

**Jefferson County Broadband Committee Meeting**

**Via GoToMeeting**

**Wednesday May 26, 2021 10:00AM**

**Members Present – Sandy McDonald and Stephanie Grove**

**Others Present – Rachel Snavelly, Jennifer Wishmyer, David Deamer, Patricia Corley, Paul Comes, Steve Lally**

- 1. Welcome; Roll call**
- 2. Call to order**
- 3. Approval of Agenda**
- 4. Approval of Minutes**
- 5. Update from WV Broadband Enhancement Council**
  - a. David Deamer displayed current mapping and speed tests

<b>City</b>	<b>Unserved</b>	<b>Served</b>
Shepherdstown	108	228
Ranson	116	715
Charles Town	88	428
Harpers Ferry	105	203
Summit Point	70	67
Shenandoah Junction	29	36
Kearneysville	27	57

- b. RDOF auction – have to careful of these census blocks because they can contest it deeming the project ineligible
- 6. American Rescue Plan Act Funding**
  - a. Jefferson County Funding**
    - i. Jefferson County      \$11,000,000
    - ii. Charles Town        \$2,510,000
    - iii. Ranson                \$2,180,000
    - iv. Shepherdstown      \$800,000
    - v. Bolivar                 \$430,000
    - vi. Harpers Ferry        \$120,000
    - vii. Total                  \$17,040,000

b. **Capital Improvement Plan** - \$138 Million in for broadband infrastructure to WV

- 4 Broadband Programs - Targeting underserved/unserved - \$138 Million
- Targeting 100 Download/100 Upload

1. **Asking current providers to expand their services/networks**

- a. "Areas where ROI will take years to recoup for service providers"
- b. "Neighbors have service, but service provider will not expand due to cost"
- c. "Quick hit to community"
- d. Estimated timeline - End of summer
- e. \$30-35 million

2. **Major projects/Middle Mile - Long-term Projects**

- a. Connecting rural locations
- b. Partnering with counties, localities or private entities
- c. Projects will be vetted
- d. \$30-35 million

3. **Partnering with Local Government & Political Subdivisions**

- a. Projects you may want to undertake
- b. Engineering services and data collection
- c. Matching funds for projects
- d. Trying not to overlap or overbuild areas
- e. Targeting underserved/unserved or unfunded areas to get service
- f. \$30-35 million

4. **Expansion of Fixed Wireless**

- a. \$30-35 million

- **Projects in City of Charles Town**

- City of Charles Town Water Towers
- 7 water towers with strong coverage of Charles Town and Ranson
- Covering Wheatland, Albridge, Jefferson Village, Charles Town/Ranson
- 48 definitive 500m bins
- Union Drive Water Tower is right beside proposed tower at Washington High School

- Estimated \$287,000-\$325,000 based on point to point links
- Great fixed wireless network in central Jefferson County

**7. Emergency Broadband Benefit Program**

- The Emergency Broadband Benefit Program is a [Federal Communications Commission \(FCC\) program](#) that provides a temporary discount on monthly broadband bills for qualifying low-income households. If your household is [eligible](#), you can receive:
  - Up to a \$50/month discount on your broadband service and associated equipment rentals
  - Up to a \$75/month discount if your household is on qualifying Tribal lands
  - A one-time discount of up to \$100 for a laptop, tablet, or desktop computer (with a co-payment of more than \$10 but less than \$50)

**8. USDA Broadband Update**

- a. Trying to target areas in the county who are unserved. Moler/Crossroads and Bakerton

**- Community Connect Grant:**

- **3 Year Grant**

- 2 years construction
- 1 year operational for service and community center operations
- Community must have a population of 20,000 or less
- Engineering needed
- Speeds must be less than 10/1 in proposed funding service area
- Funds used for construction and infrastructure, but not operational costs
- Minimum of \$100,000 with 15% match
- Maximum of \$3 million with 15% match
- Must maintain a Community Center
  - Community Center must have a minimum of two desktops or laptops at location
    - Can utilize fire department, church, etc.
  - 10% or less of funds can be used for renovations to center
- Fiber recommended
- Fixed wireless is eligible, but not recommended
- Mobile broadband not eligible
- Window for grant application anticipated for Fall 2021

- **ReConnect**

- Very restrictive program
- Has seen \$100 million for regional program and projects
- Engineering needed
- 25% match spent first
- 75% grant funds spent after
- 90% unserved homes with 10% service overlap
- Worked with regional development authorities and they have operating agreements with ISPs
- Application workshops coming in the future

**9. Overview of CDBG eligible projects**

- a. Middleway Fire Department – Estimated 400-600 CDBG households can be served and 30 Ookla 500m bins can be served
- b. JC Health Department Tower - Estimated 750-1000 CDBG households can be served and 40 Ookla 500m bins can be served
  - i. Grant Total - \$265,195 with Point to Point Equipment
- c. Estimated Grant Deadline – January 2022

**10. ISP/WISP Review in Jefferson County**

- a. Comcast – Estimate for Riverside/Mission Road area
  - i. Roughly 95 houses and 92 lots to be served - \$700,000
- b. Shentel – rolling out fixed wireless services in Jefferson County

**11. Next steps and timeline / Implementation**

- a. Stephanie and David to discuss projects (City of Charles Town Water Tanks, JC Health Department Tower and Middleway Fire Department) to JC Commission and determine intent on using ARPA funds at the June 17, 2021 Commission meeting in the evening.
  - i. Also discussing coordinating with City of Charles Town to equip water tanks with broadband equipment
- b. David to discuss Shepherdstown projects with Mayor Auxer
- c. Stephanie moving forward in discussion about Health Department tower and Middleway Fire Department tower

**12. Announcements/Old Business**

**13. Citizen Comment**

- a. Steve Lally – Comment about working with Amazon and having employees move to the county, but no internet in some areas. Pleased there is action being done.

- b. Patricia Corley – Asked about the fixed wireless coverage in her area. Wanted clarification.
- 14. **Adjournment; next meeting – Proposed June 30 in the morning or afternoon. Sandy to send out email to determine if another date and time works better for committee members.**