

**Asotin County Broadband Action Team**  
**August 18th Meeting Agenda**

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87604918466?pwd=WVJ3Zi94QzUydzZ1L1RXUjNGSkEyUT09>

**Introductions**

Jennifer Ashby (Asotin County Library), Erin Kolb (Asotin County Library), Brian Shinn (Asotin County Commissioner), Wanda Keefer (Port of Clarkston), Scott Thompson, Ernest Rasmussen (WA State Broadband), Debbie Baker, Gail Long (TDS), Chad Miltenberger (Walla Walla Community College – Clarkston), Joe Savoy (First Step Internet), Devin Gombosky (WA State Broadband), Aaron (Inland Cellular), Mark Detrick (WA State Broadband), Mark Havens (Interlink), Noel Hardin (Asotin County Fire Chief)

**Broadband Office update/Questions and Discussion of projects/Questions**

Ernest Rasmussen introduced himself; new to the State Broadband Office and first time to the meeting. Wants to help inform group's efforts re: digital equity.

Mark and Devon are part of the WA State Broadband Office team.

Mark provided an update on WSBO efforts: focus on applications NTIA connectivity grant – partnership with Learned ? ; mapping data; trying to attend as many BAT meetings as they can – wants to help and empower groups to meet goals; target and troubleshoot trouble spots.

Want to hear from ISPs and providers about challenges around signing people up.

Update re: EBB (new name coming?) benefit likely to continue – may be lowered to \$30 a month benefit rather than \$50 – helping to add to program's longevity and internet service provider incentive to continue.

NTIA grant opportunity coming Connecting Minorities Grant – working on targeting their outreach.

Broadband Exhilaration grant – 276 million – broadband infrastructure 100 down, 20 up? Shooting for 150

5 million in other grants

50 million in federal matches

7.5million Digital Navigator grant – one-on-one assistance for people with limited access to services 1.5 million will be set aside for Medicaid

RFPs by October 1<sup>st</sup> – something about Dec 1<sup>st</sup>

Multiple rounds of funding? Still to be determined. Meeting scheduled for September 9 at 1pm for BATs and internet providers – WSBO wants input about how to allocate the funds. Invitation details are still pending.

Questions and discussion regarding Mark's updates.

- Re: EEB - do not have all the answers right now, not sure if there will still be funds to help with devise
- FCC grant – do we have vendors that have signed-up for this? Can state money match ARPA money? FCC hasn't determined final rules – in a wait & see period
- Bi-partisan bill – should it pass – will be named: Affordable Connectivity Benefit – another 65 million coming with 42 million coming to the States.
- Mark – working on score cards – asking applicants to score themselves – question from BS about being cooperative rather than competitive.
- ACL has a Digital Navigator – asked about model for how this DN works – State is referring to the national digital navigator program – cannot speak to the scoring part of this – obviously want to get the biggest bang for the buck.
- Jennifer noted BAT do not have anything in writing – suggested we get together a subcommittee - Ernest/State suggests and starting to see good work elsewhere – Ferry County, Stevens County.
- Wanda speaks to Asotin County 8 year history and written plan that needs to be updated; Brian Shinn, Wanda Keefer and Jennifer Ashby offered to help with updating the plan.
- Brian – Asotin County doesn't have money with ARPA money to run fiber up Anatone – but we need it. Wonders about other counties – example microwave relays – discussion had. Ernest suggests WSBO office an informally assist with plans.
- Upcoming GO (?) (unclear to notetaker what was being discussed here). Mark feasibility things will be part of the application process. Thinking now entities will apply with their own score cards, then state scores, then pass muster – then feasibility studies paid for by the state – state wants to learn tricks – goal of theirs in the future.

Wanda – project updates

Port of Clarkston – dark fiber Port has 9 different IP leasing the ROW or aerial. Small bites at the time. On July 14 the Dept of Commerce / Revitalization gave grant funding – first fiber something project – WK wants to provide open access to the fiber. Versatility to providers –

Wanda shared documents and maps with BAT.

- RFI – analysis to show need in Asotin County
- Work trust funds project – interested in WA state broadband – survey results
- Needs more speed tests – would like help from BAT
- WK spoke with Rep Cathy McMorris-Rodgers about broadband and gave kudos to First Step and Inland Cellular
- Excitement and partnership – need to figure out how tell the story about how to apply and make things happen

Jennifer provided updates re: library's effort to promote Asotin County residents for broadband speed tests. Tribune newspaper article, called school superintendents to reach out to schools, notice billings and the asked members of this team to help promote these efforts too. Discussion about community messaging efforts (example from Okanogan County – notice on McDonald's reader boards). Jennifer will pursue local businesses for reader board message.

Something said about the Digital Equity Act – passed / introduced by Patty Murray

Discussion about getting enough tests done to not miss funding opportunities.

Mark Havens – asked JA to share EBB info about speed tests – will put info in his newsletters and Interagency.

Gail with TDS – question about source of the 270 million money – is this ARPA or something else? 9901 eligible, per WSBO. Difficult challenges – lack of control of the network – combined with?? TDS is trying to think through this all.

Jennifer – asked WSBO – how often should BAT meet – are updates coming frequently to warrant frequent meetings. Answer is yes.

From Devin at WSBO - BAT newsletter will pick-up again. Jennifer will send entire BAT roster to state so everyone can receive; team members should notify Jennifer if they do not want to receive.

Ernest mentioned people's interest in their willingness to talk about digital equity varies – so talk about funding – does our community want federal funding and are we ready for it?

#### **Future meetings**

No discussion

Meeting ended about 3:00pm

Notes by Erin Kolb, Asotin County Library