

California Broadband Council

July 22, 2020
Meeting Minutes

The California Broadband Council (CBC) met on Wednesday, July 22, 2020 at 1:00pm via virtual conference (per [California Executive Order N-25-20](#)).

Agenda Item 1 – Welcome

Council Chair Amy Tong welcomed Council members.

Roll Call

A quorum was established for the meeting.

Member		Designee	Present	Absent
California Department of Technology Director	Amy Tong		X	
California Public Utilities Commission President	Marybel Batjer	Martha Guzman-Aceves	X	
California Office of Emergency Services Director	Mark Ghilarducci	Mitch Medigovich	X	
Superintendent of Public Instruction	Tony Thurmond	Jerry Winkler	X	
Department of General Services Director	Daniel Kim	Brent Jamison	X	
California State Transportation Agency Secretary	David Kim	Lori Pepper	X	
California Emerging Technologies Fund President	Sunne Wright McPeak		X	
California Department of Food and Agriculture	Karen Ross	Arturo Barajas	X	

State Librarian	Greg Lucas	Anne Neville-Bonilla	X	
Governor's Tribal Liaison	Christine Snider		X	
Member of the Senate	Ben Hueso	Sarah Smith	X	
Member of the Assembly	Mike Gipson	Dr. Angelo Williams	X	

Agenda Item 2 – Public Safety Update

California Office of Emergency Services Deputy Director Mitch Medigovich provided a public safety update.

Mr. Medigovich highlighted four key areas of [Next Gen 911](#) - public safety answering point (PSAP) installs, OSP, test and integration, and transition.

The timeline has had a slip of about four to six weeks, some due to COVID, nothing insurmountable, but is contributing to small delays.

All the contracts have been rewarded.

SB 670 approved regulations have been posted.

Public safety broadband options contracts are available on CalNET.

Member McPeak asked how can internet service providers (ISPs) who want to connect to FirstNet or another PSAP can do so in planning for broadband deployment and building that into an application for California Advance Services Fund?

Mr. Medigovich responded that as the system is built out, it will allow access or the ability to interface with the provider that provides the high speed pathway. Intent is after everything is built out is to come back, show where pathways exists, and provide local opportunities.

[State Senate] Designee Smith asked if the Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) is getting the type of cooperation it needs from the providers.

Member Medigovich responded that the ability of contractors to get paid is based on the ability of their subcontractors and so there is cooperation. Cal OES is setting metrics so they are accountable.

Ms. McPeak asked if the build out of the entire system has to happen first, before any ISP could plan for any connection to reach last miles served, and what is that timeframe when that can happen?

Mr. Medigovich responded that it doesn't rely on the entire system being operational but there would need to be a complete region to have completed its build out and its connectivity. It is possible to roll out in regional format as long as everything is in place in both sides and we have the expected redundancy.

Agenda Item 3 – Broadband Deployment Update

California Department of Transportation Broadband Program Manager Elizabeth Dooher introduced herself and provided an update on CalTrans broadband stand alone and partnership projects.

Caltrans processed approximately 900 broadband permits between March 2019 - 2020. Since March of 2020, Caltrans processed more than 1,000 permits. Request for access is greatly increasing for right away to provide services.

In addition to permitting, Caltrans also wants to [invite partnerships with its own projects](#).

Ms. Dooher provided highlights of Caltrans resources including:

- [A map of proposed transportation projects on the State Highway System](#)
- [Caltrans Regional Contacts by District](#)
- [Incorporating Wired Broadband Facility on State Highway Right of Way – User Guide](#)
- [Broadband Installation FAQs](#)
- [Facility Co-location Information Video](#)

The strategic corridors were recommended by the regional consortia.

[A map of the 12 Caltrans districts](#) are on the Caltrans web site.

Ms. Dooher recommended that people familiarize themselves with the Caltrans web site, and contact information is also on the web site. She also noted the information is a work in progress and people should continue checking back on the web site for updates.

Ms. Dooher provided her contact information:

edooher@dot.ca.gov
916/502-2615

Ms. McPeak complemented Ms. Dooher on her work and presentation and Monica Kress-Wooster for her interim work. Ms. McPeak also asked how the Council can help Ms. Dooher and the ISPs shorten the timeframes on the most challenging [permits].

Ms. Dooher noted communication is the key, Caltrans is working to getting quicker turnaround times on their reviews and comments, and that people should feel free to and reach out to Caltrans. Submitting as complete of an application as possible helps Caltrans expedite reviews and that's why they provide a checklist and have premeetings prior to applications.

Agenda Item 4 – Task Force Updates

Council Chair Tong mentioned that during the Council's March 13 meeting, it approved three new task forces – digital inclusion, funding, and programs/policies. Immediately after the meeting everyone pivoted towards COVID so we are going to launch these task forces later this month.

Ms. Tong facilitated discussion about updates and ideas for the digital inclusion and funding task forces, as well as updates from the 2019 task forces.

[State Library] Designee Anne Neville Bonilla provided an overview of things to come with regards to Digital Inclusion. The task force will look for areas of collaboration. California has numerous initiatives to support training and adoption. At a state level the role the Council can play is to help facilitate some of those roles and connections from local governments, nonprofits, state entities, and others who may not be aware others are doing similar work. [California Public Utilities Commission] Designee Guzman-Aceves noted the Council should examine how local entities can leverage efforts. Ms. McPeak provided the example of San Jose and Santa Clara Office of Education collaborative efforts. Next steps will be to plan a subcommittee meeting to start putting action items on the table.

California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) Communications Director Rob Osborn provided a Funding Task Force update. Mr. Osborn introduced CPUC Senior Analyst Peter Platt and lead for the FCC's Digital Opportunities Fund Grant. He will be representing the CPUC on the task force. Mr. Osborn highlighted four areas where the task force may be able to source information on broadband funding:

- Local, such as bond financing which can be used as examples for other localities.
- State funding, such as the broadband improvement grant that went to the schools. Also the CPUC's California Advanced Services Fund (CASF), TeleConnect Fund, etc.
- Federal, such as the FCC's Rural Opportunities Fund and the USDA's Reconnect Fund.

- Nongovernmental sources such as private equity.

Mr. Osborn noted that one of the areas where there is already a lot of work done is the [California Grants Portal](#), which Anne Neville-Bonilla also spearheaded. The aim for this portal is to be a one stop shop for all grants and loans offered on a first come basis by California State Agencies. CPUC is working to provide broadband resources to the portal. We should highlight those programs of benefit to California. CPUC offers an array of data and funding opportunities. Ms. Neville-Bonilla pointed out that there have been many requests for different categories and in order to ensure the database has enough balance so that when one searches the database will provide opportunities. The search bar will bring up all key words. She does not currently foresee a specific category for broadband. If the state offers more broadband-specific grants in the future, broadband could have its own category.

Ms. McPeak asked Ms. Guzman-Aceves that given CASF rules changed on July 1, will the CPUC would open up other application periods in 2020.

Ms. Guzman-Aceves responded that the need is currently greater than funding allows. If funding is not fully exhausted with current round of solicitations, the CPUC would delegate to staff to have an additional round.

Ms. Tong mentioned the final task force is the programs and policies task force to be led by the various agencies' legislative representatives to look at policies/legislation that may be a barrier for a cleanup effort and if there are policies needed to be looked at with the goal of easing the adoption of and elevating the focus on broadband. Council members agreed the task force should move forward for 2020. Ms. Guzman-Aceves recommended agency governmental affairs offices meet soon, given the legislative calendar. Ms. McPeak noted the importance of legislative affairs staff involvement and that it should be elevated to the level of Commissioner Guzman-Aceves, [Senate] Designee Sarah Smith, and [Designee] Angelo Williams and the three would be appropriate task force cochairs. The three agreed to work together to lead the task force. The Council plans on hearing an update during its October meeting.

Department of General Services Chief of Office and Fleet and Asset Management Evan Speer provided a [Surplus Equipment](#) update. Mr. Speer noted the program recently has focused on:

- Making participation easier and more accessible for refurbishers, donees, and state agencies.
- Increasing participation.

The current challenge is on the supply side - having enough equipment to refurbish and distribute. With time, this will be resolved.

[Department of General Services] Designee Brent Jamison thanked Mr. Speer and the task force for all the work they've done for the surplus equipment effort and program growth.

Ms. Guzman-Aceves also thanked Mr. Speer, pointed out the CPUC's Lifeline Foster Youth program, and asked if they should collaborate.

Mr. Speer and the CPUC will follow up after the meeting.

Ms. McPeak noted there could be more collaboration of counties and the Department of Social Services for foster families and youth. State leadership and adoption can't be underestimated.

Mr. Speer noted he will reach out to DGS's Social Services contacts.

Ms. Smith asked about device distribution through schools and districts, noting many schools are unaware the program exists. She also noted schools and districts have informed the Legislature that they are frustrated by the State Allocation Board equipment lifespan requirements because they limit their ability to purchase certain technologies, especially during ad hoc scenarios such as COVID when districts and schools need to get devices to students and families.

Mr. Jamison noted the disconnect may be because the requirements are meant for bond funded facilities modernization and new construction purposes and not for technology equipment. The State Allocation Board allocates bond funding for facilities, not equipment, and there may be some confusion on the district end.

Valley Vision Managing Director Trish Kelly provided a Strategic Corridors update. They submitted information from regional consortia last fall to Caltrans. That data has now been added to the broadband maps. There have been collaborative efforts with regional consortia from the Coast and the Inland Empire. Since then, Caltrans worked with its regional offices to discuss better consistency in permitting standards throughout state regions to help move projects forward and more projects are going through. Regional consortia are interested to know which transportation funding can be used for conduit projects. Several of the broadband regions continue to work with their local governments. The California Association of Councils of Governments is working with consortia and Caltrans, including nonstate highway projects that link to state highway projects, so consortia can work regionally to link to infrastructure investments. Valley Vision is working with Sacramento Area Council of Governments, which took the corridor identification information and mapped fiber miles to it and identified regional projects. Cost estimates for conduits are high. Valley Vision has incorporated the information into its regional infrastructure plan and its overall economic strategy. They are working on updating statewide manual to update policies for infrastructure investments, including joint use of dig once.

Ms. McPeak asked if the current rules allow regional consortia to exhaust what they can do or pursue everything to work with localities and promote adoption?

Ms. Kelly responded that for the infrastructure side it's under CASF grant rules. She added they're not allowed to use that funding for digital inclusion so they raised money from other sources, mostly foundations, noting it would be valuable to have it all because it all fits together. Physical infrastructure, access, and adoption are all important components and they found via COVID efforts that even urban infrastructure needed to be updated.

Mr. Jamison provided a State Contracts update. The task force consists of Department of General Services (DGS) and California Department of Technology (CDT) representatives and met several times to identify possible technology contracts the state could leverage in its efforts to help unserved and underserved populations. They evaluated a number of large information technology contracts, including the CalNET-4 solicitation and concluded the timing wasn't well aligned. DGS and CDT did not have time to implement the new solicitation strategies with impending solicitation without potential service disruption. The task force has been on temporary hiatus with COVID as state agencies have focused on the delivery of critical services to the public. With the new reality of telecommuting, telemedicine, and distance learning, broadband expansion is more important than ever. The task force will be reconvening to again begin evaluating future opportunities to leverage state IT contracts. There will be ongoing evaluations of contracts.

Agenda Item 5 – Council Member Broadband Updates

Members who had updates provided updates.

Ms. Smith noted the end of the legislative sessions will be fast and furious. The legislature is still waiting for updated calendars so the hearing schedule is unknown, it will be a condensed calendar. There are broadband bills. One of the issues the legislature is monitoring is that distance learning stresses are high. It's becoming more challenging for people to physically distance without broadband. The FCC has let the Keep Americans Connected pledge lapse so starting August 1 internet service providers can disconnect and collect for nonpayment and back services. There is concern consumers will lose service or be unable to get service because of economic conditions. Many of the relief measures may result in people having large bills they may not be able to pay. There will be more potential for economic harm to people. Existing inequities are being exacerbated by lack of broadband because it's how people access resources now. The legislature will be talking to companies about what has been done since the pledge has expired.

Ms. Tong pointed out the Council had a resolution consistent with the pledge, specific to California.

Dr. Williams agreed with Ms. Smith's comments. He noted that Assembly Member Gipson, along with the California Legislative Black Caucus, has a legislative package around justice items. They are working with the CPUC with a local CEO who was no longer in the TeleConnect fund and with the help of California Department of Technology and CPUC legislative staff they are making progress on resolving issues. With COVID we need to help businesses with vacuums of services because a lot of these businesses are the only ones that provide certain services.

Member Christina Snider congratulated the CPUC on appointing a tribal advisor. The deadline for 2.5 gigahertz and rural tribal window is closing on August 3. Only 8 California tribes submitted applications.

[Superintendent of Public Instruction] Designee Jerry Winkler noted the Superintendent has been working with his Digital Divide Task Force on broadband policy issues, including ensuring they are doing everything they can to get broadband out there, working with school districts and focusing on digital equity (devices, connectivity, technical support/training). There's a committee working on distance learning. The Department has released guidance on opening schools. They are working with other state leaders on the digital equity front and nationwide with various organizations. They are participating in the Community Reinvestment Act, the FDIC funding for digital equity. And working to make sure that specified funding is protected and continued to flow.

Ms. Guzman-Aceves noted the importance of the communities Dr. Williams referenced, noting the CPUC has had long-standing issues with affordable housing and community centers. There is great need for the CPUC to determine how to sustain critical community facilities that house sustainable Wi-Fi. The California TeleConnect Fund is a big part of that. We need to fix the funding remittances that the carriers are providing to us, much like what Cal OES did with 911 to reform it to make it sustainable. The CPUC would like to work with Dr. Williams because they agree the need is very great. CPUC Commissioner Shiroma is working to develop a Lifeline Broadband offering and is in the middle of taking comments for the measure through the end of the month and reply comments are August 6. The CPUC has been working with the Department of Education (CDE) on the \$25 million from the California TeleConnect Fund that was dedicated to schools. To date, 396 school districts have used it, funding 86,000 mobile broadband connections. They are working through the logistics of continuing efforts through the fall. The CPUC has also worked with CDE on the Advanced Services Fund and provided \$5 million for adoption to cover gadgets. Both adoption and infrastructure funding are soon to be exhausted. They are urging that the program be expanded and continued. The CPUC has a proposed decision with comments due tomorrow and reply comments due the 28th to allow staff to do

another round of CASF funds if there are available funds and they have proposed technical assistance funding for tribal governments to be able to build capacity to obtain federal funding. The CPUC passed a resiliency requirement for wireless providers to ensure necessary planning and network investments to maintain customer services during power outages and disasters, including public safety power shutoffs.

Member Lori Pepper noted the [Mobile Hot Spot Playbook](#) for the pilot the California State Transportation Agency did is up on its web site. There are a lot of options and opportunities to provide broadband services throughout the state. There is a lot of interest in this type of program that can be used for general broadband deployment and for specific events and other things such as emergencies. Through the program, vendors created packages based on the proof of concept that are available through several department vehicles. There is a lot of opportunity.

Mr. Medigovich noted Cal OES has numerous initiatives. On the communications side, in addition to the Next Gen 911 update, Cal OES is upgrading its microwave network from analog to a digital platform, which will provide additional opportunities to support public safety entities and their communication efforts.

[California Department of Food and Agriculture] Designee Arturo Barajas noted a majority of the fairs have been tapped to serve as facilities for testing or emergency housing. Because of the Chico report, they were able to include broadband as a metric when making decisions with Cal OES and local and regional offices of emergency services and will continue to use that metric as they move forward.

Ms. Neville-Bonilla noted libraries have been in a 7-year effort to expand their broadband capabilities and have about 83% of branches connected. More than 90% of library funding comes from local government so some of the communities most impacted by COVID are hurt the most. The library applied for state match for e-rate that is going to bring in \$400,000 this year in federal funding that they would not have otherwise. The State Library is also doing technical engineering assistance with libraries who are getting e-rate coverage to help them have better access for their constituents to Wi-Fi. They are still working on the Wi-Fi maps for libraries. A national survey of libraries indicated 70% of need was that the public had access to devices and the Internet, 45% of need was that libraries were open for government services, employments benefits, small business loans, etc., and 40% was around job searches and applications support. The work public libraries do is so much more than books. Please keep them in mind for partnerships and grant collaboration. The State Library can help connect efforts with local libraries.

Ms. Tong noted that the California Department of Technology is working with many state agencies to stand up web sites for new needs related to COVID, emergencies, etc., as a way for the public to access information and departments to push information out and minimizes the need for bandwidth when the public is accessing the web sites

as a way to help the public get the most essential information necessary in the lowest bandwidth required.

Agenda Item 6 – Public Comment

Chair Tong opened the meeting for public comments.

Eli Cortez noted he has been involved in digital divide efforts since 2000 and is interested in what the hurdles and challenges are where volunteers such as him can help. Mr. Cortez will connect with Ms. McPeak after the meeting.

Southern California Tribal Chairmen's Association Representative Matthew Rantanen noted that approximately 10 tribes have submitted for the 2.5 gigahertz window and 10 he is aware of that are submitting now. Some of smaller tribes and rancherias have not had office hours together because of COVID and cannot get this done during this time frame. They have about 84 applications into the system at the national level. There is a skew because many of the Federal Communications Commission eligible areas have no frequency available so that number will throw off the number of tribes that have applied. They launched a motion for extension yesterday and there is an awareness campaign day tomorrow (#connecttribes).

Ms. Snider asked Mr. Rantanen if it was okay to bring up the matter at her during her monthly meeting/call and invited Mr. Rantanen to be a technical advisor. Mr. Rantanen agreed to both.

The meeting adjourned at 3:16pm.