



Alaska Statewide Broadband Advisory Board

Alaska Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development

Minutes for Rescheduled Regular Board Meeting- February 26, 2024, at 10:00 AM AKDT.

Approved by the Statewide Broadband Advisory Board April 15, 2024.

Attendance

Present:

Members: Michael Brase; Charles Carpenter; Ana Hoffman; Glenda Ledford (Chair); Thomas Lochner; Travis Million; Kathleen Moran; Steve Noonkesser; Christine O'Connor; Laurel Shoop; Charlene Stern; Mary Swain; and Tara Sweeney (Vice Chair).

Staff Present: Lisa Von Bargen, Deputy Director; Melissa Kookesh, Tribal Liaison; and Kalynn Himes, Administrative Specialist.

Members Absent: Representative Bryce Edgmon; and Senator Lyman Hoffman.

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

The Chair called the meeting to order at 10:01am.

Deputy Director Von Bargen called the roll, and thirteen members of the board were present. Quorum was met.

II. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Charlie Carpenter to approve the draft agenda as presented. Seconded by Ana Hoffman. Approved by Unanimous Consent.

III. Declarations of Conflict of Interest

None.

IV. Approval of Minutes from Prior Meetings

Motion by Charlie Carpenter to approve the minutes from the rescheduled regular meeting of January 22, 2024. Seconded by Thomas Lochner and approved by Unanimous Consent.

V. Subcommittee Reports

None.

VI. Staff Reports

- a. **Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD)**
 - i. **Schedule of Initial Proposals of Volumes 1 and 2**
 - ii. **Deconfliction with Other Projects**
- b. **Digital Equity**

- i. Revised Schedule**
- ii. Funding Tranches**
- c. Tribal Consultations**

Thomas Lochner gave the Board an update on the estimated schedule of the Initial Proposal, Volumes 1 and 2. He stated approval of Volume 1, the Mapping Challenge, is now anticipated to happen around April 1st, leading to a start date of the official 30-day posting of the Broadband Serviceable Locations (BSLs) and Community Anchor Institutions (CAIs) shortly thereafter. This extends completion of the Mapping Challenge to the end of July 2024.

NTIA is still reviewing Initial Proposal Volume 2, the Grant Program. The ABO is estimating approval of that program on or before August of 2024. Providing for a 120-day application submittal period, and a 90-day review period, awards are estimated to be made in early 2025 (February/March).

Mr. Lochner also explained the deconfliction process of eliminating locations based on inclusion in upcoming projects funded under other programs, like Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program Rounds One and Two. Mr. Lochner showed the Board maps of the locations and service levels currently identified, and a map of the breakdown of the state into High-Cost and non-High-Cost areas as defined by NTIA. Ana Hoffman asked how current the location maps were. Thomas Lochner replied they were current to date. It was mutually agreed to have a follow-up conversation about the status of some locations.

Charlie Carpenter asked why the entire North Slope area is considered non-High-Cost. Thomas Lochner replied it is because the North Slope is either already served or has planned service due to a project in progress by Arctic Slope Telephone Association Cooperative (ASTAC). Christine O'Connor applauded the work of ASTAC, but stated it was unfortunate the North Slope was not shown as High-Cost.

Michael Brase asked about the reconciliation of Community Anchor Institutions on the Broadband Data Map and the status of Alaska's list. Thomas Lochner and Lisa Von Barga explained the separation between the map and Alaska's official list and how it was determined what location would be included on the list.

Mr. Lochner provided an update about the Digital Equity Act Program explaining the ABO is awaiting final approval of the state's Digital Equity Plan. He further described the timeline associated with the other two Digital Equity Act programs, Capacity and Competitive. The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the Capacity Grant Program is expected to be released in late March or early April of 2024. There will be a 60-day application period. Thomas Lochner further explained, by statute, the Digital Equity Act Competitive Grant Program NOFO must be released in late September 2024.

Finally, Thomas Lochner and Melissa Kookesh provided a summary of the upcoming Tribal Consultations, including subjects and dates. The schedule is: 1) Week of April 1 during the Infrastructure Symposium in Anchorage; 2) April 10 in Nome; 3) April 17 Virtual; and 4) April 26 in Anchorage following the ANVCA/ATAA Annual Meeting.

VII. Referrals to the Technical Working Group

None.

VIII. Unfinished Business

None.

IX. New Business

None.

X. Public Comment

Shawn Williams from Pacific Dataport (PDI) explained to the Board how satellite can serve 15,000-20,000 non-common households. Mr. Williams asked if entities, like PDI, will have an opportunity to present solutions to the Board. Chair Ledford deferred to Thomas Lochner. Mr. Lochner replied in the affirmative. Christine O’Conner stated the Board does not have a role in choosing applicants, and that presentations regarding different technology options should be given to the Technical Working Group as they may provide recommendations on technology during the application review process. Mr. Lochner thanked Ms. O’Conner for the clarification and concurred with her assessment.

Charlie Carpenter said he would be interested in seeing the same presentation about technology that is being recommended for the Technical Working Group. Thomas Lochner explained the Board will see the output of the evaluation of technology by the Technical Working Group.

Shawn Williams said the purpose of the board is to evaluate everything and explained that PDI would like to give a presentation about the service solutions available via satellite. Lisa Von Barga responded that Alaska Broadband Office staff would need to seek clarification on the matter but explained that a presentation about service solutions by PDI would potentially be a conflict of interest as the information would likely be very similar to the materials that would be included in a future grant application.

Motion by Tara Sweeney to approve having the Alaska Broadband Office staff confirm the conflict-of-interest status of Shawn William’s request. Seconded by Christine O’Connor. Approved by Unanimous Consent.

XI. Board Member Business from the Floor

None.

XII. Next Meeting Date

It was determined the next meeting would be held on April 15, 2024, unless the timing of business required scheduling a special meeting prior to that date.

XIII. Adjournment

Motion by Charlie Carpenter to adjourn. Seconded by Ana Hoffman and approved unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 10:39am on February 26, 2024.