

REGULAR MEETING of the WYOMING BROADBAND ADVISORY COUNCIL

Friday, September 6, 2019 | in the Afton Civic Center at 150 South Washington Street, Afton, WY

And by Webinar: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/679998864715000589>

Meeting Agenda

(Times and order of agenda are tentative and subject to change without notice)

8:00 a.m. CONVENE PUBLIC MEETING – Chairman Doug Wilson

- Pledge of Allegiance
- Welcome and Introductions of Board Members
- **ACTION ITEM:** Consideration of approval of minutes from May 17, 2019 regular meeting at Riverton
- Preview of Agenda

8:15 a.m. EXECUTIVE SESSION to receive legal advice

- **ACTION ITEM:** Consideration of Executive Session for purposes of legal advice

10:00 a.m. MORNING BREAK

10:15 a.m. GUEST SPEAKER: Jerimiah Rieman – Executive Director, Wyoming County Commissioners Association

10:30 a.m. GUEST SPEAKER: Thomas Lacock – Associate State Director of Communications, AARP Wyoming

10:45 a.m. GUEST SPEAKER: Scott Sutherland – Program Director, USDA Rural Development

- ReConnect Loan and Grant Program: <https://www.usda.gov/reconnect>
- Connect America Fund – Phase II (CAF II): <https://www.fcc.gov/auction/903>

11:00 a.m. BROADBAND PROVIDER UPDATES

- Silver Star Communications
- Range Telephone Cooperative
- Union Wireless

12:00 p.m. LUNCH BREAK

1:00 p.m. NEW BUSINESS

- Opportunities for enhanced coordination with tribes and local governments to leverage public-private partnerships for broadband enhancement projects
- Opportunities to engage external stakeholders in support of broadband enhancement projects
- Other topics:
 - Community Empowerment Plan

- State Broadband Leaders Network (SBLN) Meeting Update
- Disconnected – 7 Lessons on Fixing the Digital Divide

1:30 p.m. OLD BUSINESS

- Updates and distribution of WY Broadband Enhancement Plan v2.0
- Update on status and further discussion regarding listing of additional funding opportunities for WY Broadband Enhancement Plan efforts
- Review current status of administrative procedures, rulemaking, launch of the WY Broadband Enhancement Plan Grant Program and any current pending applications
- Discussion of planned process for review of applications by the WY Broadband Advisory Council and recommendations to the WBC Community Grant and Loan Committee
- Update on recent activities and future plans of Broadband Manager
 - Identify opportunities for assistance from Broadband Advisory Council
- Review and discuss current Broadband related activities within specific counties
 - Goshen, Niobrara, Platte, Sweetwater, Sublette, Lincoln, Crook and others
- Review current status and any updates on the Broadband Data Mapping effort and brief demo of updated web portal solution
- Round-table updates and discussion from supporting working groups
 - **Broadband Data Mapping** – Teal Wyckoff
 - **Public-Private Partnerships & Funding** – Lauren Schoenfeld
 - **Barriers & Opportunities** – Barbara Sessions
 - **Emerging Technologies** – Jason Miller
 - **Telehealth** – Randy Miller
- Status updates from WBC Regional Directors regarding activities related to the WY Broadband Enhancement Plan in their areas

3:00 p.m. AFTERNOON BREAK

3:15 p.m. PUBLIC COMMENT and FOLLOW-UP

3:45 p.m. FUTURE PLANNING

- Discuss next steps and activities of the Broadband Advisory Council and the Broadband Enhancement Plan
 - Identify additional opportunities for communications and outreach
- Last quarterly meeting of 2019 will be in Cheyenne on Tuesday, December 3 8:00a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- Discussion on potential dates, times and locations for 2020 quarterly meetings
- Review potential guests and speakers for future meetings:
 - Policy Director from Governor Gordon’s Office
 - Emerging Technology Provider presentation(s)
 - Middle Mile Projects Success and Launch Examples (Project THOR, Colorado)
 - Federal Agency Broadband Mapping Initiative updates

4:00 p.m. CLOSING REMARKS and ADJOURNMENT

REGULAR MEETING of the WYOMING BROADBAND ADVISORY COUNCIL

Friday, September 6, 2019 at the Afton Civic Center and by Webinar

COUNCIL PRESENT: Senator Dan Dockstader, Patrick Lawson, Zane Logan, Jason Miller, Erik Rasmussen, Barbara Sessions, Lauren Schoenfeld, Barbara Sessions, Representative Albert Sommers, Scott Sutherland, Doug Wilson

STAFF PRESENT: Warren Appel, Russ Elliott, Devin Kenney, Ben Peterson, Elaina Zempel

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Doug Wilson called the meeting to order at 8:04 a.m. and led the Council in the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll was called and quorum was established.

Discussion was had about improving formalities among this Council, including Roberts' Rules and the Wyoming Public Meetings Act. Rep. Sommers emphasized the importance of accurate and complete minutes for legislative reasons.

- **ACTION ITEM:** Motion to table approval of minutes pending corrections by Mr. Lawson, second by Mr. Logan, and no discussion. Motion carried unanimously. Minutes will be revised and presented for consideration following the lunch break.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- **ACTION ITEM:** Motion to enter executive session for purposes of receiving legal advice by Ms. Schoenfeld, second by Mr. Rasmussen, and no discussion. Motion carried unanimously. Members of the public were excused to the lobby.

GUEST SPEAKERS

Jerimiah Rieman of the Wyoming County Commissioners Association joined the meeting to talk about the conversations on public-private partnerships being held among county commissions around the state, and other recent efforts of the Association on broadband enhancement.

Tom Lacock from the Wyoming Chapter of AARP on the importance of broadband technology to the physical and mental health of older citizens as it pertains to telehealth access and social isolation, particularly for rural citizens.

New Council member Scott Sutherland spoke to the Council about an upcoming Rural Broadband Summit to be held in Casper this October focused on broadband development and enhancement for rural communities and other best practices to address the digital divide. This summit is being organized/conducted as a cooperative effort between this Council, the USDA, and the Department of Commerce/National Telecommunications and Information Administration. Sutherland then led the Council on a discussion of funding available under two USDA programs: the ReConnect Grant and Loan Program and the Connect America Fund.

PROVIDER UPDATES

Barbara Sessions of Silver Star Communications spoke about the history of Silver Star, company offerings and coverage areas, and projects underway, including 180 new fiber drops in Buffalo Valley and a WYDOT highway relocation project in Star Valley which will allow Silver Star to overbuild their ILEC network with fiber. Other efforts include a 10 Gig network being piloted with Jackson Hole Airport, machine learning and predictive analytics using Artificial Intelligence, IoT upgrades, and a \$100 million investment in Fiber to the Home services.

Jason Hendricks of The Range Companies discussed the various entities under their umbrella, and shared the cutover to fiber in Sundance is nearing completion following backhaul improvements, with only 120 connections not yet cut over. Range is currently exploring expansion of their fiber network into Beulah, and is working in internal improvements and testing to ensure deployments meet expectations and requirements. Other accomplishments include the rollout of Phases 3 and 4 expansions in Newcastle, Phase 2 expansion in Pine Bluffs, and investments on expansion in the areas adjacent to Worland.

Brian Woody of Union Wireless shared updates on a project deploying fiber in between Sublette and Sweetwater counties and connecting communities such as Granger, Opal, Big Piney and Marbleton to this new fiber circuit. The circuit will help improve redundancy and accessibility in that portion of the state, though Woody mentioned progress has been slower than expected due to permitting issues. Three new zones of fiber to premises have been completed in Saratoga this summer, and the company has recently lit a middle mile section of fiber between Manila, UT and Mountain View which connects a number of small communities in southwest Wyoming.

NEW BUSINESS

Broadband Manager Russ Elliott again mentioned the upcoming USDA/NTIA Rural Broadband Summit in Casper being a unique opportunity for Wyoming as there are only six such meetings held each year.

Elliott reviewed a draft community technical resource document produced by the Broadband Advisory Council outlining Seven Steps to Better Community Broadband which breaks the steps down in simple pieces and will provide guidelines for communities on how to have conversations with stakeholders and providers. Elliott encouraged members to share their feedback on this draft document. Rep. Sommers suggested there is need for technical assistance and grant-writing assistance in some communities, especially as such conversations gain traction. Wyoming Business Council Western Region Director Elaina Zempel responded to confirm Sommers' comments and said many communities have great resources, but not all communities have all the information or support they need to carry things forward.

Elliott spoke on the traction being gained in 31 other states with many hundreds of millions of dollars on the table to encourage broadband growth in those states. Also notable is the recognition of Wyoming's broadband mapping efforts in a circular prepared by the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City focused on the digital divide.

OLD BUSINESS

Elliott informed the board there are two pending applications for the grant program, and he anticipates additional applicants will yet come. Elliott suggested the existing allocation of grant funds may quickly be exhausted based on the conversations being held around the state and the data coming from the mapping initiative clearly demonstrating unserved areas.

Teal Wyckoff of the University of Wyoming WyGIS team shared the updates to the broadband mapping portal which serve to capture responses from persons who have internet options but choose – for whatever reason – to not have it, or for those residents whose current service was unable to be collected directly through the mapping tool. The Crook County commissioners conducted a mailing of their county to collect some of this data, as did the Wyoming Rural Electric Association in the southeast portion of the state. Representative Sommers told the Council about an initiative by the Superintendent of Schools in Sublette County where each parent received a text message asking them to submit their information to the broadband map, which was very successful.

Ms. Schoenfeld shared updates from the Public-Private Partnerships working group. Schoenfeld is seeking nominations from Council members for individuals in communities to participate in the group to bring some fresh ideas and energy. Other updates include updates to the available funding list and adding this information to our website, and acknowledged the technical resource document shared earlier as a powerful tool to engage communities. Rep. Sommers suggested the working group should hold discussions on how to improve language regarding public-private partnerships in legislation.

Ms. Sessions gave an update from the Barriers & Opportunities working group, including 19 new action items. These include creation of a utility corridor through Federal lands, Franchise and Right-of-Way legislation, changes to the grant program which would allow grants directly to providers, and working with the state to be permitting agency as they pertain to rights of way and utility corridors. Legislative items include improvements to franchise language, the grant fund for providers, and changing language relating to “like for like” and allowing providers to retire obsolete technology in place. The Wyoming Medical Association continues to share the need for reliable access for small/rural towns as it pertains to telehealth, and has even gone so far as to request access to the Wyoming Unified Network to accomplish this, or even a statewide RFP to allow existing providers to build out and support an “agnostic” network dedicated to telehealth.

Mr. Jason Miller provided an update from the Emerging Technologies workgroup, covering topics including AT&T’s AirGig project, Thermoscatter, Cellular and Millimeter wave technologies, Atmospheric technologies including balloons and drones, and LEO/MEO satellites. Miller shared projections showing internet connectivity requirements by 2025 will be at 1 gbps for the average subscriber, so this number is something the Council should be contemplating to future-proof efforts.

Chairman Wilson shared an emailed update from Randy Miller for the Telehealth workgroup. Focus includes coordination among providers to ensure small clinics in rural areas have the bandwidth they need to support telehealth activities, as well as to build better relationships between patients and their healthcare providers.

FUTURE PLANNING

- **ACTION ITEM:** Motion to approve minutes from the May 2019 meeting at Riverton as-corrected by Ms. Sessions, second by Mr. Logan. Additional corrections include the noting Mr. Jason Miller as the OCIO designee. Motion carried unanimously.
- **ACTION ITEM:** Motion to nominate Ms. Schoenfeld as Interim Chair by Ms. Sessions, second by Mr. Jason Miller, and no discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

Potential date for the Spring 2020 meeting is March 3 at Greybull with other 2020 locations and dates pending confirmation by the Wyoming Business Council Board of Directors.

Elliott indicated he has received a commitment from Governor Gordon’s Chief of Staff Buck McVeigh to present at the December 2019 meeting. Other potential speakers would include a representative from WYDOT.

Elliott formally recognized outgoing Chair Doug Wilson for his leadership and the accomplishments over the past year. Wilson is relocating to Oregon for new professional opportunities and received well-wishes from this Council in his new endeavors.

There being no further business before this Council, Ms. Schoenfeld adjourned the meeting at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Warren R. Appel, Agency Services Manager

Date

Lauren Schoenfeld, Interim Chair

Date