**Governor’s Task Force on Broadband**

**July 28, 2021**

**10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

**Virtual Meeting via ZoomGov**

**Task Force Members Present:** Teddy Bekele, Yvonne Cariveau, Nolan Cauthen, Dale Cook,

Steve Fenske, Steve Giorgi, Marc Johnson, Bernadine Joselyn, Brian Krambeer, Micah Myers, Theresa Sunde, Jim Weikum, Paul Weirtz, and Dave Wolf.

**Task Force Members Absent:** Jason Hollinday

**Others in Attendance:** Chuck Ackman, Sonya Borgeson-Bethke, Anna Boroff, Joe Buttweiler, Zachary Cairns, Brent Christensen, Scott Cole, Paul Deming, Angie Dickison, Amanda Duerr, Glenn Fishbine, Brian Frederick, Jenn Frost, Laura Kangas, Bree Maki, Jessica Oh, Morgan Putnam, Whitney Ridlon, Laura Rogers, Jessica Schatz, Paul Solsrud, Ann Treacy, Diane Wells, Kristin White, Melissa Wolf and two unidentified callers.

1. **Welcome, Task Force Introductions, Attendee Introductions and Approval of Minutes from June 14, 2021 Meeting**

Chair Bekele called the meeting to order and roll call was taken. The minutes of the June 14, 2021 meeting were approved, and Chair Bekele reviewed the agenda for the current meeting. Members of the public attending the virtual meeting were given the opportunity to introduce themselves.

1. **Update from Office of Broadband Development**

Diane Wells, OBD Deputy Director, provided an update that covered the following:

* $70 million of Minnesota’s share of the Capital Projects Fund (section 604) of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) has been appropriated to fund SFY22 and SFY23 Border-to-Border grants; DEED will need to apply for the federal funds once the U.S. Department of the Treasury issues relevant guidance and begins accepting applications/plans from states.
* A new state law has been enacted to allow electric cooperatives to use existing easements for the deployment of broadband infrastructure and service.
* DEED’s Small Cities Development Program will announce its grants for broadband deployment funded via Community Development Block Grant CARES Act funding (CDBG-CV); OBD did not have a role in determining the selection criteria nor did OBD review applications.
* As of meeting date, the FCC has approved RDOF long forms for 48 winning bidders, including two in Minnesota: Consolidated Communications and Farmers Mutual Telephone. The FCC has also denied requests by several winning bidders seeking deadline extensions for obtaining state ETC designation, including LTD Broadband’s extension requests for ETC designation in California, Oklahoma and Kansas. Some winning bidders have decided not to pursue receipt of RDOF funding, including Aspire Networks 2, LLC in Minnesota.
* The FCC, NTIA and USDA have agreed to share information with reach other regarding their federal funding decisions in order to avoid duplication of funding/funding of overlapping areas.

Questions were answered after the update:

* Regarding timing of the next round of Border-to-Border grants, it is possible the federal funds will not be available in time for OBD to have a grant round in 2021.
* Regarding implications of federal funding on grant criteria, the statute authorizing use of the federal funds for Border-to-Border grants allows OBD flexibility to make adjustments to grant program in order to be compliant with federal requirements.
1. **Presentation: Connecting Minnesota: MnDOT’s Fiber Optic Partnership Study**

Kristin White, Executive Director of the Connected & Automated Vehicle Office (CAV-X), delivered a presentation that covered the following:

* Overview of the Connected & Automated Vehicle Office
* Brief description of automated vehicles and levels of automation
* Brief description of connected vehicles
* Brief description of MN CAV Challenge Innovation RFP
* Overview of CAV strategic plan
* Overview of how fiber supports CAV
	+ Description of study’s elements assessing communications infrastructure and public-private partnership feasibility to support CAV technologies
* Overview of preliminary investment scenarios
* Overview of recommendations from study
	+ - Convene a state fiber group
		- Provide more funding
		- Update laws
		- Pilot fiber partnerships
		- More industry and community engagement
* Overview of next steps
* Convene state enterprise broadband team
* Meet with MPOs and local agencies to discuss broadband needs
* Expand state vision for broadband expansion
* Issue RFI to gauge industry interest
* Review RDOF auction winners to coordinate resources
* Discuss P3 broadband legislation
* MnDOT expand fiber funding

The presentation was followed by questions and comments from the Task Force members.

A one-page overview and slides from the presentation will be available at <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/broadband/task-force/>.

1. **Presentation: Visualizing Data for Broadband Deployment**

Paul Solsrud, Product Manager Cooperative Network Services (CNS), delivered a presentation that covered the following:

* Overview of CNS and its services
* Overview of CNS RDOF mapping tool
* Examples of how Broadband Operations Map is utilized
	+ Overview of 477 Visualization Tool
* Overview of tool for high-level route design
* Example of HUBB/Location Identification
* Demonstration of Broadband Operations Map

The presentation was followed by questions and comments from the Task Force members.

Slides from the presentation will be available at <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/broadband/task-force/>.

1. **Subgroup Updates**
* *Unserved/Underserved and Funding* – Paul Weirtz
	+ - Subgroup has no new recommendations for report
		- Progress made on numbers served will need to be updated for report
		- Possibly include mention of hurdles encountered with federal funding in report
	+ *Accessibility, Affordability and Education* – Yvonne Cariveau
		- Community Broadband Action Network presented at July subgroup meeting
		- Future subgroup meetings will include Tribe representatives and Libraries Without Borders
		- Marc Johnson is spearheading plans for September Task Force meeting that will focus on education
* *Mapping and Speed Goal* – Nolan Cauthen
	+ - No subgroup updates to report
1. **Other Business, September Meeting Plans, Wrap-up**

Chair Bekele introduced report writer, Scott Cole, from Collectivity. Several Task Force members reiterated concern about delays caused by using federal funds for Border-to-Border grants and the need to educate legislature about the ramifications of funding grant program exclusively with federal dollars. Also mentioned was the need to coordinate with MnDOT in pursuing funding. Next meeting of the Task Force is scheduled for September 15, 2021, and is tentatively planned for in-person with virtual option, but it may need to go completely virtually. Chair Bekele opened meeting for public comment, of which there was none.

Meeting adjourned at 12:20 p.m.