

**Jefferson County Broadband Committee Meeting**  
**Via GoToMeeting**  
**Wednesday August 4, 2021 3:00 PM**

**Members Present – Sandy McDonald, Stephanie Grove, Dennis Jarvis, Ev Ehrlich, Russell Burgess, Commissioner Jane Tabb, Liz Cook, Charles Town**

**Others Present – David Deamer, Susan Benzinger, Krista Hoffman, Keith McIntosh, Kim Taulton, Community Member (Guest), Paul Comes, (Comcast), C. McGuire, (guest)**

- 1. Welcome; Roll call**
- 2. Call to order**
  - a. Stephanie Grove called the meeting to order with a Dennis Jarvis motion; seconded by Ev Ehrlich
- 3. Approval of Agenda**
  - a. Dennis Jarvis motion to approve motion to approve agenda; seconded by Ev Ehrlich
- 4. Approval of Minutes**
  - a. Dennis Jarvis motion to approve minutes; seconded by Ev Ehrlich
- 5. Update from WV Broadband Enhancement Council**
  - a. David Deamer gave an update from the WV Broadband Enhancement Council
    - i. Nothing regarding the RDOF auction next meeting is in September
      1. Frontier and Starlink were the winning bidders for Jefferson County
      2. Ev Ehrlich asked if funds have been awarded for RDOF winners in Jefferson County
        - a. David Deamer stated that funds have not been awarded. Both winners are still in the long-form of their applications.
    - ii. Webinar was held for Request for Comment for ISPs to comment
      1. Stated to get mapping out to community leaders and local service providers
- 6. American Rescue Plan Act Funding – Jamie Hoffman**
  - a. David Deamer gave an update on the ARPA funding
    - i. Jamie Hoffman was unable to attend. Mr. Hoffman is the GIS Coordinator with West Virginia Department of Economic Development, Broadband Office and the West Virginia Broadband Enhancement Council. He is also currently working on developing a new survey/speed test that will more accurately record the speeds down to the address level which has been difficult to do in the past. When this is finalized, his office will be asking for help from local governments to start crowd-sourcing the data. Another important thing to put on our radar is in September, they will be hosting a webinar for local governments regarding ARPA funding. Hopefully this helps!
    - ii. Request for Comment Period

1. The Request for Comment period opened up on July 12, 2021, and will remain open until September 7, 2021. The comment period is a voluntary data collection process to allow providers to submit address level data of who they currently serve. If participating in the comment period, providers are required to complete a template file located at [broadband.wv.gov](http://broadband.wv.gov) regarding served and unserved addresses. Providers are also required to submit map files of existing networks. The Office of Broadband will conduct thorough analysis to ensure the quality of the information received.
  2. Regional Planning and Development Councils, EDAs, and County Commissions can complete a response by submitting gathered information regarding broadband availability to the Broadband Enhancement Council. Please refer to the section “Requirements for Community or ISP Other Network Submission” in the Request for Comment guidance document located at [broadband.wv.gov](http://broadband.wv.gov).
- iii. ARPA Mapping - Addresses of have been categorized into four classes:
1. **Unserved:** Addresses not reported as served to the FCC,
  2. **Likely Unserved:** Addresses within a census block reported as served to the FCC, but that may contain some unserved addresses,
  3. **Likely Served:** Addresses in an area that is likely served, or
  4. **Funded:** Addresses in an area that is funded by a state, local or federally funded project (excluding satellite).
    - a. The Office of Broadband understands that these classifications are not entirely accurate and will use community reported information, speed tests, and data from providers to define a final eligibility map for ARPA funding.
- iv. ARPA Program updates:
1. ARPA funding has not yet been officially allocated
  2. The Office of Broadband is waiting upon State Treasury to release final guidelines.
  3. The Office of Broadband anticipates funding to be allocated in September.
- v. ARPA Webinar
1. A webinar will be held for local organizations (RPDCs, EDAs, Counties) that will discuss funding programs and preparation. The Office of Broadband will discuss the four programs for ARPA and how local organizations can prepare applications.
  2. David Deamer will send this information to JC broadband committee once the date and information has been finalized.
- vi. Programs
1. **Existing network line extensions:** This category of funding applies for providers to build “end-of-the-line” service extensions for cable or fiber. Some homes are refused cable or fiber services from providers and therefore stuck with DSL, satellite, or cellular. This program is intended to reach these homes. This category

applies to internet service providers with existing services in West Virginia.

2. **Fixed Wireless:** We have not received guidance from Treasury if fixed wireless will be an applicable funding category. We are anticipating Treasury to release final guidance.
3. **Local Government/Matching Broadband Funding Incentive:**
  - a. A state incentive for local governments and organizations to pool some of their ARPA allocations or other local funding
  - b. Participants must agree to pay 25% of the project costs and participate in the State's technical assistance program
  - c. Preference for gigabit service and a minimum requirement of 100/20 Mbps
  - d. Technical assistance will help:
    - i. Create high-level designs and cost estimates
    - ii. Prepare business-case analyses
    - iii. Solicit, select, and structure agreements with private partners/vendors
    - iv. Identify and apply for additional federal funding
    - v. Seek additional match from private partners
    - vi. Ensure efficient utilization of all funding streams for broadband expansion
4. **Major Broadband Infrastructure Investment:** This category applies mainly for local governments. Counties can release and RFP to procure a private partner.
  - a. New networks on major expansions of existing networks
  - b. Match will be required for all projects
  - c. Robust application and review covering
  - d. Technical feasibility
  - e. Cost reasonableness
  - f. Team experience and track record
  - g. Finance resources and soundness to deliver

## 7. **New Towers in Jefferson County**

- a. Stephanie Grove stated there are about \$20 million in requests for Jefferson County ARPA funds
  - i. They have \$5 million now and an additional \$5 million next year
  - ii. The Jefferson County Commission will be discussing requests at the next commission meeting
  - iii. Jefferson County is interested in improving broadband with ARPA funding
- b. Health Department
- c. Blue Ridge Tower
  - i. David Deamer stated that propagation study being completed to estimate how many potential addresses can be served

- ii. Commissioner Jackson reached out to land owner about Blue Ridge Tower
- iii. Ev Ehrlich asked why this site is key?

- 1. Stephanie Grove stated that owning this tower has benefits due to line of sight throughout the county.
- 2. Russell Burgess stated that this tower will help meet the needs of emergency equipment

d. Middleway Fire Department was discussed as a tower site

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

- a. David Deamer stated it would be important for JC broadband committee members to attend the WV Broadband Enhancement Council webinar in September to learn more about the statewide ARPA funds. David will send webinar information out as soon as meeting is finalized.
- b. David Deamer advised the committee to delay any broadband related action on City of Charles Town water tanks. There is continued discussion about broadband related projects needing to have at least 100/20 speeds.
- c. Stephanie Grove expressed interest in pursuing a new Health Department Tower, Middleway Fire Department Tower and Blue Ridge Tower.

**9. Announcements/Old Business**

- a. Keith McIntosh outlined proposed funding for broadband in infrastructure bill:
  - i. Potential \$42 Billion
  - ii. Connecting unserved/underserved regions
- b. Stephanie Grove stated the Jefferson County Commission sent a letter in support for the bipartisan infrastructure bill
- c. Dennis Jarvis suggested we wait until we hear more about this bill, and then meet again after more guidance comes available.

**10. Citizen Comment - None**

**11. Adjournment; next meeting – September 29, 2021 at 3:00PM**