



# Alaska Statewide Broadband Advisory Board

Alaska Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development

Minutes for Regular Board Meeting- May 2, 2023, at 10:00 AM AKDT

## Attendance

### Present:

Members: Tara Sweeney, vice-chair; Michael Brase, Charles Carpenter, Bryce Edgmon, Archibald (Stewart) Ferguson, Anastasia (Ana) Hoffman, Thomas Lochner, Travis Million, Kathleen Moran, Christine O'Connor, Steven Noonkesser, Laurel Shoop, and Charlene Stern.

Staff: Anessa Feero, Administrative Specialist.

Members Absent: Glenda Ledford, chair; and Lyman Hoffman.

### 1. Call to Order and Roll Call

The Chair called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

The secretary called the roll, and thirteen members of the board were present. Quorum was met.

### 2. Review/Approve Agenda

**Motion by K. Moran to approve the draft agenda was presented. Seconded by A. Hoffman and approved unanimously.**

### 3. Review/Approve Minutes from Prior Meetings

**Motion by A. Hoffman to approve the minutes from prior meetings. Seconded by K. Moran and approved unanimously.**

### 4. Consideration of Labor Inputs for Broadband Grant Criteria

A Briefing Note titled "Consideration of Labor Inputs for Broadband Grant Criteria" was distributed and shown to members of the board. Director of the Alaska Broadband Office, Thomas Lochner provided background on the Briefing Note in relation to the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program. The Alaska Broadband Office requested recommendations on what expectations to set for sustainable, affordable, and scalable operating costs for telecommunications providers who will apply for BEAD grant funding. These recommendations are intended to inform grant criteria.

The board discussed how expected cost allocations for labor for Operations and Maintenance differ based on the size of a telecommunications provider. Concerns were raised on whether disclosure of labor rates for the purposes of informing an Operations and Maintenance Model will disadvantage businesses, and the difficulty of creating a threshold that is both deliverable and sustainable. An alternative path was suggested, of requiring grant applicants to submit plans on the minimum service offerings they intend to provide to communities be used as a threshold for defining affordability.

The board requested the following from the Alaska Broadband Office:

- The Operations and Maintenance Model be retooled to consider salary ranges for labor rather than fixed input costs based on a market average.
- The office provide information on current best market practices and union rates for positions referenced in the Briefing Note.

- The office introduce a consideration for local geography in the Operations and Maintenance Model related to the number of people served in a telecommunications build project.
- The office provide a calendar of grant-related deadlines and decision points to brief the Statewide Broadband Advisory Board on the future timeline of the board.
- The office provide additional information on how the BEAD Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) defines tribal consent requirements for projects.

**5. Update from the Subcommittee to Establish a Technical Working Group**

Chair of the Subcommittee to Establish a Technical Working Group, Christine O'Connor announced that the committee has created an application packet. The application will be posted for 30 days before the applications are reviewed and recommendations submitted to the board.

**6. Public Comment**

Shawn Williams with Pacific Data Port raised a concern on using a 7-year threshold for required experience as a gating criterion for the BEAD grants under the fear that it would cut out market competition.

**7. Adjournment**

**Motion by A. Hoffman to adjourn and approved unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 11:02 am on May 2, 2023. The next meeting date is To Be Determined.