



WEST VIRGINIA BROADBAND ENHANCEMENT COUNCIL

MEETING AGENDA | January 16, 2020

Meeting Title	WV Broadband Enhancement Council	Time	10:00 a.m.
Chairman	Robert Hinton	Location	Capitol Complex, Bldg. 3, First Floor
		Attendance	P = Present; TC = Teleconference; VC = Videoconference; _ = Absent

	Council Member	Representing			Council Member	Representing
TC	Robert Hinton, Chairman	Rural Business User Congressional Dist. 2		-	C. Edward Gauch	WV Dept. of Commerce, Cabinet Secretary
P	Robert Morris, Vice Chairman	Urban Residential User		P	Jeff Proctor	Representing Secretary Gauch
TC	Michael J. Holstine Secretary-Treasurer	Rural Business User Congressional Dist. 3		TC	William D. "Bill" Bissett	Urban Business User
-	Robert Cole	Rural Residential User Congressional Dist. 1		TC	Dennis Lee	Business User, Large Scale Broadband
P	R.A. "Pete" Hobbs	Rural Residential User Congressional Dist. 3		P	Honorable Ronald G. Pearson	Rural Residential User Cong. Dist. 2
-	Dr. Steven L. Paine	Dept. of Education, State Superintendent		-	The Honorable Robert Plymale	WV Senate (D) (Ex-Officio/Advisory Member)
P	Brenda Morris	Representing Dr. Paine		-	The Honorable Mark Maynard	WV Senate (R) (Ex-Officio/Advisory Member)
P	Joshua D. Spence	WV Office of Technology, Chief Technology Officer		P	The Honorable Daniel Linville	WV House (R) (Ex-Officio/Advisory Member)
P	James Dixon	Representing Joshua Spence		-	The Honorable Kenneth Hicks	WV House (D) (Ex-Officio/Advisory Member)
-	Matt Turner	Higher Education Policy Commission Vice Chancellor		-	Vacancy: Rural Business User Congressional Dist. 1	
TC	Dr. Carl R. Powell	Representing Matt Turner		-		
	Representative	Agency			Representative	Agency
P	Kelly Workman	WV Development Office Administrative Director		P	Alexandra Schulz	Bowles Rice Legal Counsel
P	CarolAnn Williams	WV Development Office GIS Manager, Broadband		-	Jim Kelsh	Bowles Rice Legal Counsel
-	Wes White	WV Commerce, Deputy Secretary		TC	Chris Campbell	Tilson Technology Management
-	Peter Markham	Bowles Rice Legal Counsel		-	Elin Katz	Tilson Technology Management

Agenda Item	Details/Minutes
1. Call to Order, Opening Remarks; Roll Call	Vice Chairman R. Morris called the meeting to order and took a voice roll call.
2. Approval of 12/12/2019 Council Meeting Minutes and Financial Statement	Meeting Minutes were approved; Motion by Member Hobbs and second by Member Spence. Financials were approved; motion by Member Holstine and second by Member Hobbs.
3. Update on USDA ReConnect	Tyler County and Wetzel County Announcement Second Round Applications: January 31 – March 16, 2020 Workshop: USDA Morgantown Office, January 29, 2020 Vice Chairman Morris reviewed recent announcements from USDA for broadband infrastructure development in West Virginia.

	<p>Kelly Workman briefly detailed recent success with the Council’s push with USDA in 2019. Five applications were submitted from West Virginia. With 2 out of 5 funded, West Virginia achieved a 40 percent success rate, and more project.</p> <p>The Council is partnering with USDA on a Workshop on January 29 to help local teams develop additional projects. Any projects not funded in the first round should reapply for the second round. A complete list of USDA awards is provided here:</p> <p>USDA ReConnect: \$29,188,920 Investment Second Round applications due by March 16, 2020.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2020-Harrison Rural Electrification Association, Digital Connections: \$24,999,920, Harrison, Doddridge, Lewis, Upshur, Barbour counties. • 2019-Tyler County Development Authority, CityNet, \$3,516,000 50/50 Loan-Grant • 2019-Regional Economic Development Partnership (RED), CityNet, \$4,189,000 50/50 Loan-Grant <p>USDA Community Connect: \$7,960,000 Investment; Rolling application cycle.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2020-Hampshire County Broadband Expansion, Hardy Net, \$3 million • 2019-Preston County Economic Development Authority, Digital Connections, \$3,000,000: Preston • 2019-ClearFiber, \$1,960,000: Marion, Monongalia • 2017-Central West Virginia Development Association, MicroLogic, \$3,000,000: Barbour, Randolph, Upshur <p>Vice Chairman Morris congratulated the project teams and pledged that the Council would continue to provide assistance.</p>
<p>4. AEP Broadband Feasibility Study</p>	<p>Council unanimously approved resolution in support of study on December 12, 2019. Logan and Mingo Counties have passed resolutions in support of the project; Discussion of next steps.</p> <p>Chairman Hinton deferred to Chris Campbell for an overview. Chris Campbell with Tilson Technology reviewed ongoing work with the AEP/APCo team, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with WVDO and Bowles Rice, and Logan and Mingo counties on the coordination of the advisory committee, • Input and refinement on the AEP RFP, evaluation criteria, dark fiber lease terms, and • Working on the last-mile feasibility study which would illustrate how an ISP partner could utilize AEP fiber to build out a potential FTTP project. <p>Tilson will continue working on last-mile study to inform the RFP process, including design, cost, and feasibility. The Vice Chairman thanked everyone for their work on this project. Chairman Hinton added that the team continues to push this project ahead in cooperation with AEP and that the project is on schedule.</p>
<p>5. 2020-2025 State Broadband Plan</p>	<p>Final submitted to WV Legislature by Dec. 31, 2019. Submitted to Commerce Communications, posted on website. https://broadband.wv.gov/resources/west-virginia-broadband-plan/</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Guide draft; companion to Five-Year Plan, part of ARC Project. <p>This project was completed on deadline to meet the legislative reporting requirement and to meet the requirements of USDA and other funding programs which require a state broadband plan. The plan is posted on the Council website and will be updated annually.</p>

<p>6. FCC Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Workshop</p>	<p>FCC to consider rules for \$20 billion RDOF program in January 2020, expected to be awarded through a two-phase reverse auction procedure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal from Tilson for training approved 12/12/2019, to be scheduled. <p>Chris Campbell also detailed Tilson’s work on development of training specific to the FCC RDOF process. The FCC is expected to vote on the RDOF order in February 2020 and the first WV RDOF workshop will be scheduled in the Spring. A detailed agenda and logistics for the April workshop are in development. Three workshops were approved on 12/16/2019.</p> <p>Chairman Hinton noted that the RDOF will make available at least \$16 billion in Phase I for infrastructure development through reverse auction similar to the CAF II process. The FCC is expected to adhere to 25:3 speed thresholds, although scoring is weighted toward higher speeds. The FCC is not going to require a subscriber measurement. Noting that this will be one of the largest CAF programs seen in past 20 years, the Chairman noted that West Virginia should aggressively compete for this funding.</p>
<p>7. WV PSC Pole Attachment</p>	<p>WVPSC issued the final rules on December 6, 2019, which will take effect on February 3, 2020. http://www.psc.state.wv.us/scripts/WebDocket/CaseServiceListID=102591</p> <p>Ally Shulz, legal counsel with Bowles Rice, provided a brief review of the PSC Pole Attachment rules, which are now in effect, noting the following: The PSC adopted the FCC statutes and regulations almost entirely.</p> <p>There were a few changes, which were largely consistent with the Council’s recommendations, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definitions apply only to pole attachment proceedings • Removed provision for awarding damages in Proposed Rule 17 because the PSC does not have this authority, • Added a joiner’s provision in the former Rule 17 and new Rule 17. <p>Member Pearson commented on pole ownership patterns and how this may affect future broadband development. Asking if the poles are owned by the power companies or phone companies. Ms. Shulz stated that she does not know the exact breakdown of ownership. Mr. Pearson noted that there is discussion that Frontier is seeking relief from its COLR (Carrier of Last Resort Obligations) and is seeking legislation and/or relief from the WV PSC for this responsibility for telephone communications. Mr. Pearson stated that this could have a detrimental impact on pole network maintenance in West Virginia.</p> <p>Mr. Pearson stated that he had not seen specific legislation but that discussions are occurring. Chairman Hinton stated that he had heard this concern from a legislator. He then requested that Ms. Shultz review pole ownership in West Virginia as it could potentially relate to pending legislation and the COLR issue, as well as the Legislature’s position on this matter. The Chairman requested a rough idea of pole ownership by utility, such as 25 percent owned by Frontier, etc.</p>

8. Public Comment	Sign-In for Public Comment John Tuggle, executive director of the Region 4 PDC, requested guidance on potential partnerships with the MMI fiber project as it relates to Region 1 and Region 4. Chairman Hinton advised that Mr. Tuggle should contact the project team directly, following their meeting at the groundbreaking.			
9. Next Meeting Date	February 20, 2020, 10:00 a.m.; Building 3, First Floor Conf. Room 124			
10. Adjournment				
Action Items				
No.	Description	Assigned To	Month Identified	Target Completion Date
1.	Legal and Cooperative Toolkit and Training	WVU Law	June 2017	Underway by WVU Law Clinic
2.	Broadband Hub ARC Broadband Hub/Mapping Project	K. Workman, C. Williams WVGES	November 2018	Mapping in 10 counties complete and added to website. Development Guide drafted.
3.	Website Updates-Speed test survey updates, map updates	Commerce, C. Williams	December 2018	Complete
4.	NTIA/National Broadband Availability Map	K. Workman, C. Williams	February 2019	Two-year project. 5/10/2019 Initial Data from Phase One States.
5.	Guide to Broadband Development	K. Workman	February 2019	Draft for Review, Version 1
6.	2020-2025 State Broadband Plan	Steering Committee, Staff	March 2019	Complete.



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TC	Wes White	WV Commerce, Deputy Secretary		TC	Chris Campbell	Tilson Technology Management
-	Peter Markham	Bowles Rice Legal Counsel		TC	Elin Katz	Tilson Technology Management

Agenda Item	Details/Minutes
1. Call to Order, Opening Remarks; Roll Call	Chair Hinton called the meeting to order at 10:01am
2. Approval of 1/16/2019 Council Meeting Minutes and Financial Statement	Moved to accept the January 2020 meeting minutes as presented; Jeff Proctor motion; second by Dr. Powell; motion approved.
3. Update on USDA ReConnect from Kris Warner State Director, West Virginia Rural Development, USDA	<p>Kris Warner, the USDA Rural Development State Director, thanked the council for its work to support West Virginia applicants. The USDA has announced \$32 million in broadband grant funding, through ReConnect Round One and Community Connect and other USDA programs, in West Virginia since October 2019.</p> <p>Mr. Warner announced that a regional conference will be held in Virginia for any project teams that would like to attend. Reconnect Round Two will offer \$550 million in grants and loans. USDA will continue to assist applicants in this process.</p>

	<p>Chair Hinton thanked Mr. Warner for his work and reiterated that \$32 million has been awarded thus far and the council will support continuation of this progress. Mr. Warner stated that USDA was impressed with the level of attendance at Morgantown conference, held in conjunction with the council in January.</p> <p>Chair Hinton asked if there will be a Reconnect Round Three. Mr. Warner said yes, after Round Two awards are made, then Round Three would begin before the end of 2020. Therefore, applicants should begin to prepare now. Chair Hinton noted that West Virginia should attempt to beat its current allocation of \$32 million in rounds two and three. The council will continue working with USDA and Director Warner on this important initiative.</p>
<p>4. FirstEnergy Broadband Feasibility Study Proposed project in portions of Wood and Ritchie Counties https://broadband.wv.gov/news/firstenergy-broadband-feasibility-study/</p>	<p>Jim Kelsh, Partner and Attorney with Bowles Rice, provided an overview of the FirstEnergy Broadband Feasibility Study. The study proposes a project in portions of Wood and Ritchie Counties. This is the second study received by the council in which the council has a 60-day time period to take action. This 60-day period will end on March 24 and Mr. Kelsh hopes to have this study to Council for final action by March 12th meeting.</p> <p>Mr. Kelsh noted that proper notice has been provided, with legal ads in Parkersburg and Ritchie County papers. Those who support or oppose the study are advised of the opportunity to speak at the council meeting. If Council members have concerns, Mr. Kelsh asks that the members send those to Kelly Workman get those answered by March 12. At March 12th meeting Bowles Rice will submit for the study to be approved by the Council.</p> <p>Should the council approve the feasibility study, it will then proceed to the WV Public Service Commission for further evaluation.</p> <p>Ms. Holly Kaufmann, President for FirstEnergy, presented information about the study, introducing the FirstEnergy team and thanking the council for the opportunity. Present from FirstEnergy were: Kristin Dransfield, Eric Young, and Ray Valdez. Ms. Kaufman detailed that FirstEnergy serves one half million customers and has over 2,000 employees to assist the state. They are proud to be part of West Virginia.</p> <p>Ms. Dransfield presented presentation from Mon Power outlining the West Virginia Legislature’s enactment of SB 3 establishing a voluntary program whereby each electric utility may investigate the feasibility of constructing middle mile networks in the state. Legacy circuit replacements could provide benefits, such as lower cost of service to customers. Mon power needs to further review legal and regulatory issues as part of this process.</p> <p>Mr. Young thanked the council for having Mon Power present at meeting. He explained that the project includes 12 fiber location handoffs to ISPs. No handoff locations are planned in a 7-mile stretch in Wirt County. The Company estimates 3-5 years to complete new/rebuilt fiber route. Last mile connectivity will be provided by ISPs picking up at the handoff location to take to customers.</p> <p>Mr. Valdez explained the numbers of the project and detailed certain Regulatory and Legal Barriers that this project may encounter. Other concerns are related to: Cost Recovery, Telecommunications Services Agreement, Asset Classification, Easements and Right of Ways, Interconnections, Electric Utility Exemptions from FCC Regulation</p>

	<p>Ms. Dransfield noted that the study was filed on January 23rd and pending HR4619 will determine if study can continue.</p> <p>Chair Hinton thanked the FirstEnergy-Mon Power team and asked if Mon Power had any assumptions that if they release their fiber per mile, if that fiber is sold, what changes would occur? In terms of this model Mon Power did not, they intentionally left that off this presentation, they did not want to give false information but would expect them to occur and didn't want to give a false impression on the revenue.</p> <p>Chair Hinton indicated that from a council standpoint, this is a learning curve, did understand the cost recovery for this project would be expected and posed a couple of questions. What are the magnitude of changes even if they are never achieved? What is the impact to the customer and is it a large or small amount? How significant would that be to reducing the cost to the load bearer? The Council needs a sense of scale. Ray Valdes indicated that it would be a linear movement, depending upon the magnitude</p> <p>There were numerous questions from council members concerning the study, cost savings, number of fibers. Mr. Young indicated that the company was flexible and that the study was done from a desktop view which incorporated numerous assumptions. Chair Hinton asked if carriers wanted to use the fiber in the future that they would be permitted to do so, and Mr. Young said this was understood.</p> <p>Chair Hinton indicated that the council asked AEP to refine its cost analysis and show where the fiber cost is. He also noted that Armstrong communications had undertaken a 700+ mile fiber buildout in Ritchie County and there may be some Synergies and wanted make Mon Power aware.</p>
<p>5. Projects and Updates from Tilson</p>	<p>Chris Campbell gave an update of the AEP Broadband Feasibility Project. Regarding the RFP to solicit ISPs, AEP is having a Q&A session.</p> <p>Mr. Campbell noted that the Council had requested an investigation into the potential last mile, and Tilson has completed some of that work. Tilson is reviewing how ISPs would use middle mile fiber would on a fixed wireless network through Logan and Mingo Counties, looking at a 48-fiber network to use as a transfer network to gain access into the region. Tilson spoke with AEP regarding the project they had performed in Grayson County, Virginia, and Tilson did find differences based on distribution in certain counties, some went to a field split model, which would allow an ISP to get to a smaller portion of the county that may not originally be accessible.</p> <p>Mr. Campbell spoke on the First Energy Feasibility study, felt it to be a good contrast to the AEP feasibility study. Mr. Campbell pointed out that First Energy was at a higher level review in terms of detail. Mr. Campbell feels there is more information needed from First Energy to project cost and AEP provided a road map that Tilson has been able to follow.</p> <p>Member Ron Pearson asked if Tilson looked at the cost per mile in respect to the first energy proposal? Mr. Campbell indicated that Tilson did review costs based upon total miles and it is a large number. In the initial conversation with First Energy the request was made for additional details</p>

	<p>to better understand the cost, Tilson needs to take note of that initial impression, and proceed through a cost review similar to the prior study with a better understand of the development of the cost estimate.</p> <p>Chair Hinton requested that Mr. Campbell review the cost estimates for continuing work with First Energy. Mr. Campbell stated that the initial budget was an estimated \$50k and felt that was a good initial amount last Fall. Have gone through that amount including work done on the interconnected last mile. To move forward an increase in the budget would be needed and proposal was sent to the Council for \$32,200. Mr. Campbell thinks the amount is a reasonably conservative and would get the Council through to the next phase of study. Vote and approve on initial const to move forward: Jeff Proctor first motion; Pearson second motion; Motion Approved</p> <p>Member Jeff Proctor asked did in the review of AEP project does it make since that there is a hybrid option that would include some last mile fiber that may be omitted or duplicate some of the fiber that AEP is wanting to. Is there any alternative option so there isn't a lot of duplication. Mr. Campbell stated yes, we started with a comprehensive approach and actual respondents to the RFP may not take that approach. They may want to pick which part in the county the work, some may be a wireless approach and some may use a hybrid approach. Tilson felt it important to report out conclusions without consuming too much of the budget. There are opportunities to look at certain areas and the approach at a more graduated level.</p>
<p>6. FCC Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Workshop</p>	<p>Mr. Campbell and Ms. Elin Katz reviewed preparations for three planned workshops specific to the FCC RDOF process. Mr. Campbell states they now have high level framework on how auction will be handled. The FCC be accepting public comment on public notice in March and April. Mr. Campbell wants to do workshops when Tilson knows what the basic framework will be. Tentative next workshop will be in April. Mr. Campbell stated the goal is to educate potential bidders and go through a fake auction as a training to show what bidders should expect.</p> <p>Chair Hinton thanked Chris and Elin for the presentation and hope to announce this soon. Goal is \$200 – 300 million to capture funds for the state.</p>
<p>7. Satellite Broadcast & Communications Association (http://www.sbca.org/pages/Home.cfm).</p>	<p>Steven Hill presented on the Satellite Broadcast & Communications from Dish Network, started the presentation with background history of Dish Network. Dish is currently building a 5G network that will be stood up nationwide in the future. The network will be in rural communities to build out nationwide, not only in larger cities.</p> <p>The presenters noted that HughesNet and ViaSet are the only other two satellite broadband providers. Airlines are currently using Dish Network wireless on their flights. Broadband is being used as a backup in emergency situations.</p> <p>George spoke to how Dish is assisting with disaster relief, when WV had the floods in 2016 Dish was able to set up communications for relief workers. They have also deployed an estimated 40 systems which remain in Puerto Rico for government use. Regarding the constellation of satellites that will be sent to space via SpaceX, the estimate is by the end of 2021, service will be 100Mbps + in the United States. Once the first satellite is</p>

	<p>launched the next generation will be in production this will take an estimated 3- 5 years.</p> <p>Jeff Proctor asked how the new technology work without blackouts. George stated that this technology tends not to have that issue, if you have 2 feet of snow on the dish then you may have issues but typically no. Dish appreciates the Councils time</p>
<p>8. Pending Legislation</p>	<p>HB4015: Ally Shulz presented on these bills. Lead sponsor is Delegate Linville. This bill amends the broadband loan insurance program to expand the debt obligations, makes other changes to Chapter 31G, and provides that the Governor will appoint the Chair for a period of 3 years. State permitting agencies must provide council will any information for AREA maps that will presurvey paths for middle mile fiber and the Council must present to the Legislature.</p> <p>HB4619 makes changes to Article 2 Chapter 24, pertaining the broadband feasibility studies. Member Jeff Proctor noted that this is the cost recovery bill.</p> <p>Chair Hinton opened the discussion with question concerning length of time needed for permits and noting that the Legislature has requested additional work on the council's part. Member Robert Morris noted the cost and questioned whether the council had the expertise to continue to HB4015. The legislation would appear to change the market value from the current existing \$0.</p> <p>There was discussion of HB4619 and whether the council's role would continue. Member Ron Pearson noted the vertical access activity (in HB 4015) the state does own some of these powers, will this make available to users who need access, Would suggest that the Council manage these assets and which compensations will be split between WVOT and the Council Suggests a sub committee be established to keep check on this Chair Hinton agrees with the creation of a sub committee to deal with vertical real estate.</p> <p>Member Robert Morris asked if the Chair or Kelly Workman of the WVDO had been consulted in the creation of the bills. Discussion was that there were concerns with some of the most recent proposals, however several positive policies had been enacted and that the Council would continue to consult with the Legislature and seek input from ISP partners on any issues of concern.</p>
<p>9. Frontier</p>	<p>Chair Hinton stated the Council was going to have a representative from Frontier to speak to this but instead yielded to Mr. Pearson. Mr. Pearson wanted to enter into record a summary of financial record that was filed through Sept 30, 2019. He noted that Frontier is spending a large amount of its revenue - about 1/3 of everything they collect from their consumers – for interest payments on debt.</p> <p>Mr. Pearson stated that bankruptcy cases are usually handled in one jurisdiction with one case and parties that come forward have a lot to say regarding what the plan may contain. The WV PSC is watching this closely and working on a focused audit/management review and financial review to anticipate how the services will be interrupted.</p>

	<p>Chair Hinton stated there is willingness from Frontier to come and brief the Council and we will make the invitation for them to come and present to the Council in March.</p> <p>Mr. Holstein states that a concern for rural areas in the is there any plan for them as they are the last resort for phone service? Chair Hinton believes this was brought forward in Legislature but tabled/dismissed</p>
10. Broadband Funding Opportunities and Training	<p>Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Power Grant applications are due: Feb 28th Letter of Intent, and Mar 27th final submission.</p>
11. Public Comment	<p>There were two public comments.</p> <p>Jim Martin with CityNet stated that he had the pleasure of being on the Council formerly and appreciates what the members do. His comments pertained the middle mile infrastructure feasibility studies being undertaken by AEP and FirstEnergy. Questions posed included: What is the next step for the Utility to request rates? Is there a requirement that a last mile provider before going forward?</p> <p>Mr. Jim Kelsh noted that AEP has a request for proposal out and they would not build the facilities unless this is provided.</p> <p>Martin stated this could be another BTOP issue if not handled properly. CityNet is a last mile provider and they have asked what the cost will be. The project teams need to look at the household count and the revenue. He stated that CityNet can install fiber for \$30,000 per mile rather than a projected cost of nearly \$250,000 per mile.</p> <p>Mr. Martin asks the Council to consider the opinions of the last mile providers. Mr. Martin requests that last mile providers are invited for their option on the issue.</p> <p>Member Ron. Pearson stated that the Council is one of two entities that have to approve the projects. Council gets them first then they are presented to the PSC. We should listen carefully to Mr. Martin and if the costs are unrealistically high just to install broadband may their projects be amended to include relationships with last mile providers and whatever rate increase be understood and separate what they are allowed to extend the broadband.</p> <p>Mr. Kelsh noted that he has been involved in the AEP feasibility project and the company has requested input from internet service providers on the middle mile piece through its RFP and other consultation and outreach. RFP submissions are due back from internet providers on March 11. He encouraged input from CityNet on the process. The proposals will be received, and an advisory committee, will advise AEP.</p> <p>Mr. Martin asked the Council to consider what is the requirement of the company to deploy? Just because they say they will be a last mile provider they may not. It has been proposed that the cost would be \$35 million. CityNet could do it for \$5 million. With respect to the lease rate AEP has not set a lease rate and will be negotiated.</p> <p>Chair Hinton stated he respects Mr. Martin and agrees with what he is saying. The one bottle neck that they Council has is the 60 days to make a determination as to whether the process should go forward. On a Cost</p>

Recovery Basis, the utilities may ask for an amount and the WVPSC can adjust that amount. The Chair hopes it is well known that a vote from the Council concerning whether a proposed project is or isn't feasible does not mean that a project will continue if the utility cannot find a last mile provider. Member Jeff Proctor agreed.

Chair Hinton stated that any project done in the state it may be beneficial to see if there are any items that can place accountability and milestones for those last mile providers, such as a possible legislative amendment. These would be similar to those required for recipients of federal funding.

John Tuggle, Executive Director of the Region 4 Planning and Development Council, agreed with Jim Martin on his statements. He would like to have input on what happens. Would like to get with First Energy and AEP to determine what is next. He and his colleagues have been working throughout the regions and have many worthy potential projects.

12. Next Meeting Date	March 12, 2020, 10:00 a.m.; Building 3, 8 th Floor
13. Adjournment	Chair Hinton adjourned the meeting at 12:37pm

Action Items				
No.	Description	Assigned To	Month Identified	Target Completion Date
1.	Legal and Cooperative Toolkit and Training	WVU Law	June 2017	Underway by WVU Law Clinic
2.	Broadband Hub ARC Broadband Hub/Mapping Project	K. Workman, C. Williams, WVGES	November 2018	Mapping in 10 counties complete and added to website.
3.	FCC 477 January 8, 2020 Mapping Update (Notice Attached)	Commerce, C. Williams	February 2020	Latest FCC Data Release Mapping Underway
4.	NTIA/National Broadband Availability Map	K. Workman, C. Williams	February 2019	Two-year project. 5/10/2019 Initial Data from Phase One States.
5.	FCC RDOF Workshop		January 2020	April 2020



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REVISED DRAFT MEETING MINUTES | March 12, 2020

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P	CarolAnn Williams	WV Development Office GIS Manager, Broadband		P	Jim Kelsh	Bowles Rice Legal Counsel
-	Wes White	WV Commerce, Deputy Secretary		TC	Chris Campbell	Tilson Technology Management
-	Peter Markham	Bowles Rice Legal Counsel		TC	Elin Katz	Tilson Technology Management

Agenda Item	Details/Minutes
1. Call to Order, Opening Remarks; Roll Call	
2. Approval of 2/20/2020 Council Meeting Minutes and Financial Statement	February 2020 minutes were updated to show that Member Pete Hobbs was present by teleconference.
3. Update on USDA ReConnect	State Director Kris Warner update on USDA ReConnect. USDA has completed awards from the \$600 million Round 1. The second round of \$550 million is currently open for application. USDA today announced an extension of the second-round application deadline to March 31, 2020.
4. FirstEnergy Broadband Feasibility Study Proposed project in Wood and Ritchie Counties https://broadband.wv.gov/news/firstenergy-broadband-feasibility-study/	FirstEnergy Team Presenting/In Attendance: Sammy Gray Mr. Gray stated that First Energy had submitted a middle mile broadband feasibility study on January 23, 2020. Along with Council staff, the company has reached out to several ISPs for consultation. Mr. Gray indicated that there was little interest in the in the initial pilot project area

	<p>of Wood and Ritchie counties. He noted that in consideration of this finding, that It may be beneficial to consider other areas. Mr. Gray indicated that First Energy respectfully requested to withdraw the current study and evaluate other options. The intent is to provide more benefits to the State and for FirstEnergy customers. He noted that the project team has already started the process to engage more interest up front and to more fully assess needs. Mr. Gray thanked Council, staff and Tilson for all efforts to date and reiterated that First Energy looks forward to resubmitting an updated plan.</p> <p>Vice Chair R. Morris asked about the timeline and Mr. Gray indicated that no definite timeline has been established but efforts are underway, and he expects that a revised study will be submitted in 2020.</p> <p>Chair Hinton noted the Legislative intent to make sure that the Broadband Council has a role in the development of the study. Council should be involved in formation of study. Legal Counsel Jim Kelsh indicated that process is unfolding, and we are learning. He noted that First Energy has provided a great initial work product and is very engaged in the process. Mr. Kelsh noted that formal action of the Council is required within 60 days, if that cannot be satisfied, then he agreed that the Council should accept the withdrawal of the application.</p> <p>Formal motion: R. Morris moved to accept withdraw of application from Mon Power (First Energy). Secretary Holstine provided a second, and motion passed.</p>
<p>5. Projects and Updates from Tilson Chris Campbell, Principal Consultant</p>	<p>Update on AEP Project and Assistance for FirstEnergy Projects Update on AEP Project: Mr. Campbell noted that AEP/APCo had issued a Request for Proposals for ISP partners. The proposal response deadline was 4:00 pm on March 11, and that AEP would still be in review process for evaluating responses. Following review, he would soon have a clear picture of responses and direction of project.</p> <p>Concerning the First Energy project, Tilson is continuing to work with the project team, and has funds remaining in the budget for future work. This work will include evaluation of more favorable areas for potential projects. Meetings have already been initiated. Tilson is prepared to support project to identify potential partners, ideal routes, and to assist with outreach. The goal is to create a richer set of information upon which First Energy can base its decisions. Tilson is seeking higher level of information from potential partners. Chair Hinton asked if the current project budget was sufficient, and Mr. Campbell said that the budget would be fine in the near term, at a minimum until next council meeting. However, this may need to be revisited to incorporate review of revised proposal.</p>
<p>6. FCC Rural Digital Opportunity Fund</p>	<p>Bidding Procedure Public Comment: The FCC proposed procedures for \$16 billion rural broadband auction targeted for October 2020. Comments are due on or before March 27, 2020. Reply Comments are due on or before April 10, 2020. https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/FCC-20-21A1.pdf.</p> <p>Proposed RDOF Workshops:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 1: Charleston, WV Commerce Building 3, First Floor • April 28: Summersville, Summersville Arena & CVB • May 5: Bridgeport, Bridgeport Conference Center

	<p>Elin Katz stated that Tilson is prepared for workshops to begin on April 1. Ms. Katz added that Tilson is anticipating travel restrictions. This may provide benefit of the online format for follow up and technical assistance. She expects there would be room in the budget for follow-up or coaching. There was discussion of moving the webinars to an online format. Vice Chair R. Morris asked if this would diminish the quality of the workshops and Ms. Katz thought the online format would be effective.</p> <p>CTO Josh Spence asked that they be recorded and added to website. Ms. Katz noted this request. Dr. Powell stated this would be a good solution and the recording would enable those to view later. The decision was to conduct the April 1 workshop as an online webinar and evaluate future events as the situation warranted. Chair Hinton reiterated the State goal of \$300 million in RDOF investment.</p>
<p>7. Regional Optical Communications (ROC)</p>	<p>Presentation by: Jason Roberts Executive Director, Region 1 Planning and Development Council John Tuggle Executive Director, Region 4 Planning and Development Council Jason Roberts and John Tuggle provided an overview of the ROC initiative. 6 counties in the southern part of the State. Mr. Roberts introduced John Tuggle and Amanda Smarr with Region 4. He thanked the WV Development Office and the US EDA for providing initial funding. With the first round of HUD CDBG funding, the regions matched those funds to US EDA to begin the initiative and conduct a review of the need for service in this area of State. The ROC Board is comprised of Region 1, Region 4 and representatives of Clay, Calhoun and Roane counties. ROC is an established nonprofit.</p> <p>Mr. Roberts noted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Regional Optical Communications (ROC) is an established entity. • ROC is the result of two years of work. • This is a draft study. • ROC is working to secure funding within the 14 counties with larger projects and smaller projects, • Also includes Clay, Calhoun and Roane. • The project is based upon a regional perspective. Local governments did not understand how to bring projects together. • ROC is a champion for the region. • ROC works in partnership with Thompson & Litton and Blue Ridge Advisory Group. Thompson handles technical areas and Blue Ridge handles market items. • The total population of these 14 counties in the regions is 20-22 percent of the State's population, and 25 percent of the State's counties. • Broadband is at the forefront of development efforts and aligns with the WV Development Office's site readiness initiative. • Market analysis revealed that cable television is being cut and moving toward mobile devices. The report includes consideration of 5G. 5G will help but not a complete solution. • The Takeaway – great opportunity, broken out from years 1 through 10. <p>Development of middle mile: Mr. Roberts noted that Blue Ridge did initial outreach to anchor institutions and revealed good service in metro areas.</p>

However, the area is viewed as underserved because there is only one wholesale fiber backhaul line. This is limiting. Speeds are changing over time. In 5 years, 25/3 will be antiquated. Viewing as long-term investment. Looking for success next 20 to 30 years. Touched on FCC data and maps of areas.

Mr. Roberts noted the impact of broadband in, workforce, real estate, tourism, and all economic sectors. He discussed lack of speed for schools and education and described students at McDonald's doing homework, noting that this is more common than most realize.

ROC Findings and Recommendations: Need a conduit to extend middle mile. The project team has identified barriers:

- It is difficult to define areas that serve areas that serve the greater need without this being viewed as overbuilding.
- Companies are asked to look beyond cost per mile and look at larger issue and long term goals.
- Main issue is gaining access to outside internet source.
- Best options are Bluefield or Pearisburg and expand interconnectivity.
- Will also need to rely on wireless providers and use existing infrastructure wherever possible to reach areas with less density.

Funding resources: USDA, EDA, HUD CDBG, ARC, FCC. One size does not fit all. Region 1 has 6 CDBG applications and one ARC application pending. Region 4 has 6 CDBG applications pending and two ARC applications pending.

Work with Utilities and Partners: ROC is seeking to work with AEP and First Energy so that ROC can be partner across areas. As entities are building out ROC can serve as a manager of the fiber assets. ROC is reviewing operational models and backhaul rates.

With recent announcements of ZAYO and MMI. The Council suggested that ROC work directly with MMI and this is underway. Mr. Roberts is also working with Point Broadband and other lit networks. ROC has developed a list of projects that show cost of going from point A to Point B with estimates and installation techniques. The total cost for buried fiber is \$52 million, for aerial installation cost is \$22 million. Based upon \$95,000 per mile and \$40,000 per mile for aerial. Includes Regions 1 & 4 does not include CCR.

ROC developed a scoring matrix to rank projects in 14 counties. These are also mapped. Also show HUD eligibility and a breakdown of projects by Region and by county. The entire project has been two years in the making. The ability of picking up CCR added value.

Strategy is to focus on middle mile as major emphasis, then focus on last mile. Facilitate communication among all members. View of southern West Virginia as a cooperative effort. There is constant communication and the ROC model is enabling greater efficiency in pursuit of federal funds due to regional perspective. Do not want to operate in limited boundaries without serving project as a whole.

The ROC initiative is part of the Regional Council's overall mission to improve infrastructure in the area. John Tuggle mentioned the USDA ReConnect application in Pocahontas County and Roane EDA \$8 million

ReConnect application. This would eventually become part of the ROC network. Mr. Tuggle thanked Amanda Smarr for her work and reiterated interest in working with First Energy to develop potential project areas. He stated that the ROC approach can be replicated. In consultation with review of grid and substation needs.

Chair Hinton asked if ROC was reviewing population data, number of homes, customer counts, to include residential and business customers. Hinton asked if ROC had reviewed NMTCs and Mr. Tuggle responded that they were aware of the opportunity. Mr. Tuggle stated that the term “customer per mile” is problematic and a review of number of customers and the end goal with a perspective on complete project is needed. Hinton asked if ROC had gained soft commitments from providers and Mr. Roberts indicated that these discussions were ongoing.

Chair Hinton indicated that this great work was a result of three-year effort to develop the model of infrastructure to include a master plan and priority list and that this is needed to capitalize on federal funding opportunities. Chair Hinton thanked ROC for work. ROC thanked the Council, the WVDO and US EDA and thanked Kris Warner at USDA for his personal attention to broadband issues in West Virginia.

Vice Chair R. Morris described way the ROC initiative has executed a vision and applauded all efforts.

Mr. Tuggle and Mr. Roberts asked that the Council facilitate relationships with the utility companies, and indicated that this level of oversight ROC could provide was needed and that other areas of the state would benefit.

Mike Graney, Executive Director of the WVDO, asked if ROC would be able to share their presentation with other areas of the State. Mr. Tuggle and Mr. Roberts indicated that leaders of the regions would need to be on board. The next regional council conference is in September.

Concerning ARC funding specifically, Mr. Tuggle indicated that the State needed to establish a basic agency and Mr. Graney indicated that this was in development.

Del. Linville asked if the Council would receive the data that ROC has collected. Mr. Tuggle indicated that this would be shared. GIS information is being submitted to CarolAnn Williams. Discussion was that this may be useful in challenging FCC data as it includes data points for businesses.

Del. Linville also asked about partnership with utility companies. How would this be structured? ROC would like to discuss this in terms of lease rates as a nonprofit and execute agreements with ISPs. This is still in development. ROC would act as a broker to sublease with the goal and function of providing service to local governments and ensuring performance standards. Legislative concern would be protection of rate payer and the WV Public Service Commission would review. Mr. Tuggle stated that ROC understands that the WVPSC would be the final authority on those issues as they do with water and wastewater projects. He noted that the Regional Councils are keenly aware of these requirements. He further explained that thus far, funding applicants are the local governments. The long-term vision is for ROC to apply and possibly take on debt. Del. Linville asked if there is a movement toward control rather than

	<p>facilitation. Mr. Tuggle indicated that control was not the goal but there should be a performance measure and that agreements would need to be developed. Service provision is the main goal. Because the ROC board is made of local elected leaders and as public servants, they represent local governments and communities. Del. Linville will introduce ROC to Max Wilkinson, chief counsel for subject matter committees, to make sure all parties are informed and to work together on any legislative process.</p> <p>This concluded the ROC presentation</p>
<p>8. 2020 Legislation</p>	<p>HB 4015: http://www.wvlegislature.gov/4015: Relating to Broadband Enhancement and Expansion HB 4619: http://www.wvlegislature.gov/Bill_Status/4619: Approving plans proposed by electric utilities to install middle-mile broadband fiber.</p> <p>Ally Shultz, legal counsel with Bowles Rice, presented information on both bills. At the time of this meeting, official versions were not available. Ms. Shultz detailed that HB 4619 passed with an amendment clarified that a public utility running middle mile fiber would not be considered a public utility under Section 24-2-1.</p> <p>This section was added as a revision to the minutes to clarify statements concerning HB4619: This legislation states, "§24-2-1o(i) The council or the commission may not act to limit the number of last-mile broadband Internet providers eligible to be contracted to utilize the middle-mile fiber infrastructure constructed as part of a project proposed pursuant to this section. No board, commission, agency, or other governmental body may regulate the costs extended to a broadband customer from any last-mile broadband Internet service provider. Nothing in this subsection shall prevent the commission from reviewing, modifying, and approving or denying the cost or means of providing a middle-mile fiber proposed project pursuant to this section"</p> <p>Concerning HB 4015, there were floor amendments by Sen. Plymale creating term limits for council members and the chair and vice chair. The term limits are three consecutive three-year terms and for the chair and vice-chair two consecutive two-year terms. Del. Linville clarified that the term limits applied to these roles specifically. He stated that this was partially accurate and noted that the entire bill was struck except for the vertical asset management act. The advanced regulatory environmental analysis piece, the shot clock, and changes to the WVEDA broadband loan insurance program, as requested by the Council, were removed. For the benefit of the Council, the bill was received late in the evening on the last day of session, so conference committees were not feasible.</p> <p>Member R. Pearson asked to clarify that restrictions on service by the officers and members of the Council did pass. Del. Linville responded that this was an amendment offered by Sen. Plymale. The House concurred and the bill was submitted to the Governor.</p> <p>Chair Hinton asked if this was prospective or retroactive and Del. Linville stated that this should be asked of Sen. Plymale. Chair Hinton also asked if this was legislative intent. Member Pearson stated concern that this was shortsighted as matters as complex as those presented by ROC and those that come before the Council, require experience. He further stated that he did not understand the rationale for such limitations. These are</p>

complex issues and experience; performance and results would be more important than a last-minute amendment.

Del. Linville noted that nothing precludes members from serving for nine years, and the officers would serve four years. Member Pearson asked if the Council elects the chairman and vice chairman and is concerned by the substitution of judgement by last minute legislation action in matters that could otherwise be exercised by the Council. Chair Hinton asked if Del. Linville supported the amendment. Del. Linville affirmed that he voted in favor, noting the measure was unanimously approved by the Senate and supported the measure in general. Chair Hinton asked what is the benefit, and Del. Linville responded that this was the will and pleasure of the Senate and that having new and good ideas, as in the Legislature and Congress, and other bodies is favored.

Del. Linville noted that there were concerns by the Council that there was no consultation on the legislative agenda and Del. Linville wished to correct this by saying that he presented information to the Council at the November 2019 meeting. Further, he had consulted with Kelly Workman on proposed loan insurance program revisions. Went to great lengths to include the Council and seek input.

Chair Hinton indicated that there could be more engagement and did not recall specific recommendations on the loan insurance program.

Kelly Workman indicated that over the course of 2019, she recommended changed to the broadband loan insurance program related to the speed thresholds and number of providers that posed a limitation for eligibility, upon request of the legislative offices. She noted that the Infrastructure Committee met, along with Max Wilkinson and Jeff Proctor. The committee discussed numerous concerns related to utilization of the right of way, and Ms. Workman also provided feedback concerning the Dig Once policy. She indicated that she was not involved in discussion of term limits and that her conversations were related to the loan insurance program and Dig Once policy. There was no consultation on the vertical assets inventory. Although this item is included in the Council's five-year plan to develop this area more thoroughly and ascertain where these assets are located, she was not part of any consultation on this specific legislation.

Chair Hinton indicated that the Council should establish a plan to develop expectations to meet goals of the Legislature. Del. Linville stated that he would continue to seek input from the Council on broadband expansion in West Virginia. There was a discussion regarding voting rights, and this was not included in the final bill, therefore the legislative members remain ex-officio

CTO Josh Spence indicated that HB4015 assigned the responsibility to the WV Department of Administration and that he would work with the Real Estate Division for procurement of the study. He indicated that the Office of Technology would consult with the Council as the process moves forward.

Referring to an item in the February 2020 minutes, Del. Linville asked if the Council wanted to serve in a management role of towers. Chari Hinton said the Council did not have capacity to act as administrator. Chair Hinton

	indicated that the Council would engage with the WV Office of Technology but did not seek an administrative role.
9. Broadband Funding Opportunities and Training	<p>ARC POWER: March 27, 2020, 5:00pm (ET): POWER Portal) Kelly Workman stated that ARC Power closed March 27, with letters of intent being submitted by the end of February. There are 5-7 potential applications. Previously, it was understood that USDA or US EDA would have administered these projects. However, these agencies have not agreed to act as project administrators. Therefore, the State would need to develop a responsible agency to administer these projects. Mike Graney, Executive Director of the WV Development Office, is considering options for supporting ARC POWER, and any other ARC funding.</p> <p>Ms. Workman announced that Todd Goddard has joined the broadband team. Mr. Goddard is experienced in CDBG water infrastructure and familiar with state and federal development programs and brings this experience to management of broadband projects administered by cdbg and ARC programs.</p> <p>Member Cole asked if there was an issue with the Speed Test. Ms. Workman indicated that this was related to a procurement issue. Previously, the speed test was purchased by a subscription and must be procured through competitive meeting. The process has taken longer than expected but should be resolved soon.</p> <p>CTO Josh Spence asked that the Council review options for the next Council meeting and legal counsel indicated that the Council could meet by teleconference.</p> <p>As a final point, Chair Hinton referred to the earlier question in the February minutes concerning the Council's intention regarding management of vertical infrastructure. He clarified that this was a result of general discussion after Member Pearson raised the suggestion that if the Council would be involved in consultation on vertical assets with WVOT that a committee would be formed to work with WVOT, but there was not intent for management by the Council.</p> <p>Chair Hinton asked for a motion to adjourn, offered by Vice Chair R. Morris.</p>
10. Public Comment	Sign-In for Public Comment
11. Next Meeting Date	April 9, 2020, 10:00 a.m.; Building 3, First Floor
12. Adjournment	

Action Items

No.	Description	Assigned To	Month Identified	Target Completion Date		
1.	Legal and Cooperative Toolkit and Training	WVU Law	June 2017	Underway by WVU Law Clinic		
2.	Broadband Hub ARC Broadband Hub/Mapping Project	K. Workman, C. Williams, WVGES	November 2018	Mapping in 10 counties complete and added to website. Final reports to be submitted to ARC March 2020		
3.	FCC 477 January 8, 2020 Mapping Update	Commerce, C. Williams	February 2020	<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td data-bbox="1170 1864 1552 1921">Latest FCC Data Release Mapping</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1170 1921 1552 1953" style="text-align: center;">Underway</td> </tr> </table>	Latest FCC Data Release Mapping	Underway
Latest FCC Data Release Mapping						
Underway						

4.	NTIA/National Broadband Availability Map	K. Workman, C. Williams	February 2019	Two-year project. 5/10/2019 Initial Data from Phase One States.
5.	FCC RDOF Workshop		January 2020	April 2020