



WSU EXTENSION
Okanogan County

Meeting Minutes
OKANOGAN COUNTY & CCT
BROADBAND ACTION TEAM MEETING
July 27, 2023
2-3 pm

Meeting started: 2:06 PM

Introductions: Attendees by Zoom/call in:

Roni Holder-Diefenbach (OK CO Economic Alliance), Kayla Wells-Yoakum (OK CO WSU Ext.), John McDonald (PUD), Kellie Conn (OK CO WSU Ext.), Mike Maltais (Quad City Herald), Brandi Schwerdtfeger (ACRS), Hanna Kliegman, Chris St. Germaine (Ziply Fiber), Joanna Sebastian (Methownet), Lisa Bower (Okanogan City Council), Gerardo Perez -Guerrero (Community health Plan of WA).

Introductions.

June Meeting minutes approved.

Roni Holder-Diefenbach (OK CO Economic Alliance)- Discussion of NCW Tech Alliance upcoming training opportunities to assist organizations for Digital Navigation Equity. The organization would like to work with us to provide these opportunities to Okanogan County. Jenny Rojanasthien and the team will present at the August meeting. They would like us to identify 7 entities who would benefit from a small grant of \$4000. To qualify they will need to attend a coalition launch, send one staff member to attend training, share resources via social media, etc. NCW Tech also offers a full year of tech support. Please let Roni know anyone that would be good to offer funding. The coalition launch is on September 28, 2023, they will be handing out pamphlets. We will really look at long term, long range, digital equity planning and making sure that we are identifying and addressing all of the things that we've put into our newly creative digital equity plan.

Roni, Kayla, and Greg Medonca with OCEC met with Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) and presented an update on our work, the different funding applications and provided an overview of where we are in the planning process. Gave the final copy of the Broadband Action plan that also included our Digital Equity Plan and the Methow Valley plan which was combined into one document. Discussed ARPA dollars for allocation to our BAT, dedicate and match from BOCC. Matched a million dollars; \$500,000 would go to OCEC, \$500,000 to Okanogan County PUD. OCEC did receive funding from WSBO Round 2 for the upper Methow in partnership with MethowNet to install fiber. They already have marketing materials to get the word out about their new services. BOCC is working on a resolution to make these funds available to OCEC.

Partner Updates Digital Equity and Navigator- Roni received donated computers from NCW Tech Alliance for our organizations. Offer one year of tech support. If we know of businesses in need let Roni know.

Kayla Wells-Yoakum- (WSU OK CO Ext.) WSU Extension is offering on-line, month long, Remote Worker Certificate courses, open statewide \$299 per person. The class will teach more efficient and effective ways to work remotely. The course is offered through Utah State University. WSU Extension does offer scholarship money for courses to those who qualify.

<https://extension.wsu.edu/remoteworkcertificate/>

John McDonald (PUD)-Waiting for funding announcements. USDA Reconnect 5 later this summer, which we will apply for. Waiting for WSBO application to be opened to apply for 1.2M BEAD funding. On the infrastructure front, PUD has upgraded edge routers from 10 G to 100 G routers which means 100 G upstream in preparation for mass fiber to the home. Spoke with Rob Larsen at Ziply about a public-private partnership with PUD. Ziply would like to use PUD's existing infrastructure to build centers which will allow the community to have more internet options. New network analyst added to PUD, now have 3.

Chris St. Germaine (Ziply)- Awarded contractors Tonasket Brewster Pateros, Loomis, Danville, need contractors. 60 days of start will be finished for build out. Small build blocks. NTIA funding broadband infrastructure program, 5 G options.

Joanna Sebastian (Methownet)- PUD Twisp in south, OCEC north? Awarded 12M 2600 customers or 2/3 of OCEC customers. Had two? town halls, mazama and Twisp grange. Door to door hangers, have 1800 signed up. In talks with contractors.

Gerardo Perez -Guerrero (Community health Plan of WA)- Rumors that the DOC may offer additional funding for digital navigation training. One of the biggest changes at DOC with this current and previous grant is they are looking for a regional or consortium approach. Instead of having many small organizations, they are trying to find a way to have a more regional base.

Meeting adjourned at 2:52 pm

Next meeting is August 24 @ 2:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Kellie Conn (WSU OK CO Extension).