

CONNECT NEW MEXICO COUNCIL MEETING
Hybrid, 411 Capitol St., Santa Fe, 87501
Room #307
July 20, 2023, 1:30 – 3:30 PM

1. WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Video recording time: 00:00:01

The meeting of the Connect New Mexico Council was called to order by Renee Narvaiz, at 3:30 pm, on Thursday, July 20, 2023, in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Ms. Narvaiz introduced herself and reviewed general rules and procedures regarding the meeting.

MEMBERS PRESENT – In Person

Kimball Sekaquaptewa, Chair
Secretary Peter Mantos
Ovidiu Viorica

MEMBERS PRESENT – via ZOOM

Luis Reyes, Co-Chair	Launa Waller
Eli Guinnee	Steve Grey
Tico Charlee	Joseph Navarette
Jim Ruybal	Godfrey Enjady
Jerry Smith	

MEMBERS ABSENT-

Leonard Manzanares
Bogi Malecki
Katherine Crociata

OTHERS PRESENT

Renee Narvaiz, IT, Public Information Manager
Natalie Runyan, GIS
Vanessa Willock, NM DoIT General Counsel
Kathy Schlegel, Director OBAE
Joanne Hovis (CTC), T. Fremin, Drew Lovelace (OBAE), Eric Luchetti (OBAE), Bob Digneo (AT&T), Mike Waring (AT&T), Rikki-Lee Chavez (AT&T), Jessica Hitzman (NM Legislature), Nathan Cogburn, Steve Crut, Amelia DeJesus, Cato Garcia, Bill Boas, Scott Lopez, Heather Floyd, Richard Estrada, Jeff Albright, John DiRuggiero, Gail Long, Nora Meyers Sackett, Paul M. Donovan, Matejka, Jim Wasilewski, Peter Ambs, David Jimenez, Greg Sutton, Carlos Herrera, Mitch Hibbard, Johnny Montoya, Alison Riley, Jennifer Somers, Lee Reynolds, Dianne Lindstrom, Michael Lord, Belinda Rogers, Daniel Meszler

2. APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA AND MINUTES

Video recording time: 00:01:13

MOTION A motion was made by Mr. Viorica and seconded by Mr. Reyes to approve the agenda as presented.

VOTE No opposition, motion passed.

MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. Reyes to approve the minutes of the June 29, 2023 meeting and seconded by Mr. Viorica with minor corrections previously submitted. Ms. Narvaiz acknowledged these corrections and stated she will update the minutes as requested, and then send out to the Council members and post to the website.

VOTE No opposition, motion passed.

3. CHAIR UPDATES/COMMENTS

Video recording time: 00:02:26

Kimball Sekaquaptewa - Welcomed all to the meeting. Ms. Sekaquaptewa acknowledged all of the increased activity with respect to OBAE staffing up, and all aspects related to connecting New Mexico. She recognized the many partners participating in today's meeting and the good collaboration that is occurring.

She reported on the recent press conference with special guest, Mitch Landreau, former mayor of New Orleans, who is now the head of infrastructure for the Biden administration, and how important this is for demonstrating what makes New Mexico unique and why it is so expensive to build out here, as well as gaining new partnerships. She thanked OBAE for working with the Governor's Office and the Governor, herself, for attending this press conference. She also noted that part of the press conference was hosted at Santa Fe Indian School and that Senator Ben Ray Lujan attended along with Representative Teresa Ledger-Fernandez. She shared that another part of the tour, including Senator Heinrich, visited other locations, including Santo Domingo Pueblo, where they could see some of the unique challenges facing New Mexico, but that Santo Domingo has also been a leader in broadband development for their community, including wireless and fiberoptic for local unserved, non-tribal community members as an effort for sustainability of their network. She commented that there were a lot of good things shared with the Washington delegation as well as the New Mexico Congressional delegation. She noted that the total funding for broadband is now at \$1.4 billion, which includes the \$675 million from BEAD, as well as all other programs already awarded and paused to celebrate this as the result of a lot of hard work by a lot of people.

Mantos – This was a great meeting and commented how Ms. Sekaquaptewa had become a little emotional, which was quite appropriate as this is a great accomplishment. He expressed appreciation for Ms. Schlegel and her team, and this Council, for bringing everyone together for this at the national level, as well as representation from counties, municipalities, tribes, etc., a great time to celebrate a lot of hard work coming to fruition, but also means the start of some really hard work, as noted by Director Schlegel.

Kimball – Appeared to be a small group when she first received the RSVP list for security and was surprised when a Secret Service detail arrived with then a total of over 70 attendees, so this was unusually well attended, which spoke well of the investment that the broadband community has to this endeavor. She reminded everyone that when they attend these types of gatherings to introduce themselves to other attendees as this is the network, these are the people that will make this happen. She thanked everyone for attending today's meeting. She then asked the AT&T representatives to give their presentation.

4. AT&T FirstNet Investment – Presentation by Bob Digneo and Mike Waring

Video recording time: 00:08:24

Mr. Digneo thanked Ms. Sekaquaptewa and the Council for the invitation to present today. He then asked Ms. Narvaiz to screen share the FirstNet slide show on the room screen as well as on ZOOM. He also introduced his presentation partners, Mr. Mike Waring, a retired State Police captain, who now works for AT&T, as well as Rikki-Lee Chavez, another AT&T representative. Mr. Digneo stated that he is the Director of Internal Affairs for AT&T in New Mexico and expressed his appreciation for the work of this Council and the Office of Broadband Access & Expansion, noting how critically important their work is to the State, and how well they are doing this.

Mr. Digneo then asked Ms. Narvaiz to begin the video presentation which explains the concept of FirstNet. Ms. Sekaquaptewa asked when FirstNet was initially awarded. Mr. Digneo stated

this occurred in 2017. Ms. Narvaiz then played the video for everyone. In this video it was noted that in 2017 New Mexico was one of the first states in the country to opt into the FirstNet build, with the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta being one of the first large events in the country where FirstNet was tested. Following the video Mr. Digneo asked Ms. Narvaiz to return to the slide presentation and explained that FirstNet is a nationwide dedicated wireless broadband network devoted to first responders and others involved with civil emergencies, which was born out of the 911 tragedy. In reference to Ms. Sekaquaptewa's question about timing Mr. Digneo explained that the federal act was passed in 2012 and the states were offered the opportunity to opt-in and New Mexico was one of the first, in August 2017. Mr. Digneo reviewed the slide show and gave details about Band 14 and how that works, noting that Band 14 channels have been installed on 400+ towers in New Mexico, some owned by AT&T and some owned by other companies, to provide this public safety network. Mr. Digneo noted the different types of customers served by FirstNet; law enforcement including State Police, local police and county departments, fire and rescue departments to include EMS and other types of emergency responders. Mr. Digneo then described that there is another category of customers which are not specifically law enforcement or public safety, but do interface with the public during emergencies, such as NM Department of Transportation, which uses FirstNet in some instances, such as crew communications during storms, etc., as well as healthcare providers, hospitals, and electric power companies. He commented that this is a wide array of entities, all of whom are in a position to impact public health and safety in times of emergency or special events, such as the Balloon Fiesta when there are large numbers of people in a relatively small space at one time.

Mr. Digneo then described a separate, but important aspect of FirstNet, which is the availability of mobile cell towers which can be deployed to specific situation upon request of a subscriber agency. These are called SatCOLTs (Satellite Cell on Light Trucks), which are mobile cell sites which link to FirstNet via satellite and do not need commercial power to operate and provide first responders with connectivity in hard to reach areas. Another aspect of AT&T's contract with the federal government is that AT&T will provide a response operations group to help agencies identify what assets and help they may need during specific situations, both planned and unplanned. Mr. Digneo gave further details regarding the AT&T "deployables" which include the SatCOLTs and other types of equipment which can be utilized, and gave examples, such as SatCOLTs brought to the FEMA headquarters site in the Navajo Nation during COVID pandemic to provide backup communication, which was an unplanned event, and then a planned event such as the Cibola County Motorcycle Rally where a SatCOLT was used to back up public safety communications.

Mr. Digneo noted that there are new advances happening with FirstNet with respect to making the service more useful to the user community here in New Mexico and asked Mr. Waring to review three aspects of these new developments. Mr. Waring described these as: 1) the "deployables" which are available to public safety entities at no cost, are totally self-sufficient and come with two drivers, especially in areas where there is no coverage, 2) the "connected car/vehicle", such as a police car or fire truck, which could be described as a giant hot-spot, where all devices are connected to the network through the vehicle, including an officer who might be engaged with an individual and notifies dispatch automatically, or for firefighters whose vital signs begin to show unsafe levels and need to be relieved from the front line, 3) interoperability with state radio system with enhanced "push to talk" applications for better interoperability with other agencies at the state, federal, tribal and local levels. In terms of the technology and the network this is not just another cell phone or broadband provider, but a partner for public safety in the long-term.

Schlegel – What was done in Mora County when the tower was destroyed during the Calif

Canyon/Hermit's Peak Fire?

Digneo – The cell site above Mora burned and was totally out of service so AT&T parked a mobile cell site in downtown Mora with coverage for part of the community, but was not able to cover as large an area as the original tower on the mountainside. However, this filled a gap until the tower, equipment on the tower and fiberoptics to the tower could be replaced, which was accomplished relatively quickly in a little over three months' time.

Schlegel – Is that site back up and running now?

Digneo – Yes, it took about 3½ months to restore. Asked Mr. Waring if he had anything to add to the question about Mora.

Waring – AT&T supported public safety as best they could in Mora, Las Vegas and the Jemez Mountain area, with the available resources, the response operations group and additional assets brought in to the state at that time.

Kimball – Question regarding prevention; are there monitoring stations being designed for early alert for mountainous areas or is this part of any design strategy in place?

Digneo – This falls under the purview of the fiber providers who have “network hardening strategies” to make fiber connections less affected by disturbances such as fires and floods, etc. As far as the cell sites one major area is back-up power for cell sites and this is constantly being re-evaluated.

Waring – Redundancy is a primary focus for public safety, and includes power supply, fiber or cell service.

Digneo – AT&T has a national network operations center with meteorologists on staff who watch weather patterns with respect to weather events that could affect service, so there are some early warning components in place with respect to observation on a nationwide basis in an effort to stay one step ahead.

Overall AT&T has invested for FirstNet as well as commercial use approximately \$50 million/year over the last three years in the wireless network in New Mexico, with upgrades in towers, the radio carriers on the towers and adding towers statewide. Reviewed slides showing added cell sites across the state over the last couple of years. Stated any new site put in place automatically gets Band 14 for first responders as well as a large portion of radio spectrum for other subscribers. Concluded presentation, thanked the Council for this opportunity, open for questions.

Kimball – Asked about request for building a tower.

Digneo – Can take request and submit to the company. If decision is made to put a tower in a new area the existing assets will be examined, which could include structures such as a church steeple or a tower owned by another company, in addition to power source and fiberoptic availability. Towers being added all the time. Will be glad to take input with regard to locations and present to the network organization as a request.

Kimball – Is there an articulated program for making such a request or point of contact?

Digneo – Stated he would be the point of contact.

Viorica – Question in chat: Does one have to have an AT&T cell phone to use FirstNet?

Digneo – Yes, this is part of the contract with the Department of Commerce which set up the FirstNet Authority. AT&T is charged with building but they also have the benefit of getting the subscribers for the network, so this is AT&T specific.

Narvaiz – Question in the chat from Steve Grey – Is this a 5T network only?

Digneo – It is 5G and 4G LTE, a combination. There is 5G in some parts of the state, but FirstNet technology works on either 4G LTE or 5G LTE.

Viorica – How many of the 400 towers mentioned are connected to fiberoptic?

Digneo – Exact number uncertain but most are. Some use microwave to connect back to the network because fiber could not be supplied to location.

Viorica – Clear that where there is no cell service FirstNet is unavailable, which includes some rural and tribal areas. We need to correct this. How can New Mexico and AT&T take advantage of the large BEAD investment, state investment and other sources of funding to not only make sure every New Mexican is connected to broadband, but also to ensure all communities are covered by FirstNet so this service is available to first responders 100%.

Digneo – No specific answer, but as this Council and OBAE move forward there should be a role for cellular communications and “fixed wireless” or point-to-point wireless, which is a piece of the puzzle. What has been described today is cellular mobile radio, which is not point-to-point, but is for mobile devices. There should be a role for cellular industry in the mix. Commented that this Council and OBAE are of course focused on providing fiberoptic service to residences, which is the correct place to start, but at some point there needs to be collaboration about how wireless technology, fixed and mobile, would fit into the big picture for this Council.

Waring – Part of the 25-year contract is reinvestment of funds from FirstNet into the network, for technology, new sites, etc. FirstNet Authority has the ability to do this reinvestment. Suggested the Council consider beginning conversations with FirstNet Authority, on the federal side of things, to discuss what is next for New Mexico, how to make things better and cover as much of the state as possible.

Digneo – Can come to him for contact regarding this, can connect with FirstNet Authority individuals assigned to New Mexico, to look at this.

Viorica – Definitely something the Council would be interested in and should pursue.

Kimball – How does AT&T fit specifically with BEAD? What could be the niche for AT&T as a partner.

Digneo – Not necessarily a natural fit with BEAD. Each state has some latitude in how it achieves the program. Fixed wireless could perhaps be discussed as a possible solution or cellular wireless/mobile phone service as another solution, but perhaps the state funding would have more flexibility with this than the BEAD program. BEAD is huge and will be dominant for a while. AT&T corporate realizes that BEAD is all about fiber first, with fixed wireless second and perhaps other technologies.

Waller – Understanding that FirstNet is only available to AT&T customers, what percentage of New Mexico is covered by AT&T towers and in those areas not covered is there any collaboration or contract/relationship with the predominant carrier to recognize the FirstNet customers?

Digneo – Don't have a percentage. New Mexico very large with very rural areas that may not have a cell site from any company. For living units, residences and businesses AT&T covers well over 90% of the living units of the state, though there are areas with absolutely no coverage. Not aware of any partnerships with other providers or if FirstNet Authority has looked at this, where Band 14 would be available on another company's cell site. Certainly can place equipment on towers owned by other companies, but not aware of any multi-company approach at FirstNet Authority.

Enjady – Through Tribal Broadband Continuity Program were able to start build on 14 towers on Mescalero Apache Reservation and have been working some with FirstNet, just getting started. Looking at using the tribe's 2.5 GHz spectrum combined with FirstNet's Band 14 to provide better services for first responders, conservation officers and law enforcement on the Mescalero Apache Reservation. Hopeful to have FirstNet offer services on some of the newer towers being placed. Plan is for fiber to almost all of the new towers. Hope to be able to use both bands in single units, testing this out now, to get better services for first responders. This is a new collaboration, still in its infancy, but working on this with hopefully good results in the near future.

Digneo/Waring – Great program. Looking forward to this development.

Mantos – Want to make everyone aware of the TTRS program that the Department of IT maintains through its public safety radio service, which also works on the 700 MHz. His understanding is this does not work with cell phones but works with specialized radios. Good interoperability with multi-agencies working fires. Is an ongoing program using existing towers to include federal towers, to build this out. Senate Bill 409 proffered during last legislative session to supply free subscriptions to emergency responders for this service, unfortunately did not pass. Governor supports this and wants to see it happen. Department of IT is offering this service but due to statutory limitations it is not free, but substantial subsidies available to emergency responders. Expectation is for this program to expand quite a bit over the next few years.

Narvaiz reads a question from Charlee – What is FirstNet's deadline to have this deployed statewide?

Digneo – No completion date. Adding footprint as fast as possible and as fast as capital budget will allow. May never be complete because with expansion of footprint more capacity is added to existing parts of the network to allow for more and more users. Continually growing physical network. Not aware of a completion date that has been discussed. Will just continue to build the network. Certain requirements to be met under federal contract and those are on track.

Kimball – How many new locations might be in the queue, or actively in project management in New Mexico?

Digneo – Could research this. Public information about future build is considered competitive/proprietary information, as it is with all carriers. Aware there is public interest in FirstNet but not authorized to disclose new sites or when they will be built. Local government

entities that provide permits for telecom equipment have processes that may take months or years, which dictates the timeline, in addition to the issue of opposition from local residents who do not want cell towers in their area.

Charlee – 106 FirstNet towers across the Navajo Nation, 92 are currently functional and do make a big difference. Question as to why AT&T pulled out at last minute on request for tower included in the NTIA grant.

Digneo – Not familiar with specifics regarding this situation. Offered to research and discuss further offline.

Kimball – Thanked Mr. Digneo and Mr. Waring for coming and for their presentation and willingness to take questions.

5. Rulemaking Update - Vanessa Willock, Tribal/State Collaboration Act amendment

Video Recording time: 01:34:31

Primary issues being addressed.

1) Amendment to Grant Program rules to add language to the rule which is consistent with the Tribal/State Collaboration Act. This stresses and makes clear that in the process of grant-making activities we fully intend to comply with that Act and collaborate with Indian Nations, Tribes and Pueblos. A draft is currently with the working group. Next working group meeting is next Monday afternoon and will include further discussion of this.

2) Forthcoming will be rulemaking on HB 262 and SB 452, which folds into earlier discussion about mapping, making sure this is all in line with the FCC standards in terms of quality of service for homes, businesses, public institutions when requesting information from different service providers. Will draft this and discuss with respect to FCC rules and if changes need to be made.

3) Administrative hearing rules that need to be put in place regarding how to process any disputes made with respect to the grant-making process.

6. Working Group Updates

Video Recording time: 00:59:37

(Done out of order, started with “e” – PROP working group, then back to “a” – Tribal Working Group)

Updates

a. Tribal Working Group – Godfrey Enjady

Met yesterday with Director Schlegel and put together a slide show regarding the commitments made by NTIA to the State of New Mexico through the Pueblo Broadband Continuity Program. Approximately \$80 million has been given out so far. Hoping that another \$80 million will be made available in the second round of this program. Looking at a lot of different aspects of BEAD, last mile, middle mile, etc. Work being done by Chair Sekaquaptewa for Santa Fe Indian School and Middle Mile Project for connectivity to the tribes will be a key factor for tribes to consider with respect to connection to matrix centers in Albuquerque and Santa Fe, etc. Consultation processes happening as well as bootcamps that were arranged, one recently at Tesuque, which was well attended. Tribal leadership lacking in understanding of how broadband works and what it does. They were made aware of the importance of broadband during the pandemic when it was essential for children to continue their education at home. They then wanted to take this into their own hands, as sovereign nations, to provide these services themselves, as some providers were hampered. As a result tribal leadership is taking a new approach on how they should work with the State. One aspect is to look at tribal

consent and tribal engagement by the State of New Mexico, as well as collaboration. Self-determination is a big issue, determining what is best for tribes as well as mapping, especially in “checkerboard areas”. Expects Tribal Connectivity funding to be released in August-September-October timeframe, and there is a six-month window for tribes to be a part of that. Other funds available through USDA Reconnect 5 will also be coming out.

Kimball – Honored to have Mr. Enjady leading this group for many reasons, especially since he brings fresh information from Washington and is always advocating, which is much appreciated. Gave details of other funding sources that will be forthcoming. Mr. Enjady also chairs the NTTA, which will have their meeting in August and is well attended by tribes nationwide and provides a lot of education for tribal leadership. Thanked Mr. Enjady for all he does.

b. Grant Working Group/Rulemaking – Kimball Sekaquaptewa
Covered in Legislative and Rulemaking update.

c. Mapping Data & Evaluation Working Group – Peter Mantos & Natalie Runyan
Mantos – Mapping process has become more complicated, for example wireless coverage which may extend to a community of 1,000 people, but the equipment on the towers only has capacity for 500, which begs the question of whether or not this area is covered, in actuality only 500, or half the population, is covered. Question is how to express this. Part of the problem is getting information from ISPs, who are not permitted to release some of that information, as noted previously by the AT&T representatives. Process not as straightforward as it seems. Information needed that helps Director Schlegel and others make the grants; who is going to cover what and where. New focus on what the team should be doing in this regard. Asked Ms. Runyan to continue the report.

Runyan – In past couple of meetings discussing which groups to meet with, i.e. providers, others in speciality areas, etc. Experimenting in Dona Ana County and possibly Otero County, working with secure data consortiums; a consortium of local people invested in a particular area of interest to sort out the data table. Want to invite more participation. Detailed agenda sent out the day before the meeting. Gave details of mapping deadlines, etc., as well as timeline and data allowances at present. Will be starting technical discussions with DOT mapping group on permitting and how to approach this from a technology and data perspective. Office of Broadband has new project managers, one in each of three regions around the state and she will be meeting with them and some of the mapping team over the next couple of weeks to break down what data they need, what data they may be encountering which can be converted into tools for them. Next meeting will focus on the mapping as it relates to the BEAD grant making. Required to submit an Initial Proposal that outlines the grant method and should be out by the end of August for public comment. Should be able to report more specifically by next Council meeting. Mr. Enjady had asked about cost modeling work being done and what to expect from that.

Mantos – Thanked Ms. Runyan. Asked the Chair if there was anything else.

Kimball – Expressed appreciation for all this hard work. Still a lot of work to be done to determine unserved or underserved with respect to grant applications, etc. Outreach offered to tribes and local governments and communities, sees need for check-in to see who did their homework, where they are in the process and how to help with matching efforts.

Viorica – Thanked the working group for their work, noting that it is complicated. Another aspect that has to be included is the location of unserved at-risk students. State is under a

court order to find these students and identify what will be needed to connect them as quickly as possible. Needs continual work as this is a moving target; new students coming into the mix and students graduating out, which involves a lot of data analysis and mapping effort to be done on a continuing basis, as well as coordination with PED, school districts and others. One example of many with respect to the constituency that needs attention and work. Definitely a work in progress.

d. Digital Equity & Inclusion Working Group – Eli Guinnee

Not much new to report, have had to cancel the last two or three meetings for various reasons. Planning for a meeting next week and continuing to meet every other week. Have stayed in contact with OBAE. Will be supporting a survey they are working on. He and Katherine are discussing the start of a report from this group. In review of past meetings he noted the first meeting was in May 2022, so they are at a point to start compiling what they have learned over this time period. May have covered this at previous meetings, but recent “hot topic” is telemedicine and the role of digital equity and IT with respect to telemedicine. A lot yet to be learned in this area and pursuing this as part of his library work. Has been in contact with UNM Health Library and has connected with some of the doctors there to learn about their HERO program and how community health workers function, etc., hoping to ensure they get the support they need through libraries and potentially through technology support and become a part of the holistic system of health support, especially in rural areas with limited access to health services. There are exciting things happening in this field, there is a lot to learn and will be one focus of this group in the coming weeks.

Kimball – Thanked him for this report, looking forward to hearing future reports.

e. Permits, ROW and Pole Attachments Working Group (PROP) – Ovidiu Viorica

Reminded the Council that this Working Group meets every other Tuesday from 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. to discuss ideas and good quality recommendations related to permitting and improvements to the permitting landscape as well as dealing with pole attachments. Starting to circulate some ideas with outside groups and legislative committees. Director Schlegel will also present some of these.

1) Extending existing electric easements to broadband infrastructure. Have to consider concerns related to current right-of-way holders, tribal concerns, etc.

2). Simplification of environmental and cultural studies related to previously disturbed corridors.

3). Preparing a model for cost-share related to pole attachments, to include establishment of a fund that could pay for unexpected cost over-runs.

4). Small cell tower build to include some state priorities to bridge certain hard to cross areas such as railroads.

5). Rule-making on DOT for telecommunications portion.

6). Partnering with federal agencies similar to Fast 41 Project process which coordinates federal agencies involved in the permitting process. Expanding this to tribally sponsored projects as well as projects below the \$200 million threshold.

7) Additional resources related to hiring permit specialists, essential to moving the process along.

A lot of ideas out there and will have to be prioritized.

f. Regional Planning & Community Engagement Working Group – Jerry Smith
Group met yesterday, part of their regular meeting series. Key focus continues to be communicating the message that broadband is everyone’s business. Staying in touch with New Mexico Counties Association and New Mexico Municipal League has been one of their goals. Broadband message going out in the weekly newsletter put out by the New Mexico Counties Association. Continues to send updates to Susan Mays at New Mexico Counties Association with items deemed important to include; others may submit information to her as well. Thanked Ms. Mays for this effort. Work group members and others have been doing presentations when the Association of Counties meets, most recently in Farmington. Work of this group has been bolstered as OBAE has been “staffed up” to support significant engagement across the state. More work and planning needed for this but good momentum in outreach and communications. Announcement of BEAD fund award has gotten people’s attention.

Engagement activity has included the “Spring Sprint”, which was the six in-person regional meetings, as well as 14 virtual listening sessions, a first network operators conference, known as ABQ-NOG, and an industry meet-up with a lot of gas and oil industry representatives, the recent “Let’s Get Going” bootcamps, one in the south at Anthony, New Mexico and one in the north at Tesuque Pueblo facilities, both well attended and considered successful, and the previously mentioned high-profile press conference on July 6th, where the BEAD allocation was formally announced.

Future engagement – expects to hear later in this meeting from CTC and OBAE about plans for further outreach and engagement momentum, striving to support the public who are now eager for instruction on how to engage and ensure that their community receives their fair share of funds to address local versions of the digital divide.

Current mailing list made up of 19 individuals, five Council members and 14 volunteers, with another six, who are mostly OBAE staff, copied on the emails as interested, and they have been attending meetings and supporting the group. Meeting attendance averages seven to nine participants and they meet every other Wednesday from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Group started meeting in March 2022, and by end of December 2023 will have met 59 times.

Would welcome any new members. All work groups doing an awesome job, great to hear about the work, the leadership and participation.

Kimball – Great report, good to hear about all the good work happening.

Tabled item regarding new members to working groups to next meeting as there are other “housekeeping” items that can all be addressed together. Some members “termed out” as Council members and there is an effort toward coordination of next steps regarding this and an update will be given at the next meeting on Council membership as well as working group membership. Request for data has been made to the working groups to determine how many active members there are, who is on their mailing lists, etc. OBAE and the Council are in a different position now so this is a good time to reassess process for new working group members.

7. Legislative Action with sub-committees – Kelly Schlegel

Video recording time: 01:36:57

Preparing for next Legislative session. Have put together a package to try to socialize some early ideas and this has been presented to the tribal working group. This covers the 2025

fiscal year budget, which goes to the LFC, the Senate Finance Committee and the House Finance Committee. In spite of recent federal funds awarded and the \$100 million fund for Connect New Mexico, it is apparent this will not be enough to reach every person in New Mexico, so other grants will be sought out as well as presenting the need to the Legislature and requesting additional funds for things such as sustainment, cybersecurity, start-up costs for tribes who want to be independent ISPs, covering all areas not quite covered by BEAD funds. Short session this year, have to pick things that will get through. Ms. Schlegel already starting to make the rounds of the Legislative Subcommittees, most recently DOT, highlighting right-of-way issues as well the partnership between DOT and OBAE, gave example of numerous road builds across the state and how this could help “flesh out” the middle mile, but this will require approximately \$14 million/year in reserve to purchase conduit and fiber to take advantage of these builds. Also working to make sure DOT is on board with right-of-way legislation and anything that can be leveraged from what DOT already has.

She and Secretary of DOT, Ricky Serna, have a trip planned to Utah as DOT in Utah has taken a major role with respect to broadband, and they will be looking at what has been done there. They have built a portal where interested parties can list their assets in a point system, which also includes rights-of-way, easements and permits. Will be interesting to see how this could work and gave example of amending an old easement.

Will be visiting the Rural Subcommittee soon. Will start briefing legislators next week on the early plans and probably the LFC. Budget has to be worked out by September 1st; coming up quickly. Meeting with Kimball and Godfrey next week to get their ideas and make sure all on the same page.

Work in process with councils for statewide education network.

Kimball – Would be nice to view Utah portal demonstration. Asked Kelly to check if this would be available via Zoom.

8. **OBAE Update** – Kelly Schlegel

Video recording time: 01:44:48

a. NTIA Award Update

\$675,372,311.86 awarded. Reviewed Plan timeline:

5-Year Plan due August 28th, on track, met with CTC, some policy decisions had to be made in light of NTIA guidance on Volume 1 and Volume 2. Will be posting 5-Year Plan.

Digital Equity Plan, due end of November. Getting ready to turn in OBAE/Connect New Mexico Council Digital Equity Plan due August 1st, which is currently in review with CTC and will be sent to Council members for comment after this is completed. NTIA Digital Equity Plan due November 30th.

Initial Proposal, Volume 1 and Volume 2, with a challenge process, due December 27th; describing how the funding will be used to serve the unserved across the state. Gave details. This requires a one month public comment period. Comments will need to be gathered during November in order to submit in December. This is on track but is still a heavy lift. Partnering with CTC as they have the skills for data analytics not available on OBAE team yet.

After Initial Proposal is approved, and an anticipated hearing process, and once the challenge process is approved, contingent grant making can begin, but funds will not be available until the Final Proposal is approved. Reviewed hierarchy of priorities for funding again, i.e., unserved locations, underserved locations, community anchor institutions and finally low income housing. Will probably not have enough funds to reach some of the lower priorities.

b. Job openings

Three program managers.
Financial and grant coordinators
Tribal liaison
Mapping person
Digital equity manager

This is what is needed to manage the \$1.4 billion which has come in to the State plus the \$675 million, putting the total at close to \$2 billion. Have to provide technical assistance, viral consultations, community engagement, tool kits, really have to run alongside everyone. Hopefully another \$1 billion in state funding that will have to be managed. Staff number could potentially grow from 17 to 40.

Need to get together on the \$100 million fund and \$5 million of this is for grant writing for tribes and communities, so if anyone needs help with plan preparation there is funding for grant writers. Breakdown of \$100 million is \$5 million for grant writing, \$25 million for schools and \$70 million for everything else. Would like to be able to replace this fund every year for a while.

c. 5-Year Plan Progress

Covered under NTIA update

d. State Digital Equity Plan Progress

Covered under NTIA update

e. NTIA Digital Equity Plan Progress

Covered under NTIA update

f. CTC Engagement Update – CTC – Joann Hovis

Ms. Hovis was not available at this point in the meeting, joined later but Chair opted to hear this report at next week's Special Meeting.

Ms. Schlegel introduced Eric Luchetti, new grants manager, who has really extensive experience in financial world. He has worked in many other agencies previously and brings this expertise to the team.

Ms. Schlegel extended an invitation to network with all broadband people at her home on Saturday, July 29th, 3:00 p.m., 7 Via Estancia, in Santa Fe. Come for food, fun, games and broadband networking.

Kimball – 120 is the goal right now, 100/100. She met with a lot of other New Mexico organizations, creative industry people, people for the Labs, people from UNM for an EDA proposal and these people were giving a warning about where AI meets 3D simulation and next will be 3D browsers, which are already under development and coming out, so as soon as this first round of network upgrade is done, prepare for the next one.

9. Public Comment: - Kimball Sekaquaptewa

Video recording time: 01:56:04

Viorica – Reminded Council about setting up an interview for input to the 5-Year Plan. Not sure what the correct venue for this would be; a special meeting might be necessary. If the Council is interested in this it would need to be coordinated in the near future, within the next couple of weeks.

Kimball – Agreed special meeting needed. Need to make this decision today as the meeting has to be advertised. She was informed that three days were all that was needed for special meeting notice. Asked if Thursday, July 27th at 1:30 p.m. would be agreeable to the majority of the Council members. Renee will send out notification and any supporting documents.

Recognized and welcomed Nathan Cogburn in the audience, who has expressed interest in the working groups. This is his first meeting and he is in the process of onboarding.

Schlegel – CTC says they are on if the Chair wishes them to report.

Kimball – Not at this time. Look forward to speaking with them next week.

10. Adjournment:

Video recording time: 01:58:54

Motion for adjournment: Secretary Mantos.

2nd: Ms. Waller

No opposition, meeting adjourned at 3:38 p.m.