

Asotin County Broadband Action Team
October 19, 2022, 2pm Meeting Agenda

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87604918466?pwd=WVJ3Zi94QzUydzZ1L1RXUjNGSkEyUT09>
Meeting ID: 876 0491 8466
Passcode: 425187

2:00 Introductions

Jennifer Ashby, Debbie Baker, Gail Long, Dustin Loup, Wanda Keefer, Sarah Reaves, Michael Gaffney, Mark Heitstuman, Chad Miltenberger

2:05 Broadband Office update/Questions

2:20 WSU Extension grants

Mike: Dustin is one of two statewide leaders on WSU Broadband project. Building on Monica's work, they signed an MOU to continue to support BATs. Morphed into contract between WSU Extension and Commerce to support two initiatives statewide. They will hire 2 state leaders and 7 regional coordinators, 7 faculty members involved. Stream #1 is to support at the county level BAT efforts statewide. The deliverable will be a BAT Action Plan, leading to the state gaining federal funds. They will help identify gaps, etc. and help prioritize projects. One federal \$ stream is \$800 million to 1 billion dollars for which to compete. Will work with each county, through extension office. If county doesn't have capacity to do much on their own, regional coordinators will step in. \$45,000 per county to support BAT; some will be spent at regional level. Mapping is a necessary component and they are hoping to realize economies of scale by mapping region or state wide. Jennifer highlighted advertising for speed tests as a statewide campaign. Going through county extension offices will help with addressing variety of needs

Stream #2 directed at counties and tribes, focus is digital equity, rather than the infrastructure piece. Legislative direct flow-through funding of \$3 million. Will identify barriers to digital participation and working on ways to directly distribute funding through simple grant process, which will probably have a two-part structure of receiving funding.

Due date for WSU to meet deliverables is June 30. They will be sending a questionnaire to determine needs and nature of participation for each county.

Dustin: in process of developing set of tools to be part of larger tool kit for informing and supporting BAT work and the digital equity planning work. Will identify what is needed at local levels in order to inform state what is needed for funding. Important to align to local priorities as well as having a state overview.

Mark: feels like Asotin County BAT is well set because of two year history.

2:35 Port Update

Wanda pointed out that our Asotin County plan is now 10 years old. Some of the items have been accomplished, some are not attractive from a business perspective. Wonders if the plans made under original commerce state broadband plan grants are being considered. Important to know community engagement and if organizations have stayed with goals.

We need data on who our disadvantaged populations are – can WSU help with that?

We need resources to not just get to final design, but to make sure projects are really feasible before applying for \$.

Mike: good to know there are some plans

Dustin: Questionnaire asks what work has been done, the plans that are made, how old are they. Agrees with need for data. May not rely on state broadband speed tests because local planners need to know what their specific situation is. WSU would like to create platform, do mapping, GIS, etc.

Wanda: would like demographics of populations, connectivity availability, broadband speed, student test scores, impacts of more or less speed, etc.

Mike: that is a goal and part of planning process is to determine how to partner with organizations already doing mapping work in the state.

Gail: Is the state envisioning trying to do a speed availability type of map?

Mike: data needs to help tell story

Dustin: there will be layers to data and mapping available. Speed tests are just one component of their plan. State is required to use FCC data to determine if area is underserved. Good quality local data will be necessary to challenge FCC data. Want all the layers as reported by providers, digital navigators, users.

Jennifer: has there been any effort to make the FCC accountable to have good maps?

Dustin: FCC maps understate level of service. They are in process of updating to gather data at location level, not census block. Personal opinion is that state challenge process, rather than the federal level. will be a more feasible opportunity to challenge maps. Current system requires underserved communities and persons to refute bad data.

Wanda: we are a small entity, federal grants are challenging for application process and for meeting \$ matches. Even with help coming from WSU, small entities are overburdened and need collaboration with agencies who can help.

Mike: Agree. Wants to build plan that is sustainable after \$8 million is gone. How do we continue to support local entities? The gap is recognized and is being considered.

2:35 BAT Web Page

No update.

2:45 Digital Navigator grant update

We have a program in place but are in a hiatus in October due to vacation and admin leave. We help people use the device they have, explore other devices, sign up for ACP, have hotspots and laptop kits.

Wanda, Brian, Jennifer and maybe Gail, will continue to work on local plan. Anyone else welcome.

2:50 Questions/Discussion

Gail: as a service provider we have a problem with permitting offices getting the permits processed. They can build faster than they can get permits. Something for WSU folks to think about.

Dustin: want to identify policy-related challenges and get that info to the right people.

Wanda: would like someone to work with WSDOT to ease permitting challenges.

Thank you to WUS folks for providing information about new opportunity.

Mike: We are excited about project

Wanda: misses Monica Babine. She did a fabulous job.

Jennifer: will work on get

Adjourned 2:55pm.

Chat:

14:45:19 From Sarah Reaves (TSMH) to Everyone:
Agreed!

14:51:45 From Mike Gaffney WSU to Everyone:
mjgaffney@wsu.edu

14:52:24 From Mike Gaffney WSU to Everyone:
dustin.loup@wsu.edu

14:55:25 From Mike Gaffney WSU to Everyone:
509-338-0318

14:55:42 From Wanda, Port of Clarkston to Everyone:
Thank you Mike, Mark and Dustin for your commitment to this new program.

14:56:30 From Sarah Reaves (TSMH) to Everyone:
Thank you!