

Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority

July 17, 2025

10:00 AM

Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, Hearing Room 1

400 North Street, Harrisburg

Dial-In: +1 267-332-8737

Phone Conference ID: 490 070 776#

- I. Call to Order
- II. Approval of the April 10th, 2025, Continuance Meeting Minutes
- III. Financial Update: April - June 2025 Expenditures
- IV. BEAD Guidelines
- V. Subcommittee Visioning (working with Michale Baker)
- VI. Public Comment
- VII. Adjournment

*This meeting will be recorded, and your participation is your consent to being recorded.

Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority (PBDA)

Board Meeting Minutes

July 17, 2025

Commonwealth Keystone Building

PUC Hearing Room #1

400 North Street, Harrisburg

Microsoft Teams Meeting

Board members:

- Secretary Uri Monson, Office of the Budget, Chairman
- Senator Kristin Phillips-Hill, Secretary
- Matt Franchak on behalf of Senator John Kane, Assistant Secretary
- Sara Gligora on behalf of Secretary Russell Redding, Department of Agriculture
- Representative Rob Matzie
- Representative Carl Walker Metzgar
- Dr. Laura Dimino on behalf of Dr. Kyle Kopko, Center for Rural Pennsylvania
- Secretary Rick Siger, Department of Community & Economic Development
- Cathy Hall on behalf of Acting Secretary Dr. Carrie Rowe, 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 in attendance

- Chloe Mandara, Office of Senator Phillips-Hill
- Nicole Weaver, Office of Representative Metzgar
- Rich Pronesti, Office of Representative Matzie

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
- Dr. Stephanie Perry, PBDA, Workforce and Digital Program Specialist
- Greg Alliger, PBDA Broadband Project Manager
- Felicia Duger, PBDA Deputy Digital Director
- Julia Brinjac, PBDA Director of Digital Community Investment
- Sue Benedek, PBDA Counsel
- Kaitlyn Capurro, Legal Office Administrator
- Marshall Fischer, Technology Specialist
- Mary Markle, PBDA Executive Assistant
- Leigh Walter, Deputy Director Legislative
- Lori Irwin, DCED Chief Counsel
- Justin Backover, DCED Press Secretary

In Person and virtual Guests:

Twenty-five additional guests attended in person and virtually.

I. Call to Order

Chairman Monson called the meeting to order at 10:02 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 April 10, 2025, Continuance Meeting Minutes

Chairman Monson asked for questions and comments on the April 10, 2025, minutes as presented to the Board. Seeing none, he asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Motion was made by Matt Franchak and seconded by Secretary Siger. Motion passed unanimously.

III. Financial Update: April – June 2025 Expenditures

Brandon Carson presented the 4th quarter expenditures noting \$3.6 million in ARPA CPF Program expenses. He stated that there were \$2.3 million in reimbursements for Multipurpose Community Facilities Program subgrantees and approximately \$1 million in Broadband Infrastructure Program subgrantee reimbursements.

He added that the BEAD line item of expenditures includes administrative expenses only, as BEAD dollars have not yet been awarded.

Mr. Carson noted that NTIA terminated the Digital Equity Capacity Program for Pennsylvania and all states on May 9, 2025. NTIA provided the closeout procedure which PBDA is implementing.

Mr. Carson concluded with MOU expenses, stating that expenses for the quarter ending June 30, 2025, were \$584,000 and expenditures for the fiscal year were approximately 20% less than the estimate.

IV. Capital Projects Fund Updates and Approval

a. Digital Connectivity Technology Program (DCTP) Update and Round Two Approvals

Dr. Stephanie Perry provided an update on the DCTP including a review of the goal of the program, eligibility components, and an update on round one awardees.

Dr. Perry stated that round two received 128 applicants requesting over 12,000 devices. The list of proposed awardees includes nine previous awardees and 52 new initiatives, covering 28 counties and includes educational facilities as well as social service and community development providers. She presented the complete list of projects to the Board. Upon approval, they will be posted to the PBDA website.

Chairman Monson asked for comment, and hearing none asked for a motion to approve the list as recommended. Motion was made by Matt Franchak and seconded by Secretary Siger. Mary Markle conducted a roll vote.

Board Member	Voting Designee	Vote
Chairman Monson		Yes
Secretary Redding	Sara Gligora	Yes
Secretary Siger		Yes
Secretary Rowe	Cathy Hall	Yes
Secretary McNeil	Barb Burba-Filoreto	Yes
Senator Kane	Matt Franchak	Yes
Representative Matzie		Yes
Representative Metzgar		Yes
Senator Phillips-Hill		Yes
PUC Chairman DeFrank	Joel Cheskis	Yes
Dr. Kopko	Laura Dimino	Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

b. Multipurpose Community Facilities Program Update

Tim Arthun provided an update reminding that last year the Board approved the allocation of \$44 million for 49 Multipurpose Community Facilities projects across 27 counties. He stated that most projects are in active construction or pre-construction phases, with additional projects expected to mobilize in the next 90 days and three projects expected to near completion in the next month or so. Mr. Arthun noted that over \$4 million in reimbursements have been processed. Certain projects have not begun construction for reasons including architectural work, site prep and permitting work or deferment due to other capital improvement projects in progress. He concluded that PBDA is confident that projects will be substantially complete by December 2026.

c. Broadband Infrastructure Program (BIP) Update

Greg Alliger reminded of the Board's approval in 2024 of over \$204 million for more than 50 BIP projects. He stated that all but one project is under contract with 30 projects in active construction and 22 in pre-construction phase. He added that over \$4.8 million in reimbursements were processed. Mr. Alliger noted that ten or more projects are nearing or can currently provide commercial service and added that according to FCC data and updates from awardees, approximately 10,000 locations are now listed as served. Mr. Alliger concluded by mentioning that the PBDA team attended groundbreaking ceremonies in Butler County on July 16th.

V. Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program

a. Round Two Guidelines

b. Draft BEAD Grantee Agreement

Brandon Carson reminded that Round One of BEAD applications closed on February 7, 2025, with over 239 applications submitted from 26 applicants. As application review was taking place, NTIA advised PBDA to reduce expenditures associated with subgrantee selection, signaling that changes from the federal government were forthcoming.

He stated that on June 6th, NTIA issued the BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice with significant changes including, the removal of the BEAD Notice of Funding Opportunity non-statutory requirements, and updates to the definition of what constitutes a Priority Broadband Project. The Policy Notice also establishes new scoring criteria, adopts a technology neutral approach, and adjusts requirements for low-cost service options.

Mr. Carson explained that today the Board will be asked for to approve updated Round Two guidelines that align with the new federal framework.

He added that since June 6th, all Round One applications were deferred to Round Two, and that all applications will be evaluated under the new guidelines. In addition, he stated that the required unlicensed fixed wireless (ULFW) notice, Round Two scoring, and updated eligible locations have been posted.

Mr. Carson listed the next steps following the Board's approval of the updated guidelines, beginning with the Round Two application window opening on July 18th and closing on August 1st. He stated that the draft BEAD subgrantee agreement will then be posted for public comment followed by review, scoring, negotiations with applicants and public comment on the Final Proposal scheduled for August. A list of recommended projects will be brought to the Board for approval at a special meeting in late August. Mr. Carson concluded that this positions PBDA to submit the Final Proposal to NTIA on September 4, 2025, allowing Pennsylvania to remain a leading state in the implementation of BEAD.

Chairman Monson asked for comments and questions from the Board.

Senator Phillips-Hill shared that she is committed to Pennsylvania remaining as a leading state in deploying broadband but is exceedingly concerned about the path of this effort, particularly as it relates to prevailing wage. She noted that NTIA guidelines require an accurate classification of workers and for wages for potential subgrantees.

She referred to page 21 of the NTIA's BEAD FAQ, which states "*NTIA's ongoing grant monitoring will include review of state prevailing wage law application to ensure that the Eligible Entity uses appropriate classifications.*"

The Senator went on to express that with the Shapiro Administration's decision on classifying the hourly rate for teledata lineman, along with the Trump administration prioritizing low cost, she is concerned that Pennsylvania could push out fiber as cost competitive, resulting in satellite dominating the grant awards.

She noted that NTIA and Pennsylvanians are watching closely and by not setting a classification and rate for teledata linemen that makes sense and is in keeping with other states, this administration could ruin a once in a generation opportunity to get all Pennsylvanians connected.

She added that she will vote to approve the guidelines for Round Two but felt compelled to speak out on the dire situation the administration has created by debating an arbitrarily new high wage rate for a new worker classification that could jeopardize deployment of high-speed internet to millions of Pennsylvanians. She concluded that the actions of this administration will determine if Pennsylvania remains a leader in this effort.

Chairman Monson commented that the Prevailing Wage Appeals Board (PWAB) is currently deciding a dispute between Labor and Industry (L&I) and industry members. He noted that the PWAB is an independent body and that the administration has no control over outcomes or timing of those appeals.

He noted that the current rates set by L&I are being followed and if a new classification results from the appeal during the application process that would impact the rates, L&I will provide those changes to the PBDA quickly and PBDA will notify all applicants immediately. He concluded that the goal of PBDA has always been to ensure that all applicants work under the same set of rules.

Secretary Siger thanked the PBDA staff for their effort and noted the significant work still ahead.

Chairman Monson asked for a motion to approve the BEAD Round Two Guidelines. Motion was made by Cathy Hall and Seconded by Secretary Siger. Mary Markle conducted a roll vote.

Board Member	Voting Designee	Vote
Chairman Monson		Yes
Secretary Redding	Sara Gligora	Yes
Secretary Siger		Yes
Secretary Rowe	Cathy Hall	Yes
Secretary McNeil	Barb Burba-Filoreto	Yes
Senator Kane	Matt Franchak	Yes
Representative Matzie		Yes
Representative Metzgar		Yes
Senator Phillips-Hill		Yes
PUC Chairman DeFrank	Joel Cheskis	Yes
Dr. Kopko	Laura Dimino	Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

VI. Subcommittee Visioning

Chairman Monson stated that PBDA is working with Michael Baker International (MBI) to conduct visioning for the Authority's subcommittees and asked Brandon Peters to provide an update.

Mr. Peters reminded that the current subcommittees; Data & Mapping, Technical, Workforce & Supply Chain, and Outreach and Education, were created to present a cross section of expertise across the broadband ecosystem. He added that their role thus far, has been strategic planning for BEAD and other programs. As programs are now at the implementation point, the subcommittees will have new roles such as, supporting data validation, identifying emerging deployment issues, advising on workforce alignment, and strengthening community connections. He explained that the subcommittees will be looked to for guidance in keeping PBDA's efforts grounded and responsive. MBI will interview, survey, and workshop with subcommittee members which will result in a strategic action plan in alignment with Act 96 and reinforcing the subcommittees' advisory role to PBDA.

VII. Public Comment

Chairman Monson took a moment to thank Dr. Kyle Kopko for his service to the Board. Dr. Kopko will be leaving his position with The Center for Rural Pennsylvania to assume the role of Executive Director at the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania (CCAP).

Chairman Monson asked Ms. Markle to facilitate the public comment session.

Todd Eachus, President of the Broadband Communications Association of Pennsylvania (BCAP) started by mentioning that he looks forward to working with PBDA on issues forthcoming related to pole attachment and permitting.

He then shared that in the hearings before PWAB it was revealed that IBEW holds three collective bargaining agreements across the state which define the journeyman lineman rate. He added IBEW also holds a collective bargaining agreement with classifications for teledata lineman and fiber splicer, noting those rates that are less than they have been seeking.

Jim Mercante of the Chester County Digital Alliance, (CCDI), noted that the migrant education program will be losing its funding which will cut off digital literacy programs. He went on to speak of the relevance of cell service as it related to contact in times of natural disasters and other emergency preparedness. Mr. Mercante expressed his gratitude to the PBDA staff and Board.

Chris Field acknowledged the efforts of the PBDA staff and the NTIA officers and the Board for their service to Pennsylvania communities and expressed his hope that a broadband office remains for years to come.

VIII. Adjournment

Chairman Monson again thanked Dr. Kopko for his service on the PBDA Board.

Chairman Monson noted that the next regular meeting will be held on October 16, 2025, with a special meeting likely being called in late-August to approve the BEAD Final Proposal. He then asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Matt Franchak made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Senator Phillips-Hill. The meeting adjourned at 10:43 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Senator Kristin Phillips-Hill
Secretary