair Eachus advised that the committee's meetings are now quarterly. He also mentioned the committee's role in the joint meeting with Data & Mapping. He stated that the committee devoted time and effort to addressing barriers, including pole attachments, access and permitting and noted the Broadband Ready Communities program as a response to those challenges. Chair Eachus said that the committee will continue to work with the PBDA on the BBRC program.

Co-Chair Sarah Hammond reported for the Outreach and Education Subcommittee. Chair Hammond began by thanking former chair, Kevin Sunday for his service on the committee. She shared that the committee has focused on sharing out the information that other committees and the Board have been promoting. The committee has worked on external communication, such as providing representatives with materials to take back to their districts. She spoke to the collaborations with CAI's and the committee's role in assuring that feedback from community outreach events was communicated. The committee also provided feedback on the creation of the new website. Chair Hammond concluded by announcing that she is leaving her role as co-chair.

On behalf of chair Russ McDaid, Dr. Stephanie Perry reported that the Workforce and Supply Chain Subcommittee meetings are now bi-monthly. Dr. Perry updated the Board on the current members and their roles. She mentioned a vacancy on the committee and that they are looking to fill it with someone from education. She added that the committee provided updates that informed Volume II, discussed workforce readiness strategies and digital equity. The committee promoted the Prevailing Wage Series II and provided feedback to Labor & Industry on the Commonwealth Workforce Transformation Program. The committee will continue to promote and engage in upcoming workforce events including a tour of IBEW in Collegeville to learn more about their training program.

XII. Public Comment

Chairman Monson asked Kalie Snyder to conduct public comment.

Mark Critz, from Secretary Redding's office asked if the mapping challenge was a second chance for challengers to show that they should be part of the map. He also asked if the schedule is contingent on Volume II being approved.

Mr. Critz thanked Sarah Hammond for her time and service to the PBDA and on the Outreach and Education Committee.

Commissioner Dave Glass from Clearfield County stressed the importance of integrating the awarded areas into the maps showing unserved and underserved locations as quickly as possible.

Kalie Snyder, as staff liaison to the Outreach and Education subcommittee, thanked Sarah Hammond for her service to the committee

XIII. Adjournment

Before adjournment Chairman Monson thanked Chair DeFrank for providing the meeting space and added that it was a really a good day with the allocation of these funds. He noted the next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 25th at 10:00 am and asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion was made by Representative Matzie and seconded by Mr. Hanna.

Respectfully submitted,

Senator Kristin Phillips-Hill,
Secretary