

**Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority**  
Board Meeting Minutes  
August 10, 2023  
Keystone Building Meeting Center – Forest Room  
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 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
- Chairwoman Gladys Brown Dutrieuille, PUC
- Dr. Kyle Kopko, Center for Rural PA

**Designees in attendance:**

- Chloe Mandara, Legislative Director, Office of Senator Phillips-Hill
- Rich Pronesti, Senior Committee Executive Director, PA House of Representatives
- Matt Franchak, Policy Director, Office of Senator John Kane
- Phil Kirchner, Executive Director, PA House Consumer Protection
- Joe Witmer, Counsel to Commissioner Brown Dutrieuille



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

- Brandon Carson, PBDA Executive Director
- Brandon Peters, PBDA Deputy Executive Director
- Paul Opiyo, DCED Director of Policy and Planning,
- Kalie Snyder, PBDA Outreach & Engagement Manager
- Pam Frontino, PBDA Grants Manager
- Julia Brinjac, PBDA Digital Equity Program Manager
- Kyle Snyder, PBDA Broadband Planning Specialist
- Greg Alliger, PBDA Broadband Project Manager
- Britt Muniz, PBDA Counsel
- Leigh Walter, DCED Director of Legislative Affairs
- Colin Parry, DCED Executive Policy Specialist
- Teresa Wills, DCED Deputy Director of Legislative Affairs
- Chad Newton, DCED Deputy Communications Director

**Guests in attendance:**

- Steve Warhola
- Brian Regli
- Wendy Lader, NTIA
- Andrew Scampone, MBI
- Evan Rubin, MBI
- Chris Taylor, MBI
- Tereira Snerling, MBI
- Carrie Cleary
- Richie Rambaran, Ichor Strategies
- Doug Brown, Dauphin County
- Julie Fink-Yates, City of Philadelphia
- Bill Klumph
- Carol Duffy
- Jim Mercante
- Shirley Anders
- Sharie Kreutz, Worth Twp
- Devin Harman
- Roy Hoover
- Sheri Strok
- Matthew Szuchyt
- Bill Perkins
- Beaver County
- Rick Garces
- Barb Burba-Filoreto
- J. McCaffrey, Cirro Stratus Tech
- Kay Kyler, Girard Twp.
- Barrett Sheridan
- Jessica Narvaez
- Charlotte Keith
- Ashley Pollard
- John Mizerak
- Thomas Musgrove
- Doug Friend
- Senator Michele Brooks
- Brian Barno
- Brent Jagueneau-Siegel
- Rosta Farzan
- Dave Westcott
- Kyle Lane
- Elizabeth Lose
- Vincent Vicites
- Steve Brewster
- Joseph Gerdes III
- Matthew Hoffman
- Fallon Binner
- Tom Gombar
- Emme Reiser
- Rick Power
- Gerald Mensah, Global Tranz
- Melissa Gates
- Morgan Webb
- Aaron Young
- Jennifer Algae Keaton
- Scott Kramer
- Kelly Herzog
- Stacy Richards
- Rob Troxell
- Gregory Welker
- Patricia Hippler
- Todd Eachus
- Jennifer Cloonan
- Bill's Otterpilot
- Mark Longietti
- Joseph W Taylor
- Rene Gonzalez
- Joe Paluso, Crown Castle
- Andrea Verobish
- Andrew French
- Jeff Evans, PennWisp LLC
- Honey Stempka
- Catherine Tulley, SPC MPO
- Donald Terry
- Brady Rodgers
- Cliff Lane
- Lisa Stalnaker
- Laura M Grassia
- April Brumfield
- Theodore Ritsick
- Matt Fine
- Aidan McLaughlin
- Eric Battisti
- Roberta Farls
- Bill Sproull
- D. Frawley
- Pedro Romero
- Adam Gingrich
- Jeanne Shearer, Windstream
- Jennifer Blatz
- Michael Horvath
- Brandon Brenize
- Amelia De Jesus
- Jessica Fowler
- Mark Poepping
- David Stewart
- Michael Zody
- Steve Samara
- Travis Stormer
- Mike Roberts
- Tom Kreiner
- Grace Sekelewski
- Workforce Bd. Lehigh Valley
- Phil Macres
- Jessica Carroll
- Rick Forbes
- Philip Jones
- Kristen Ritchey, Comcast
- Mark Rafail
- Anthony
- Carmen
- Dave
- Tara Z
- Kate 2
- RACF
- DMF

**I. Call to Order**

Chairman Monson called the meeting to order at 1:33 PM.  
Kalie Snyder conducted a roll call of the board members and confirmed quorum.

**II. Approval of July 12, 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 was made by Senator Kane and seconded by Mark Critz. Chairman Monson asked for all Board members to approve or deny the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**III. Five-Year Action Plan Review and Approval**

Chairman Monson called on Brandon Carson to present the Five-Year Action Plan.

Brandon began by noting that the public comment period closed on August 8, 2023. He stated that despite the limited timeline, PBDA created a quality plan and that no substantial changes were made to the version provided for public comment. Brandon noted that the public comments received will be incorporated into the development of the BEAD Initial Proposal.

Brandon discussed the 3-phase approach for BEAD, which includes the 1) Five-Year Action Plan, the 2) Initial Proposal which is due 12/27/23, and 3) the Final Proposal.

Chris Taylor from Michel Baker International (MBI), presented an overview of the Five-Year Action Plan, beginning with the project timeline.

Tereira Snerling, MBI, reviewed the community outreach efforts. Tereira discussed the completed community conversations and roundtables as well as those that are planned. She then provided the numbers, including the totals for community conversations: 21 hosted with 505 attendees, roundtables: 3 hosted with 249 attendees, and surveys completed: 5,734.

Evan Rubin, MBI, spoke on the gap analysis which included maps illustrating the 279,085 unserved locations and 54,048 underserved locations as well as the digital divide index.

Chris then spoke on affordability, including enrollment numbers for the Affordable Connectivity Program, (ACP) as well as eligibility. Chris noted that only 30% of eligible households are currently enrolled.

Chris discussed the public comment period which showed 184 individuals making 526 comments and including many indicating the need for internet in their area, inquiries about the time frame for the delivery of broadband as well as comments indicating that some constituents do not want broadband in their area.

He then asked for comments from the Board.

Senator Philips Hill noted that the use of zip codes in the ACP data is obscuring the disparity of the economic demographics within a zip code. She asked if it would be possible to pull data using municipal boundaries.

Evan responded that he is unaware of options to extract data at the municipal level, but he will look into it.

Senator Philips Hill reiterated the inaccuracy of zip code data for not only York County but across the Commonwealth.

Joe Witmer commented that there has been a request made for more granular data than zip code level from ACP, but there has not yet been a response.

Mark Critz asked about future public comment periods. It was clarified that the future public comment periods mentioned will be for the Digital Equity Plan, not the Five-Year Plan

Chairman Monson asked for motion to approve the plan as presented to the Board. Motion was made by Senator Kane and seconded by Secretary Siger.

Chairman Monson asked for additional comments from the Board.

Mark Critz commended all those who collaborated on the plan, acknowledging the tight timeline.

Chairman asked Kalie to complete roll call vote.

- Chairman Monson – Yes
- Mark Critz – Yes
- Secretary Siger – Yes
- Cathy Hall – Yes
- Matt Bembenick – Yes
- Senator Kane – Yes
- Rep. Matzie – Yes
- Rep. Metzgar – Yes
- Senator Philips Hill – Yes
- Chairwoman Brown Dutrieuille – Yes
- Dr. Kopko – Yes

Chairman Monson noted that this approval marks a milestone and commended the team's work.

#### **IV. State Digital Equity Plan Update**

Chairman Monson asked Brandon Carson to present an update. Brandon shared that the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) recently encouraged states to request extensions on the Digital Equity Planning Grants. PBDA submitted a request for a 120-day extension which will allow for a longer survey window, an extended public comment period, and facilitated public comment sessions. Brandon noted that the extension is pending approval by NTIA.

Brandon invited Chris Taylor to present an update on the Digital Equity (DE) Plan.

Chris went back to the timeline, noting that parts of the Five-Year Plan will feed into the DE plan and that there will be a 6-week public comment period. He laid out what will happen during the public comment period, including 16 focus groups, 6 public comment sessions and 20 sites to distribute and collect paper surveys. Chris ended by offering the link and QR code to the survey.

**V. Capital Projects Fund (CPF) – Broadband Infrastructure Program Update**

Chairman Monson acknowledged the passing of the August 8, 2023 CPF application deadline and asked for an update from Brandon.

Brandon shared that there were 231 applications submitted requesting over \$936 million in program funds. He reviewed the timeline for the application process including curing of applications, a challenge period, challenge adjudication, scoring, deconfliction and final determinations. Grant awards are targeted for 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2024. The PBDA team will be working to make sure funds are not allocated to already served areas, and that there is not investment in overbuilds. Kalie will be working with PSATS, PML, CCAP, and PSAB for local government input on the proposed projects.

Brandon noted that with this inaugural program there were some “growing pains”, but feels the program has positioned PBDA well for the allocation of BEAD funds.

Chairman Monson asked for questions on the Capitol Projects Fund.

**IV. Public Comment**

Chairman Monson asked Kalie Snyder to conduct public comment and questions.

Mark Longetti, Director of Business and Community Development, Hermitage, PA, asked about accessing the information on the slide that showed the DSL points merged with the DDI data set; in particular, the municipalities that are shaded.

Jeannie Shearer, Windstream, mentioned that the due date for projects is the end of 2026, and asked that the Board and PBDA be mindful that critical construction time is in the spring.

**V. Adjournment**

Chairman Monson called for a motion to adjourn. Motion made by Senator Kane and seconded by Secretary Siger. Meeting adjourned at 2:34 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Senator Kristin Phillips-Hill  
Secretary