

Minutes from the Advisory Board Meeting for the State Universal Communications Services Program held on December 11, 2019.

INTRODUCTION:

The Advisory Board for the State Universal Communications Service Program (State USF), pursuant to Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 480-123-150 and described in Docket UT-150067, held its annual meeting on Wednesday, December 11, 2019, at the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission Building at Lacey, Washington in Room 217.

Public Notice of the meeting was distributed on November 20, 2019, and was also listed on the Commission's public web page in the Calendar section.

ATTENDEES:

The meeting began at 10:00 a.m. P.T.; and all six Board Members were in attendance:

Board Members attending:

In-Person –

- Jing Roth, Assistant Director - Telecom, Commission Staff – Chair
- Rick Vitzthum, Chief Financial Officer Kalama and Tenino Telephone Companies – (ILECs serving fewer than 40,000 access lines in Washington)
- Phil Grate in lieu of Mark Reynolds, Northwest Region Vice President of Public Policy, CenturyLink – (ILECs serving more than 40,000 access lines in Washington)
- Cindy Manheim, Executive Director – Senior Legal Counsel , AT&T – (Wireless Providers)

Via Telephone –

- Lisa Gafken, Assistant Attorney General – Public Counsel
- Rhonda Weaver, Senior Director of State Government Affairs, Comcast – (Competitive Local Exchange Companies or “CLECs”)

Staff in attendance/or participating by phone:

- Sean Bennett, Commission Staff
- Tim Zawislak, Commission Staff
- Jennifer Cameron-Rulkowski, Assistant Attorney General

OPENING COMMENTS:

Jing Roth, chair of the board, convened the meeting. She gave a brief statement regarding the history and future of the program, welcomed and thanked all the members for their service on the board. Each board member made a brief introduction.

AGENDA:

Summary of Fund Distributed and Year Five Timeline

Sean Bennett (Commission Staff), summarized the amounts distributed on an annual basis and provided remaining fund balance before administrative costs. Additional discussion about funding levels for fiscal year 2021 and onward. Funding levels are based on the amount of funds placed into the account. Staff provided a timeline for the fiscal year (2020).

Program Results

Sean Bennett (Commission Staff) described the major program milestones as presented in the Agenda attachments. Additional takeaways included the following:

- FCC Report 477 indicates that the percentage of Class B company broadband customers in aggregate, has increased from 5 percent as of June 30, 2015 to 17 percent as of June 30, 2018, and to 23 percent as of June 30, 2019 for broadband speeds of at least 25 down/3 up and from 21 percent to 37 percent and to 52 percent for speeds greater than 10 down/1 up but less than 25 down/3 up.

UT- 190437 - Rulemaking to Implement 2SSB5511:

Chair Jing Roth, Commission, Assistant Director reviewed the implementation schedule and key changes in the ongoing rulemaking.

Jing Roth and Sean Bennett responded to several board member questions regarding the proposed eligibility categories and fund distribution to companies deemed eligible. All board members agreed that if a company seeks eligibility as an “Other Provider”, additional meetings would be needed to determine petition requirements, distribution amount and compliance reporting, among other things.

Conclusion:

The meeting adjourned by approximately 11:00 am, December 11, 2019.