

**Jefferson County Broadband Committee Meeting  
Minutes  
Wednesday June 30, 2021 3:00 PM**

**Members Present – Sandy McDonald, Stephanie Grove, Ev Ehrlich, Jeff Polczynski, Russell Burgess, Tricia Jackson, Jane Tabb**

**Others Present – David Deamer, Rachel Snavely, Richard Taylor, Keith McIntosh**

1. **Welcome; Roll call**
2. **Call to order**
  - a. Stephanie Grove welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order with an Ev Ehrlich motion; seconded by Tricia Jackson
3. **Approval of Agenda**
  - a. Tricia Jackson motion to approve to approve agenda; Jane Tabb second
4. **Approval of Minutes**
  - a. Ev Ehrlich motion to approve minutes; Tricia Jackson second
5. **Update from WV Broadband Enhancement Council**
  - a. David Deamer discussed the upcoming Broadband Mapping Tool – Details served addresses, potential addresses, and unserved addresses
  - b. David Deamer addressed the RDOF auction – have to careful of these census blocks because they can contest it deeming the project ineligible
    - i. Waiting to see if the ARPA funds will be affected by RDOF census blocks
  - c. David Deamer shared the speed tests conducted in Jefferson County

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

- d. Jane Tabb asked about serving addresses in rural Leetown area
- e. Ev Ehrlich expressed the same concern about serving addresses in the Riverside area
6. **American Rescue Plan Act Funding**
  - a. Stephanie Grove stated that the County Commission is interested in putting ARP funds towards broadband
  - b. Jane Tabb and Tricia Jackson asked for a cost estimate on the broadband projects identified in Jefferson County
    - i. David Deamer stated he would put together cost estimates
  - c. David Deamer summarized the WV Capital Projects Plan - \$138 Million in for broadband infrastructure to WV
    - **4 Broadband Programs - Targeting underserved/unserved - \$138 Million**

- **Targeting Underserved/Unserved areas – 25/3**

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. \$25 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. \$40 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 million

4. **Expansion of Fixed Wireless**

- a. \$25 million

7. **Emergency Broadband Benefit Program**

- a. David Deamer spoke about the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program. It 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; 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)
- b. Jane Tabb requested more information about this program, and voiced that it should be on the Jefferson County Commission Facebook page
  - i. David Deamer stated he would send over more information following the meeting

8. **Fixed Wireless Projects in Jefferson County**

- a. David Deamer displayed the Power Point shown to JC Commission Meeting on 6/17/21
- b. Russell Burgess stated there is equipment on the JC Health Department Tower, but the tower may have issues.
- c. Jeff Polczynski seconded that statement by saying the tower is old and may not conform to recent standards. Recommended a load study to be completed for the current tower.
- d. Russell Burgess verbalized that this location is very useful for a potential new tower.

- e. Jeff Polczynski stated there is another tower being built in close proximity to the proposed tower in Middleway.
  - f. Jeff Polczynski also stated that the Blue Ridge Tower failed inspection.
  - g. Stephanie Grove asked how much it would cost to replace the Blue Ridge Tower.
  - h. Jeff Polczynski stated it would roughly cost \$250,000
  - i. Tricia Jackson stated she will have a conversation about property near Blue Ridge Tower.
  - j. Stephanie Grove questioned if they would be duplicating efforts by building new towers at JC Health Department site and Blue Ridge Tower site.
  - k. Tricia Jackson stated it would be great if both towers could be replaced.
  - l. Ev Ehrlich asked about cost for WISP to be on towers.
    - i. David Deamer stated that costs can vary and more research will be done to see what other municipalities are doing.
  - m. Ev Ehrlich asked who would execute the agreement between county and private ISP/WISPs?
    - i. Stephanie Grove stated that the county would enter in an agreement, but requested David Deamer's help in the process.
- 9. ISP/WISP Review in Jefferson County**
- a. David Deamer has reached out to each service provider to see if they will be pursuing funding from the WV Capital investment fund to expand last-mile service. No information from any service provider
  - b. Frontier – No communication
  - c. Comcast – David Deamer has directed them to the WV Broadband Enhancement Council website to show unserved areas.
  - d. Shentel – Fiber to the home in Charles Town/ Ranson, no communication about fixed wireless in Jefferson County
  - e. Telegia – No Communication
  - f. Morgan Wireless – Interest in expansion in Jefferson County. Want to do a site visit. Serving residents in Morgan and Berkeley County
- 10. Next steps and timeline / Implementation**
- a. Stephanie Grove expressed interest in including an earmark for fixed wireless service
  - b. Tricia Jackson questioned why the cost is so high for Comcast to expand service
    - i. Jane Tabb seconded this concern and expressed interest in helping private ISPs to expand service
  - c. Jane Tabb stated she likes the Health Department Tower along with the Blue Ridge Tower
  - d. Russell Burgess asked how tall the towers should be?
    - i. David Deamer responded that the proposed towers in the Jefferson County Broadband Options are 180' for optimum signal propagation.
  - e. Jeff Polczynski recommended replacing the Health Department Tower
  - f. Stephanie Grove stated that the Health Department tower would qualify for broadband and emergency service funding.
  - g. Jeff Polczynski and Tricia Jackson discussed land requirements for the Blue Ridge Tower
    - i. Stephanie Grove stated that more research is needed for that site.

- h. Delay in funding of projects until more guidance comes available from WV Broadband Enhancement Council
  - i. More information coming available in July
- 11. Announcements/Old Business**
  - a. None
- 12. Citizen Comment**
  - a. None
- 13. Adjournment; August 4, 2021 @ 3:00PM**