**Governor’s Task Force on Broadband**

**Monday October 21, 2024**

**10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

180 E 5th St Suite 1200

St Paul MN 55101

**Task Force Members in Attendance in Person**: Chair Teddy Bekele; Brian Hood; Adam Hutchens; Marc Johnson

**Task Force Members in Attendance Virtually**: Briana Mumme; Dave Wolf; Gail Hedstrom; Melissa Wolf; Paul McDonald; Steve Fenske;

**Task Force members Absent**: Ini Augustine; Bruce Crane; Daniel Lightfoot; Phil Stalboerger; John Twiest

**Others in Attendance in Person**: Hannah Buckland; Kristina Ruport; Benjamin Vargas; Anna Norcutt Preuss; Giselle Lo

**Others in Attendance Virtually:** Wes Kerr; Diane Wells; Carol Bossuyt; Melinda Miller; Simon Thorne; Ace Wesselmann; Michelle Rebholz; Tom Karst; Emily Feeley; Derrik Simmons; Michael Wimmer; Nathan Zacharias; Joseph Muia; Todd Kruse; Mika Baer

**I. Welcome**

Chair Bekele called the meeting to order, roll call was taken, and an overview of the agenda provided.

**II. Approval of minutes from September 24, 2024, Task Force Meeting**

Meeting minutes were approved from the September 24, 2024, Task Force meeting.

**III. Office of Broadband Development Overview + BEAD and Digital Opportunity Updates**

Diane Wells (Deputy Director, OBD) presented an overview of the office and infrastructure programs. The Round 10 Border-to-Border and Low Population Density grants were awarded with state funding appropriated by the legislature. The Round 3 applications for Line Extension were received, and the awards are in process of being made. Updates on the BEAD process include next steps for identifying BEAD eligible locations after the BEAD challenge process is over. Final proposals for BEAD are due October 3, 2025. Before that, OBD expects in late November or early December of this year to submit final list of BEAD eligible locations.

Hannah Buckland (Digital Equity Program Lead, OBD) updated the Task Force on Digital Opportunity in Minnesota. With the Digital Equity capacity grant, Minnesota is waiting to hear from NTIA on the plan that was approved in Marchm2024. So far, three states (Idaho, Nevada, and Michigan) have been approved. For the Competitive Grant, NTIA received over 700 applications and are working on going through those now. Native Entity grants are under way, and the application opened on September 25, 2024, and closes February 7, 2025. Questions from the Task Force were on why 3 states have been awarded; on the competitive grant, and if there is evaluation around geographical positioning or will geographic dispersion be considered; and clarification around dates for BEAD, next steps, and OBD’s capacity for the program.

**IV. Presentation from Connected Nation**

Wes Kerr (Director of Community Solutions, Connected Nation) presented on Connected Nation, a non-profit organization that works nationally, and in Minnesota, with the mission to improve lives by providing innovative solutions that expand the access, adoption, and use of high-speed internet and its related technologies. Connected Nation has supported Minnesota’s Broadband efforts since 2008 and sees Minnesota as a trusted leader across the county in understanding and guiding broadband development. A background on broadband mapping in Minnesota was shared, support of Border-to-Border field validation, and current work with BEAD in conjunction with Sanborn in Minnesota and nationally. The next steps for BEAD are to have a final review of locations and data from the Challenge process, the submission of locations to NTIA, data curing with NTIA, and a receipt of final approval of locations to move into the applications process. Questions from the Task Force were around the field validation process; and a comment on Connected Nation’s field validation process.

**V. Annual report draft progress + work time**

The Task Force reviewed progress made by the subgroups in the annual report draft. An overview of the entire document was provided by Chair Bekele, as well as a time for Task Force members to report any issues they have accessing the SharePoint with annual report drafts and documents. An overview of subgroup sections was provided by the subgroups: Affordability & Digital Equity; Economic Opportunity & Work Force Development; and Mapping, Funding, and Policy. Subgroups were asked to try to meet 1-2 more times before the November 26 meeting, and work on moving their sections into draft form. The goal is to have a more finalized draft to review and discuss at the November 26th meeting since the annual report itself is due in December.

**VI. Other Business, November 26 Meeting Plans, Wrap-up**
Chair Bekele opened the floor for questions and comments for Task Force members and others attending. It was reiterated that in-person attendance at the November meeting is encouraged, as there will be time for subgroups to meet and work on their sections for the annual report.

The meeting was adjourned around 12pm.