

Jefferson County Broadband Committee Meeting
Via GoToMeeting
Wednesday April 28, 2021 10:00AM

Members Present – Sandy McDonald, Stephanie Grove, Elizabeth Cook, Jane Tabb, Laura Whittington

Others Present – David Deamer, Patricia Corley, Paul Comes, Wade Salvadge, Carline Shaw, Amy (Public), Stacy Tabb

- 1) **Welcome; Roll call**
- 2) **Call to order**
 - a. Stephanie Grove welcomed everyone and called meeting to order with a Sandy McDonald motion; seconded by Jane Tabb
- 3) **Approval of Agenda**
 - a. Jane Tabb motion to approve agenda; seconded by Laura Whittington.
- 4) **Approval of Minutes**
 - a. Laura Whittington motion to approve minutes; seconded by Sandy McDonald
- 5) **Update from WV Broadband Enhancement Council**
 - a. David Deamer gave an update on the WV Broadband Enhancement Council
 - i. RDOF auction long-form completed. More updates coming in May/June
 - ii. WV Broadband Enhancement Council working with a contractor to create a framework to distribute money statewide
 - iii. ARPA funds need to spent by 2024
 - iv. Encouraging folks to download FCC Speed Test App and take the Ookla Speed tests to help illustrate the need for broadband. The link for each is posted on Eastern Panhandle Regional Planning and Development Council social media.
 - v. Subsidies – FCC E-Rate Program, Emergency Broadband Benefit Program
 - vi. David showed Ookla speed tests in the county and showed areas that are underserved/unserved.
- 6) **Overview of CDBG eligible projects**
 - a. David Deamer outlined the CDBG eligible broadband projects in the county
 - i. Health Department Tower – Equipment Upgrade
 1. \$41,000 + Point to Point Equipment
 2. Estimated 1,000 CDBG addresses can be served
 3. 40 Ookla 500m bins can be served
 - ii. Middleway Fire Department Tower – 180’ broadband tower
 1. \$206,000 + necessary point to point equipment
 2. Estimated 500 CDBG addresses can be served
 3. 30 Ookla 500m bins can be served
 - iii. Potential Project – City of Charles Town Water Tower – S. George Street
 1. Estimated similar cost as Health Department Tower
 2. Line of Sight to Health Tower and Meyerstown Tower Location
 3. 4 Ookla 500m bins in CDBG eligible zone – at least 10 more bins

- b. Stephanie Grove asked about Blue Ridge Elementary School as a project site
 - i. Commissioner Jackson stated there is a tower near the location
 - ii. David Deamer stated he will follow-up about this location
 - c. Commissioner Tabb asked utilizing the American Rescue Plan funding for broadband infrastructure
 - i. Stephanie Grove stated they are awaiting information on guidelines to use the funds
- 7) **Bolivar Update**
- a. David Deamer highlighted discussion about the Harpers Ferry Water Tank and Bolivar tower location
 - i. Not permitted to equip water tanks or build a smaller broadband tower on premises
 - ii. Tuscawilla Fiber Pilot Study (498 residents served w/ 5 miles of fiber) - \$1,020,000. Bolivar/Harpers Ferry - est. 1000 addresses.
- 8) **ISP/WISP Review in Jefferson County**
- a. David Deamer gave a ISP/WISP update in Jefferson County
 - i. Comcast –
 - 1. Discussed expansion of services in Bolivar
 - 2. Will be participating in the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program
 - 3. They have worked with Fixed Wireless Service providers in the past in servicing tower and the WISP sends signal out
 - ii. Shentel –
 - 1. Fiber to the home in Charles Town/Ranson in the next couple months
 - 2. Working on expanding fiber further
 - 3. Fixed Wireless - 25-100 Mbps speeds
 - 4. Fiber 300Mbps – 1 Gbps speeds
 - 5. Will be participating in Emergency Broadband Benefit program
 - iii. Morgan Wireless
 - 1. Strong interest in expanding into Jefferson County
 - 2. 25+Mbps speeds
 - iv. Point Broadband
 - 1. Have not followed-up with them since last meeting
 - v. Frontier
 - 1. No communication
- 9) **Next steps and timeline / Implementation**
- a. David Deamer asked Stephanie Grove if the commission wants to pursue a CDBG grant
 - i. Stephanie Grove stated that she would propose it to the Commission
 - ii. David and Stephanie discussed how to determine number of households that would sign up for service
 - 1. Creating a survey to determine price point and service needed in CDBG eligible zones
 - 2. The survey would also determine if residents/businesses would utilize services.

- b. David Deamer is going to meet with USDA representative to discuss funding source
- c. David Deamer to meet with City of Charles Town representatives to discuss equipping water tower with broadband equipment

10) Announcements/Old Business

11) Citizen Comment

- a. Patricia Corley – Asked for an explanation about ARPA funds
- b. Wade Salvadge – Moved to the mountain between Shannondale and Riverside. They should meet houses per mile requirement to have service to their homes. Wants to see action regarding this issue.
- c. Stacy Tabb – Notifying the public about fiber lines, easements and other broadband related changes

12) Adjournment; next meeting May 26, 2021 @ 10:00AM

- a. Stephanie Grove made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Jane Tabb