

Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority (PBDA)

Board Meeting Minutes

October 10, 2024

Microsoft Teams Meeting

Attendance

Board members:

- Secretary Uri Monson, Office of the Budget, Chairman
- Senator Kristin Phillips-Hill, Secretary
- Senator John Kane, Assistant Secretary
- Secretary Redding, Department of Agriculture
- Representative Rob Matzie
- Representative Carl Metzgar
- Dr. Kyle Kopko, Center for Rural Pennsylvania
- Mike Hanna on behalf of Secretary Siger
- Cathy Hall on behalf of Secretary Mumin, Department of Education
- Barb Burba-Filoreto on behalf of Secretary Reggie McNeil, Department of General Services
- Joel Cheskis on behalf of Chairman Steve DeFrank, Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission

Designees:

- Chloe Mandara, Legislative Director, Office of Senator Phillips-Hill
- Matt Franchak, Policy Director, Office of Senator John Kane
- Laura Dimino, Center for Rural Pennsylvania
- Rich Pronesti, PA House Consumer Protection, Technology and Utilities Committee
- Zach Reber, Deputy Director, Office of the Budget
- Mark Critz, Department of Agriculture
- Nicole Weaver, Office of Representative Carl Walker Metzgar

Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) staff:

- Brandon Carson, PBDA Executive Director
- Brandon Peters, PBDA Deputy Director
- Kalie Snyder, PBDA Outreach & Engagement Manager
- Pam Frontino, PBDA Grants Manager
- Tim Arthun, PBDA Policy & Program Specialist
- Charles Napier, PBDA Director of Infrastructure
- Kyle Snyder, PBDA Broadband Planning Specialist
- Dr. Stephanie Perry, PBDA Digital Equity and Workforce Specialist
- Greg Alliger, PBDA Broadband Project Manager
- Julia Brinjac, PBDA Director of Digital Equity
- Mary Markle, PBDA Executive Assistant
- Penny Ickes, Communications Director
- Leigh Walter, Director, Legislative Affairs
- Michael Shorr, Community Development Regional Director
- Lori Irwin, Chief Counsel
- Penny Ickes, Director, Communications
- Johnna Pro, Executive Deputy, Secretary Community Development

Virtual Guests

Eighty additional guests participated virtually

I. Call to Order

Chairman Monson called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and asked Mary Markle to provide housekeeping and to conduct roll call. Ms. Markle conducted roll call and confirmed quorum.

II. Approval of September 19th, 2024, Meeting Minutes

Chairman Monson asked for questions and comments on the September 19, 2024, minutes as presented to the Board. Seeing none, he asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Motion was made by Senator Kane and seconded by Mike Hanna. Motion passed unanimously.

III. Financial Update: July – September 2024 Expenditures

Brandon Carson provided an update on 3rd quarter expenditures and highlighted a \$20 million dollar expenditure for the purchase of over 14,000 laptops for the Digital Connectivity Technology Program as previously approved by the Board.

Mr. Carson reviewed payroll, other direct expenses for the Capital Projects Fund (CPF) programs, and the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program. He noted the \$1.156 billion available in BEAD funds and that subgrantee selection will begin this fall. He discussed the reclassification of approximately \$177,000 in funds from the Digital Equity Planning Grant to the BEAD cost center. He stated that the MOU expenses and all other expenditures align with fiscal year projections.

IV. Capital Projects Fund – Multi-Purpose Community Facilities Program Approvals

Tim Arthun presented an update on the Multipurpose Community Facilities program. Mr. Arthun reviewed the program mission and eligibility requirements for applicants and projects. He discussed that the application process yielded 599 applications from 65 counties, with \$900 million requested. The program was significantly oversubscribed.

Applicants included libraries, local governments, non-profit organizations, and other community anchor institutions (CAIs). The applications were evaluated based on how well the mission and guidelines were reflected as well as their demonstration of addressing the needs of their community.

Mr. Arthun presented the 49 projects to the Board for approval. He stated that the projects are diverse and cover 26 counties. The total amount for approved projects is \$44.746 million.

The projected timeline and next steps for the program show contracting completion by the end of 2024, followed by groundbreakings in the spring/summer of 2025 and substantial completion for all projects by the end of 2026.

Mr. Arthun shared that additional information will be available on the PBDA website and offered to take questions from the Board.

Chair Monson thanked U.S. Treasury for their partnership and the PBDA staff for their work on this effort.

Dr. Kopko commended the PBDA staff for their work and expressed his pleasure in seeing rural communities well represented in the list of approved projects.

Hearing no further comments, Chairman Monson asked for a motion to approve the recommended projects. Motion was made by Dr. Kopko and seconded by Senator Kane.

Board Member	Voting Designee	Vote
Chairman Monson		Yes
Secretary Redding		Yes
Secretary Siger	Mike Hanna	Yes
Secretary Mumin	Cathy Hall	Yes
Secretary McNeil	Barb Burba-Filoreto	Yes
Senator Kane		Yes
Representative Matzie		Yes
Representative Metzgar		Yes
Senator Phillips-Hill		Yes
PUC Chairman DeFrank	Joel Cheskis	Yes
Dr. Kopko		Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

V. Capital Projects Fund – Broadband Infrastructure Program Update

Chairman Monson offered an update noting that 15 projects are under contract and negotiations are being finalized on the remainder of the contracts.

VI. Capital Projects Fund – Digital Connectivity Technology Program Update

Brandon Peters highlighted that the program aims to address barriers to broadband adoption by offering \$20 million in devices through a competitive grant process.

A total of 139 applications from 47 counties were submitted, requesting 10,247 of the 14,000 laptops available. Applications are being reviewed and recommended approval will be presented to the Board at a special meeting later this year.

Because more laptops are available than were requested in this initial application round, Mr. Peters noted that a second application round will take place in 2025. With fewer devices available in the second round, areas in the Commonwealth that did not apply in the first round will be targeted.

VII. Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program Update

Utilizing a map denoting the 1300 Broadband Serviceable Areas (BSAs) in the Commonwealth, Chuck Napier offered an update on the BEAD Program, remarking that Broadband Serviceable Locations (BSLs) are located within the BSAs. The map, along with BEAD guidelines, are posted on the PBDA website. Mr. Napier shared the timeline beginning with PBDA posting the final list of eligible locations, application rounds and review periods, and concluding with the draft of the Final Proposal.

VIII. Subcommittee Updates

Kalie Snyder presented an update on the PBDA subcommittees, noting that all committees were updated on Broadband Ready Communities Program (BBRC), and BEAD.

She shared that the Outreach and Education subcommittee discussed revisions to the BBRC and will help promote the relaunch. The committee will be instrumental in spreading the word regarding the Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program. She added that the committee welcomed new member, Maurice Cobb, Secretary/Treasurer for the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO.

The next subcommittee meeting will be October 24, 2024.

The Data and Mapping subcommittee offered feedback on the proposed BSAs, the BEAD Challenge Process and data collection for CAIs. Going forward, the subcommittee will discuss additional mapping layers and mapping functionality. The subcommittee will meet again on December 11, 2024.

The Technical subcommittee met in September to discuss the BEAD timeline and pole attachment challenges.

DJ Ryan is taking a leave from the committee and Jennifer Liptak, also from the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, will join the committee for the interim.

The Technical subcommittee will meet on December 12, 2024.

Ms. Snyder noted that all subcommittee meetings are posted on the PBDA website.

IX. 2025 Draft Board Meeting Schedule

Chairman Monson stated that the following dates are proposed for the 2025 regular meetings of the Board:

- Thursday, January 16, 2025

- Thursday, April 3, 2025
- Thursday, July 17, 2025
- Thursday October 16, 2025

All meetings will be held at 10:00 a.m. in PUC Hearing Room #1, located in the Keystone Building. A virtual option will be provided for all meetings. Special meetings of the Board will be called as necessary. All meeting information will be listed on the PBDA website.

Chairman Monson added that the full list of approved projects for Multi-Purpose Community Facilities program will be posted to the PBDA website following this meeting.

X. Public Comment

Chairman Monson asked Ms. Markle to facilitate the public comment session. With no comments offered by members of the public, public comment session concluded.

XI. Adjournment

Chairman Monson noted that the next regular meeting will be held on January 16, 2025, and called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Kopko made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mike Hanna. The meeting adjourned at 10:32 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Senator Kristin Phillips-Hill
Secretary