**Governor’s Task Force on Broadband**

**Tuesday December 17, 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**: Teddy Bekele; Melissa Wolf; Daniel Lightfoot; Marc Johnson; Adam Hutchens; Bruce Crane

**Task Force Members in Attendance Virtually**: Dave Wolf; Briana Mumme; Steve Fenske; Gail Hedstrom; Brian Hood; John Twiest; Ini Augustine

**Task Force members Absent**: Paul McDonald; Phil Stalboerger

**Others in Attendance in Person**: Bree Maki; Hannah Buckland; Tom Karst; Carah Koch; Benjamin Vargas; Kristina

Rupport; Anna Norcutt Preuss

**Others in Attendance Virtually**: Brent Christensen; Ann Treacy; Nathan Zacharias; Michelle Rebholz; Mika Baer; Karrie Jansen; Samantha Ernst; Todd Kruse; Diane Wells; Kevin McKinnon; Barbara Droher Kline; Orion DiFranco; Paul Solsrud; Simon Thorne; Joe Buttweiler; Ace Wesselmann; Emily Feeley; Shawn Thompson; Ciera Drey; Steve Kraus; Jennifer Frost.

**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 the November 26 Task Force Meeting**

Meeting minutes were approved from the November 26 Task Force meeting.

**III. Updates from National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)**

Tom Karst (Federal Program Officer, NTIA) announced that Carah Koch (Federal Program Officer, NTIA) would be Minnesota’s new FPO. Carah will continue on as her role for the FPO in Wisconsin, and the two states will share her. Tom will be continuing his work at NTIA in other roles.

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

Bree Maki (Executive Director, OBD) shared that the land use position has closed, and provided updates on a monthly working group meeting, which will plan to focus on transparency and clarity in processes moving forward. Also announced were Border-to-Border, Low-Population Density, and Line Extension progress reports are soon due. Diane Wells (Deputy Director, OBD) provided updates on BEAD. OBD will be getting a final deduplicated list of what are believed to be BEAD eligible locations after an extension was approved for Minnesota. OBD is also working with a new grants management system manager. The current timeline is to plan to start a prequalification process before moving into subgrantee applications, and before the prequalification process OBD will be holding office hours, schedule to be announced soon. Information on all of this will also come out of the biweekly email blast from OBD. Hannah Buckland (Digital Equity Program Lead, OBD) provided updates on the beginnings of grant opportunities, which are expected to be available in 2025. The DO team are hopeful that the office will begin accepting grant applications around mid-2025.

**IV. Presentation on MN Broadband Cost Analysis Report, CTC Technology & Energy**

Shawn Thompson (Vice President of Analytics, CTC Technology & Energy) presented on a study commissioned by OBD on the cost gap analysis. CTC Technology & Energy is a leading broadband authority serving as a public interest consultancy, focused on business and technology strategic planning. OBD issued a Request for Proposal for a consultant to perform a broadband cost gap analysis study for the state of Minnesota. The purpose of the analysis was to determine the amount of funding needed to serve the state under BEAD and to determine the cost if all locations in the state were to be served with a minimum 100Mbps download/20Mbps upload wireline connection.. CTC’s findings were as follows: 1) to cover every location in Minnesota with fiber would require $2.08 Billion in funding; 2) to reach all BEAD-eligible locations with the state’s allocated funding of $628 Million, the optimal technology mix is 90.8% fiber, 0.7% fixed wireless, and 8.5% satellite. Further, CTC found that an “incumbent expansion” model scenario results in less required funding than new entrants, largely due to incumbent cost benefits around existing network infrastructure, pole attachments, existing conduit, etc. CTC’s analysis also determined that there are small numbers of extremely remote and high-cost areas that may require up-to $64,000 in funding per location. The presentation from CTC can be found under the December meetings on [the Task Force webpage here](https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/broadband/task-force/#2).

**V. Task Force review updates to annual report draft**

The Task Force reviewed updates to the annual draft as a whole and made finalized changes to recommendations from the subgroups: Affordability and Digital Equity; Economic Opportunity and Work Force Development; and Mapping, Policy, and Funding. Additional small edits were discussed and agreed upon to be finalized outside of the meeting.

The Task Force voted on and approved the annual report. The voting counts were: 11 approved; 1 abstained; and 3 absent. Chair Bekele said he would follow-up with absent members on their votes.

**VI. Other Business, 2025 Meeting Plans, Wrap-up**
Chair Bekele opened the floor for questions and comments for Task Force members and others attending. The January meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 13 at 10am in St. Paul, MN at the Centennial Office Building. Additional details, and a draft of the 2025 meeting schedule will be posted to the [Broadband Task Force webpage](https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/broadband/task-force/).