



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS WORK SESSION MINUTES

Tuesday, January 18, 2022, 11:00 A.M.

Willowbank Office Building
420 Holmes Street, Room 146
Bellefonte, PA 16823

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I. CALL TO ORDER

The public work session of the Board of Commissioners was convened at 11:09 AM by Chair of the Board Michael Pipe.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

In attendance were Commissioner Michael Pipe, Commissioner Mark Higgins, Commissioner Steven Dershem, and Deputy Administrator John Franek Jr.

County personnel present included Controller Jason Moser, Liz Lose, Peter Butler and Travis Walker.

Guests present included Kim Stank and Corey Troutman.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments received from the public.

IV. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

A. Broadband Update

Assistant Director of Planning and Community Development Liz Lose reported that SEDA COG has received two proposals for the Snow Shoe Broadband Project. Peter Butler reviewed the responses and prepared a comparison of the two vendors. The first, from Upward Broadband, is a purely fixed wireless system for the Borough of Snowshoe. It was noted that they are only proposing to hit seven percent of the households in that area. Network speeds that will be offered are also a concern.

The second proposal was from Black Bear Fiber, a company born out of Centre WISP who the County has worked with in the past. The service will be fiber to the home and Liz was impressed with the speeds that will be offered. Peter noted that Black Bear Fiber won a region just north west of Snow Shoe and has additional grant funding that they can bring to the project.

Commissioner Pipe said this will be great for the Snow Shoe community. Through her discussions with CTC Technology, Liz has learned that fiber is the ideal way to go.

It was the consensus of the Board that Liz communicate to SEDA COG their interest in moving forward with Black Bear Fiber.

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Regarding the Broadband Strategic Plan, Liz and Peter met with CTC last week and they have the website for the speed survey up and live. She discussed publishing a public service announcement on CNET and distributing a press release. Peter said that they learned most response to the survey is typically received in the first two weeks. To reach residents who do not have internet to perform a speed test, they will also distribute a paper survey.

- B. Kim Stank reported that \$5.5 million has been expended and the revenue loss number has changed. Final rule was released. Non profits are better defined and includes 501(c)(3) and (19). The revenue loss number went from 4.1% to 5.2% and you can use a standard \$10 million, this is a huge help to municipalities. Commissioner Pipe asked if the final rule clarifies if Federal or State funds get factored in to the revenue. Kim said this was not answered, but she expects some FAQ's will be coming out.
- C. Margaret Gray has received a proposal from AMI Expeditionary Healthcare to administer COVID-19 testing to employees. She is going to take a closer look at it, but costs are around \$150,000.

V. QUESTIONS FROM THE PRESS

VI. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Commissioner Higgins, seconded by Commissioner Dershem, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 11:37 AM.

ATTEST:

Margaret N. Gray
Administrator