

Idaho Broadband Advisory Board Meeting

Monday, July 26, 2021

700 W Jefferson, Boise, ID 83702

Room-WW53

Idaho Broadband Advisory Board Members

Chairman, Rep. John Vander Woude, *Idaho Legislator*
Rep. Megan Blanksma, *Idaho Legislator*
Rep. Barbara Ehardt, *Idaho Legislator (Z)*
Sen. Doug Ricks, *Idaho Legislator*
Mitch Watkins, *Watkins Distribution*
Margie Watson, *JC Watson & Company*
Andrew Emerson, *MH Solutions*
Sen. David Nelson, *Idaho Legislator*
Not in Attendance:

Idaho Commerce Staff

Tom Kealey, *Director Idaho Commerce*
Eric Forsch, *Broadband Development Manager*
Andrea Vlassis-Zahn, *Broadband Development Coordinator*
Cathy Perry, *Grants and Contracts Analyst*
Magaly Carrillo, *Community Development Analyst*
James Varner, *Community Development Analyst*

Vice Chair Sen. Carl Crabtree, *Idaho Legislator*

(Z) denotes via Zoom

Call to Order

Chairman Rep. John Vander Woude called the meeting to order at 1:01 with a quorum present.

Roll Call

Identification that there was a quorum- no specific individual identified Actual roll call done before the adjournment of the meeting

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Vander Woude noted that the minutes for July 17, 2021, Idaho Broadband Advisory Board meeting had been distributed. There were no corrections. Motion made by Margie Watson, seconded by David Nelson, All in favor approved the minutes as distributed.

Idaho Broadband Grant Application Review- \$10 million Cares Act Funds

The Idaho Broadband Advisory Board discussed the options on how to score and add projects to a wish list. It was preferred that Idaho Commerce gave their recommendations first and then compare to the individual lists made by each member of the Board. The criteria used to rank the projects by the Board ranged from cost by household, distribute money equally between regions to making sure unserved and underserved areas were considered.

The criteria used to score by Idaho Commerce was based on the completeness of the application, scope of work, how they projects promote equal access, and if they meet CARES criteria. Match was not considered as part of the scoring; however, the board may decide to take match into consideration. It is important to note that several projects were challenged. Challenges can be contested, and grantees have until Wednesday, July 28th to respond.

Libraries

Discussion:

Projects are being challenged because ISPs are mentioning that there is already existing infrastructure. Board members asked if it is possible to fund projects but decide to reduce the money that will be given. For example, the libraries are asking for an amount of one million. Commerce answered that according to Section 4, item 3 in the grant guidelines, it is fine to reduce the amounts awarded from the amount requested.

Motion

Go over statewide agencies first, such as libraries.

Motion by: Senator Ricks
Second by Margie Watson
All in favor. Motion Approved.

Eric Forsch explained the library's project. The project's scope of work includes adding hot spots outside of the library, near the parking lot so people can connect while in their car. This is important because during a Telehealth visit, users need privacy. Due to concerns from the board members. Commerce will ask the applicants about the life span of the routers that will be outside of the libraries and what the long-term expenses will be.

Motion:

To add the 25 libraries to the recommendation list (App. 004759)

Motion by: Mitch Watkins

Second by: Representative Ehardt

Discussion and questions:

All in favor. Motion Approved

Discussion:

Board members asked about how a community is labeled as underserved or unserved. Commerce responded that it is based on the information the applicant provided on the application as well as other information sources that are available to Commerce. In addition, board members were concerned about the lawsuit with Bonner County as they had reapplied for a grant. Commerce mentioned that the lawsuit has been resolved.

Eric Forsch presented projects form Bonner County (App. 004866 and App. 004867)

Motion:

Add the two unserved projects recommended by Commerce to wish list.

Motion by: Representative Blanksma

Second by: Senator Nelson

All in favor. Motion Approved

REGION 2

Eric Forsch presented projects from Idaho County (App. 004758) and Lewis County (App. 004768) to the board.

Motion:

To add all unserved proposals except for Farragut State Park to the project list in the interest of time. (App. 004867, App. 004845, App. 004784, App. 004841, App. 004790)

Motion by: Representative Blanksma

Second by: Mitch Watkins

All in favor. Motion Approved

Region 4:

Eric Forsch presented the project from Lincoln County (App. 004798)

Motion

To add project 4798 to list.

Motion by: Representative Blanksma

Second by: Margie Watson

All in favor. Motion Approved.

Region 5:

Projects already included on list

Region 6:

Eric Forsch presented the projects from the City of Roberts (App. 004857) and Ririe (App.004805)

Motion

To add projects 4805 and 4857 to the list.

Motion by: Representative Blanksma

Second by: Margie Watson

All in favor. Motion Approved.

Region 7:

Eric Forsch presented the project from the City of Carey (App.004815)

Motion

To add Carey to the project to list.

Motion by: Mitch Watkins

Second by: Representative Blanksma

All in favor. Motion Approved.

Discussion:

Recommended that Commerce prioritizes the projects on the list to move quickly in the next meeting. In addition, the board plans on adding extra projects to the list in case some projects are unable to move forward, there are backup projects to choose from.

Motion:

To add project of Twin Lakes (App. 004836) to the list.

Motion by: Margie Watson

Second by: Representative Blanksma

Substitute Motion:

To include projects 004754, 004758 and 004748 to the list. Leave out Twin Lakes (4836).

Motion by: Senator Ricks

Second by: Senator Nelson

Roll call for substitute motion:

Chairman Rep. Vander Woude: no

Representative Blanksma: no

Representative Ehardt: no

Senator Ricks: yes

Senator Nelson: yes

Andrew Emerson: yes

Mitch Watkins: yes

Margie Watson: no

Substitute motion is tie vote, fails to pass.

Original motion passes with 3 no's.

Discussion:

The board members mentioned that this list was a wish list and will not be approving a final list to be funded until all challenges have been received by Wednesday, July 28, 2021.

Furthermore, after the challenges have been received, Commerce and DAG will look the projects over. Commerce will send an updated spreadsheet with the projects that were moved to the wish list. The board is planning for a meeting for next week to revise the projects that received challenges. After that meeting, the board will finalize the list to be able to move forward with funding.

Adjournment

Chairman Rep. John Vander Woude called the meeting to adjourn at 3:36 p.m.