Utah Broadband Advisory Commission 2024

Utah Broadband Advisory Commission Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, July 30 · 11:00am − 12:00pm

Virtual Meeting

Members Attending Virtually: Sen. Chris Wilson-Co-Chair, Rep. Robert Spendlove-Co-Chair, Rebecca Dilg (non-voting member), Chris Parker, Lynne Yocom, Rep. Scott Chew, Sen. Wayne Harper, James Toledo, Laura Hanson (appointed stand-in for Sophia DiCaro), & Kelleigh Cole

Online Staff: Claire Shiverdecker, Teri Mumm, Elizabeth Henrikson, Steve Greene, Jim Grover, Todd Jenson, Rebecca Dilg, Julia Huber, Kamron Dalton

Online Visitors: Silvia Wilkins, Max Backlund, Eric Isom, Vikram Ravi, Ivan Djambov, Kim Rodela, Jim Farr, Clint Jorgensen

Welcome and Introductions: Representative Robert Spendlove welcomed everyone to the Tuesday July 30, 2024, Utah Broadband Advisory Commission virtual meeting.

Meeting minutes approval: Meeting minutes from the December 19, 2023, Utah Broadband Advisory Commission meetings are discussed and approved unanimously.

MOTION: Sen. Chris Wilson motions to approve the December 19, 2023 meeting minutes. The motion carried with Aye votes from Sen. Chris Wilson, Co-Chair, Rep. Robert Spendlove, Co-Chair, Sen. Wayne Harper, Lynne Yocom, James Toledo, Chris Parker, Laura Hansen standing in for Sophia DiCaro, Kelleigh Cole, and Rep. Scott Chew. The motion passed unanimously. No Nay votes recorded.

State Challenge Process - Timeline, Results, and Update - Claire Shiverdecker, Program Manager & Steve Greene Technical Program Manager: Volume 2 of the initial proposal has been approved, and the Challenge Process is expected to be completed within two weeks from now. At that point, the focus will shift to implementation, including the granting and sub-granting process to distribute funds. The Challenge Process allowed stakeholders to review and contest the eligibility of locations for BEAD funding based on the FCC's national broadband map. The total timeline is 120 days The initial 10 days were for publishing locations and opening the map, then 40 days for submitting challenges with evidence, then 40 days for the rebuttal phase for ISPs to contest challenges. Our current phase is the determination phase where reviewers are making final decisions on each challenge and rebuttal. 118 out of over 200 challenges were legitimate. Out of the 13 rebuttals, 10-11 were effective in rebutting the challenges. With the evidence from both challenges and rebuttals, reviewers are trying to classify each challenge as either sustained or

rejected. By September 5th, the complete list of underserved and unserved locations should be published. While some challenges came from local organizations, the majority of the challenges came from ISP's. Results of the challenge process will most likely result in fewer locations qualifying for BEAD financing which enables a more efficient distribution of BEAD funding.

Volume 2 of State's BEAD Initial Proposal Overview- Rebecca Dilg, Director, Utah Broadband Center

The State's volume 2 of the Initial proposal was approved last week. The document is roughly 115 pages and contains information on financing priorities and areas of the state that are serviceable by broadband. There are approximately 43,000 unserved and 20,500 underserved areas that are qualified for funding. About $302 million, or 95% of the overall BEAD allocation will be designated for infrastructure deployment. A high-cost threshold will be established and different technologies will be used due to some areas having a high cost for the use of fiber optics. There will be two primary stages to the application process: 1) Pre-Application and Registration: This is where applicants must propose census blocks. 2) Formal Application: Entities must spell out their competency for technical, management, financial, organizational, and operational skills as well as adherence to all local, state, and federal rules. The application score is determined by taking into account the community impact, minimal BEAD investment, affordability, fair labor standards, speed to deployment, and coordination with local tribal governments. Fiber optics will be given priority based on cost and efficiency. Points are given in different areas such as open access networks, workforce development, affordability, and community impact. High permit fees and obstacles to financing are causes for worry. Steps will be taken to ensure providers fulfill their obligations. Performance concerns will be tracked, and there may be times when money will need to be reassigned.

DE Proposal/Capacity Grant Funds- Teri Mumm, UBC Digital Access Program Manager-

The IIJA Infrastructure package includes the Digital Equity Act. This act addresses digital skills, services, and accommodations in addition to broadband development. A milestone was reached with the acceptance of Utah's statewide digital access strategy by the NTIA. This is the first time every state and territory has a digital equity plan. Utah has applied for state capacity award funds under the Digital Equity Act. In order to strengthen organizations' capacity to support the state's digital equity plan, Utah intends to invest $5.6 million in capacity grants over the course of the next 5 years. In the late summer of 2024, NTIA will begin to accept applications for competitive grants, with a 60-day application window. This financing may support initiatives such as the creation of a statewide digital navigator program. Utah is focusing on forming partnerships with nearby communities by means of the Utah Digital Opportunity Network and others such as the Navajo Nation. The state is getting ready for the next round of funding, which will include competitive grants. The state will be supporting projects with significant impact. Training on digital skills, broadband uptake, device accessibility, and

affordability are among the funded activities. State agencies, Native American groups, Indian tribes, foundations, and community institutions are all eligible.

Next Meeting Proposal: The time for the next virtual Broadband Advisory Commission meeting is discussed, and tentatively planned for late September 25, 2024 at 11AM MST.

Motion to adjourn: Lynne Yocom motioned to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried with Aye votes from Sen. Chris Wilson, Co-Chair, Sen. Wayne Harper, Rep. Scott Chew, Rep. Robert Spendlove-Co-Chair, Lynne Yocom, Kelleigh Cole, James Toledo, Laura Hanson (appointed stand-in for Sophia DiCaro), and Chris Parker. The motion passed unanimously. No Nay votes recorded.