California Broadband Council
March 21, 2019 Meeting Minutes

The California Broadband Council met on Thursday, March 21, 2019 at 1:00 p.m. in the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration Board Room, 450 N Street, Sacramento, CA.

Roll Call:

A quorum was established to being the meeting.

The following members of designees were in attendance:

1. Amy Tong, Director, California Department of Technology (CDT)
2. Sunne Wright-McPeak, President, California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF)
3. Patrick Mallon, Assistant Director, CA Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) (for Dir. Mark Ghilarducci)
4. Martha Guzman Aceves, Commissioner, California Public Utilities Commission
5. Jerry Winkler, Director, California Department of Education (for Superintendent Tom Torlakson)
6. Brent Jamison, Deputy Director, Department of General Services (for Director Daniel Kim)
7. George Akiyama, Chief Information Officer, Caltrans (for Secretary Brian Annis)
8. Sarah Smith, Principal Consultant, Senate Energy, Utilities and Communications Committee (for Senator Hueso)

Not present:

1. Assembly member Mike Gipson

Agenda Item 1 – Chairperson Welcome and Introductions

Chairperson Amy Tong welcomed everyone to the first meeting of 2019 and provided and overview of the agenda.

Agenda Item 2 – 2018 Recap and Updates

CalTrans Update

Chris Schmidt, Chief of the Division of Transportation and Planning, Caltrans, provided an update on the identification of strategic corridors and the Dig Once program. Maps of existing opportunities were provided along with maps identifying excess capacity that could be shared with industry.

Mr. Schmidt made the following points:

- Both existing opportunities and excess capacity was significant in urban areas but absent in rural areas
- A better dialogue with the broadband industry is needs.
- Caltrans is working with the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) on next steps and how to have the conversations with industry.

Comments from Council:

FirstNet Update:

Patrick Mallon, Assistant Director, CA Office of Emergency Services, provided an update on FirstNet as reported at the December 8, 2018 CalFRN meeting.

AT&T is evaluating coverage needs at all state fairgrounds with the understanding that these sites are used as command posts for major disasters and/or housing impacted residents.

Mr. Mallon will work to get an estimated time of completion for the assessment and if the results can be shared. The information may be considered proprietary and subject to a non-disclosure agreement.

Any gap coverage provided will be cellular, not fiber.

USDA ReConnect Program:

Robert Tse, US Department of Agriculture provided an update and information on USDA's ReConnect grant and loan program

- California ranked third in the number of comments received for this program
- Deadline dates as follows:
    - May 31, 2019—Competitive pure grant funds
    - June 21, 2019—Competitive program. Funds are 50% grant and 50% loan
    - July 2019—Loan program on a first come-first served basis
- Funding is based on points scoring
- Points are given to applicants in states that have a state broadband plan
- USDA has not defined "state broadband plan"
- It is anticipated that another $550 million will be available next FY.

Task Force Updates

Stephanie Tom gave a brief overview of the three CA Broadband Council Task Forces that help the council further the mission to reach 98% access and 90% adoption by 2023. A key focus moving forward will be on Digital Equity.

Matthew Rantanen, member of the Tribal Task Force, provided an update on the activities:

- The Task force continues to promote the Tribal Task Force Broadband Access and Adoption Survey of the 109 federally recognized tribes
- Current response rate is 30%
- Goal is to achieve 50% response rate by June 1
- The survey will provide a true baseline of access to broadband by the tribes as well as the needs
- Data can be used to align unserved/underserved areas with identified strategic corridors, areas lacking fiber for FirstNet and help areas connect with grant programs.

Councilmember Sunne Wright McPeak commented that some tribal lands still need electricity as much as broadband. The Rural Electrification Act for grants and loans still exist for this purpose.

Mr. Rantanen also commented that fiber is not always a good option as many tribal lands have geographical issues that make fiber in the ground difficult. There need to be towers but those need electricity. In some areas, solar is not a viable option and coordination with utilities would be helpful.

Michael Todd, member of the Surplus Equipment Task Force, provided an update on the activities:

- The Surplus Equipment Task Force has facilitated the donation of over 500 state surplus computers
- The Task Force is partnering with the City of Sacramento for an event in October during Digital Inclusion Week
- There is a need for more nonprofit refurbishers to help with refurbishing surplus equipment and make it usable for community members
- Existing law creates challenges to get surplus computers from state to the community easily
- Marketing materials are being developed for this program
- Working to identify more refurbishers

Action: Jerry Winkler will reach out to have a conversation with schools regarding awareness of surplus equipment program.

Laura Askins will send Sarah Smith relevant statutes related to the surplus equipment program.

Council member Brent Jamison mentioned ramping up the CalPIA program as it not subject to the same restrictions placed on other state entities with regards to surplus

equipment donations. It was noted that the CalPIA program retains 4 of every 5 computers that are refurbished.

Council member Sunne Wright McPeak also cautioned to be careful not to cut the community-based organizations (CBO) out. Three of the five current refurbishers are CASF grant recipients.

Michael Pierce, member of the Long Term Goals/Advisory Task Force provided an update:

- Task Force has reviewed the original 7 Key Objectives and the short term and long term goals proposed by Council Members at the April 2018 meeting
- The state is making progress towards goals
- The state needs a guiding strategy or plan to help prioritized suggested goals
- Recommendations from the Task Force include:
  - Developing a broadband strategic goals document to help guide decision making
  - Identify efforts of each of the entities represented on the Council that further objectives

Agenda Item 3 2019 Strategy and Goals

Sunne Wright McPeak mentioned the recent California Emerging Technology Fund's study on broadband access and the results. She will be sending out the results to be shared.

Break
Chairperson Amy Tong called for a 5 minute break and asked for Sunne Wright McPeak to chair the remainder of the meeting. Chairperson Tong and Councilmember Guzman Aceves were then excused. Stephanie Tom filled in for Amy Tong and Michal Minkus for Martha Guzman Aceves as the designees.

There was a formal request to develop a strategic document for broadband as well as support for the creation of Digital Equity Bill of Rights.

Agenda Item 4 2019 Strategic Discussion

Each member of the council was asked to discuss current efforts related to the mission of the CBC.

California Legislature:
- Interested in the degree to which affordability is an issue.
- Is cost a barrier to access and adoptions?
- There is a policy discussion around service quality and affordability.

CalOES:
- assessing broadband coverage for First Responders at Fairgrounds.
- Assessing speeds—there needs to be a balance in needed speeds
- Assessing appropriate levels of coverage

California Department of Education:
- School Districts are looking at putting up their own towers as an option for access
- School Districts need to provide information to families on affordable offers

Department of General Services
- How can we leverage state contracts such as those for cellular coverage and computers?
- Include provisions in contracting language that can support the mission

Caltrans:

- More collaborative meetings around issues such as the strategic corridor planning
- Provide opportunities to work issues out

California Public Utilities Commission
- Looking at affordability and access
- Digital Equity
- Work to knock down the silos through collaboration

California Department of Technology
- Work to leverage our customers in state, cities and counties.

California Emerging Technology Fund:
- Data from last survey to send out and share with council members
- CBOs are important to the mission
- Utilities are the best source of low income data in the state.

Action Items from discussion:

- The Council approved a motion for the Long Term Goals Task Force to create a statewide strategic plan for broadband.

- Council member Guzman Aceves proposed the CPUC would create the "Digital Equity Bill of Rights".

- Each member will assess efforts by the respective entity that furthers the mission of the CBC and plan to report back at the next meeting.

- Brent Jamison to look at contracts and consult with CPUC

- George Akiyama to help follow up on strategic corridors issue.

- Patrick Mallon to provide information and timeline on assessment of fairground.

Public Comment:

Joy Sterling provided comment on the abstract provide related to access in farm fields.

Tom West provided comment on memo to Chairman Tong regarding the CBC supporting minimum speeds of 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload stating that anything less in not adequate, especially for future needs.

Robert Tse commented that the USDA ReConnect Grant program awards 20 points for 100 Mbps symmetrical speeds.

David Espinoza, CSU-Chico, provided comment on coverage maps needed to be more accurate and publically available. Need to integrate coverage from entities such as CENIC and overlay strategic corridors identified by Caltrans.

Robert Osborn, CPUC, announced that the CPUC is planning an en banc in May or June to bring stakeholders together to discuss issues facing the state regarding the communications grid.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:08 p.m.