

Attendees: Commissioner Greene
Commissioner McKee
Todd Broucksou
Catharine Rice
Jim Northrup
Travis Myren
Doug Noell
Patricia Hull
Paul Cardillo
Terri Buckner
Victoria Deaton
Dr. Kathleen Dawson
Jeff Sural
Vasu Kilaru
Patricia Sullivan

Local, State and Federal Funding Updates

Catharine – strong preference for funds that you don't have to compete for; best use of time to devote time to funds have best chance of getting and have most control over; (see attachments)

The \$1.2 trillion American Rescue Act allocated \$350 billion to State Recovery Funds and Local Recovery Funds. For NC, \$8.5 billion has been earmarked in state and local recovery funds.

Regarding the local recovery funds, Orange County is slotted to receive \$28 million, of which \$14 million has been requested and formally received. The second tranche will be available in no less than 12 months from May 10, 2021.

Attached is the Governor's Recommendations on use of the State Recovery fund portion of the American Rescue Act for broadband and digital literacy/affordability uses.

Last week NC Broadband Matters had many members of the Governor's staff discuss these plans and field questions. The video archive can be found [here](#). Below is Nate Denny's slide summarizing that for broadband uses.

The Treasury Dept. Interim Final Guidelines shape how the ARA, including the State & Local Recovery funds, can be used. For specifically broadband infrastructure construction, see pages 69-77 in attached.

Approach & Initiative Investment

Governor Cooper proposes closing the digital divide with a \$1.2 billion state investment, using funds from the American Rescue Plan, in the following areas to achieve digital equity in North Carolina. We will also leverage significant private sector investment.

 Infrastructure	\$600M	Ensure availability of internet service at speeds of at least 100/20 Mbps for more than 98% of North Carolina households.
	\$350M	• GREAT Grant 2.0
	\$150M	• Competitive Bidding
	\$100M	• Stop Gap Solutions
 Affordability	\$420M	Lower cost barriers for North Carolinians.
 Digital Literacy and Enablement	\$165M	Improve awareness and enable North Carolinians to realize the benefits of high-speed internet through digital literacy and upskilling aimed at accessing the digital economy.
	\$70M	• Device Support and Break-Fix Services
	\$95M	• Awareness and Digital Literacy
 Administrative	\$15M	Supplement existing state administrative capacity to support high-speed internet efforts.

American Rescue Act Funds (\$1.2 trillion; \$350 billion for state and local recovery funds; local recovery funds \$28 million received directly from Fed (\$14 million tranche already taken); state funds – Treasury Dept, relevant interim final guidelines ; stopgap funds for vendors that can't hit 100/20; state recovery piece \$420 million for affordability; \$330 million for digital literacy; std aiming for is minimum 100/20 – aim for being able to measure results, all students having 100/20 by 2024. Have access to local recovery funds to use at our discretion (treasury interim final guidelines – includes definitions of underserved/unserved); Doug – question Emergency Connectivity Fund (through FCC) (up to \$250/device - separate from ARA) \$7.2 billion for whole country; Emergency Broadband Fund \$3.2 billion reimburse provider up to \$50/household; Terri – q for Doug => have a map of these students/staff?; 1460 student hotspots/170 staff where students didn't have good broadband access (all across area – White Cross and other areas across the district); Doug has addresses for these students/staff; asking for data and using it to justify need; in Treasury interim final guidelines, want funds used for underserved/unserved; networks where there is not “reliable” access to 25/3?? Homes that do not have access to reliable wired – systems have to be built to 100/100 symmetrical unless not possible then have to be built to 100/20 scalable; Terri – must provide metrics, serving unserved/underserved; governor's goal is to serve 100% of all students; bottom line – local recovery funds OC can control

RFP Review

Jim – had quite a few comments; Terri – concerns; happy w/idea of making this a public/private partnership – county would own resources and someone would operate the resources in our name; include what costs to deploy/manage/maintain; ownership left intentionally vague in order to get interest on RFP – see what responses we'd get then go into contract phase; SG: language indeterminate but that's okay for now; EM: agree, no issue with County owning the infrastructure and leasing to vendor for modest fee (one that will be attractive to providers); if have questions once we get responses, can get more info from respondents; Jim – this RFP is looking for a turnkey solution and we can stipulate that we want ownership during contract phase – current RFP for provider to build/deploy/maintain internet service to 5000 homes – not for county to build fiber network; Terri's point – if we go with RFP as-is, we run the risk of getting responses then pulling out because they want to own the fiber themselves; Todd – can negotiate after responses received; Catharine – short term is 18 months; room in RFP for multiple service providers; Catharine – proposes just talking with providers rather than dusting off RFP for short term solution; Jeff – done this in dozens of counties, way we

approach this is crowd sourcing, aggregation then send list to all providers - going to have a meeting, have a task force, going to share addresses, share ideas and proposals, helps planning task forces to structure their RFP's and tailor it to a specific purpose; the more specificity in RFP, the better the response; might be worth having a public announcement to put it out there; could possibly draw serious attention from providers since \$\$ now so much higher; Commissioner Greene – do an open call, suss out whether providers are wanting to “own” the solution; possibly call an emergency meeting to see how other commissioners feel about owning/not owning resource; Terri – if one vendor comes in and builds all the fiber (to own), we no longer have leverage...need competition and have a stake in the game ourselves; have a physical meeting (not phone) and ask each vendor to come and be prepared to present their solution in that meeting; Todd – asks Jeff how long it'll take to put together such a meeting – Jeff says 2-4 weeks face-to-face, provide info ahead of time so providers can be prepared; Buncombe County is an example of this process; Alexander County as well; 18 months short term, 3-5 years long term; Paul – can we just post a public advertisement to comply with open meeting rules?; Jim – need to include list of vendors; Paul – has list of vendors, will send.

Earl McKee – board has process where can put forward amendments to budget; proposes to place an amendment to budget that we hold aside \$5million each of 1st and 2nd years (total of \$10million) for broadband infrastructure that will make this a feasible project

Action Items:

- Jim to get up with Jeff's team to put together a meeting in early July – have an update next meeting with dates, more details

Motion to approve minutes from last meeting - approved

Adjourned 7:00.