



RURAL BROADBAND EXPANSION COUNCIL

Minutes for Regular Meeting
10:00 a.m. on Monday, May 18, 2022
State Capitol, Room 112

1. Call to Order / Welcome / Establish a Quorum

- Rep. Phillips called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m., reminded all that the meeting is being recorded, and ordered the roll to be called.
- Present: Cliff Agee, Mike Fina, Patrick Grace, James Leewright, Roger Neal, Logan Phillips, Brian Whitacre, and Brandy Wreath.
- Absent: Mike Berube, Drew Beverage, Darlene Brugnoli, Steven Harpe, Billy Staggs, Daniel Webster, and Jerry Whisenhunt.
- No quorum present.

2. * Approval of Minutes of previous meeting(s)

- Tabled for lack of a quorum.

3. Presentations

- Partnering on Broadband and Digital Inclusion – **Mr. Jeremy Hegle** of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City – 15 min. (requested by Dr. Whitacre in March) (See [slide deck](#) posted online.)
 - I. Presentation: The Federal Reserve system promotes a stable and healthy economy. When more people participate in the economy, it's stronger. Lack of broadband limits participation, so the Fed takes interest in fixing the digital divide. Participates in the Employer Laptop Challenge, providing older laptops to those without them. Philanthropic support can come in the form of direct gifts, matching money, etc. ACP & need for trusted partners. Broadband Equity, Access & Deployment (BEAD) program timeline. State Digital Equity Planning (DEP) Grants. 60 days/July 12 by Gov, naming SBO. 1-3 years. 5 yrs. Tribal govts. Sept 29 (earliest release of funds). Capacity to distribute funding can be a limiting factor. Link DEP and BEAD programs/plans. Digital divides exist in urban areas not so much because of a lack of infrastructure, but a lack of digital literacy & skills and not fully understanding the internet's relevance and benefits. Outreach strategy. Supplement, not supplant, existing programs. Partner with Workforce development agencies, Labor, Higher Education. Digital Inclusion requires: (1) affordable, robust broadband service; (2) internet-enable devices that meet the needs of the user; and (3) access to digital literacy training.
 - II. Discussion.
 - Whitacre: The State Broadband Office is now approved, but no director yet. With a 60-day timeframe on NTIA's Digital Equity Planning Grants funds, what are our options for getting and handling these funds?
 - Hegle: I don't work for NTIA, but my understanding is that the Governor names the office to receive the funding. Even without a person in place, there are things to do now – outreach, need for digital navigators, asset inventory, and identifying partners.

4. * Sub-committee reports with discussion and possible action on recommendations

- Tabled all sub-committee reports.

5. Remarks from Co-Chairs

- Sen. James Leewright
 - Returning to private sector after my current term. Proud of the work of this Council. Thanks to all on council and subcommittees.
- Rep. Logan Phillips
 - In the last two and a half years, we've changed the face of Oklahoma – by digital inclusion programs, by the creation of this council, by the creation of \$42 million in tax rebates, preparing for the ARPA and BIL funding that's coming.
 - Highlights of HB3363, the new State Broadband Expansion Act
 - Governor signed on 5/6/22; Emergency Clause (Act became law once signed).
 - Copy of HB3363 is posted in the Council's Teams site.
 - **New** – State Broadband Office
 - transfers duties from Commerce to SBO.
 - will be housed in OMES.
 - **New** – Broadband Governing Board
 - 9 members (State Treasurer; Lt. Governor; 2 by Speaker; 2 by Pro Tem; 3 by Gov.)
 - Convenes before June 6 (30 days from effective date).
 - **Changes** – Rural Broadband Expansion Council
 - Name (drop Rural).
 - Role (advisory to SBO).
 - Membership (2 legislators and Harpe roll off; director of SBO joins).
- Recognize service of departing members.

6. Discussion of possible agenda items for next meeting

- Election of new chair and vice-chair or co-chairs of the Broadband Expansion Council.
- Cooperative Broadband Coalition. CREC. Adoption rates. (Whitacre)
- OUSF updates. (Wreath)
- Strategy on planning grants (Fina)
- Introduce SBO director.
- Discussion of State Broadband Expansion Act.

7. Announcements

- No meeting in June. Next regularly scheduled meeting: 10:00 a.m., Wednesday, **July 20**, 2022, in **Room 450**, State Capitol. [Members must attend in-person to count toward quorum, speak, and vote.]
- Without objection, Rep. Phillips named Brandy Wreath to serve as interim chair.
- Brandy Wreath presented the Oklahoma Corporation Commission's Sharon Fisher "It Takes a Village Award" to ODOC's broadband team: Kirk Martin, Mike Sexton, Aldwyn Sappleton, & Birendra Rana.
- Whitacre: OK now ranks ~21 or 22 for ACP enrollments. Good news: In Oklahoma, unemployed individuals and households with no internet are more likely than the rest of the U.S. to sign up for

ACP. Bad news: It looks like enrollees are getting connections for mobile phones only, not for desktops.

8. Adjournment

- Rep. Phillips adjourned the meeting at 10:38 a.m.

* Indicates anticipated action.

Prepared by: Kirk Martin, Oklahoma Department of Commerce

Approved by Council, as presented, on 07/20/2022.