

**Minutes from the Advisory Board Meeting for the State Universal Communications
Services Program held on January 27, 2021**

INTRODUCTION:

The Advisory Board for the State Universal Communications Service Program (State USF), pursuant to Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 480-123-150 and as described in Docket UT-150067, held its annual meeting on Wednesday, January 27, 2021.

The Commission issued a Public Notice of the virtual meeting on January 4, 2021 and the notice was on the calendar section on Commission's public website.

ATTENDEES:

The meeting began at 10:00 a.m. P.S.T.; one Board Member did not attend while six Board Members were in attendance:

Board Members in Virtual Attendance:

- Jing Roth, Assistant Director – Telecommunications section of the Commission and Chair of the board
- Rick Vitzthum, Chief Financial Officer Kalama and Tenino Telephone Companies – (ILECs serving fewer than 40,000 access lines in Washington)
- Cindy Manheim, Executive Director – Senior Legal Counsel, AT&T – (Wireless Providers)
- Russ Elliot, Director, State Broadband Office
- Lisa Gafken, Assistant Attorney General – Public Counsel
- Rhonda Weaver, Senior Director of State Government Affairs, Comcast – (Competitive Local Exchange Companies or “CLECs”)

Absent –

- William Bridges, Northwest Region Vice President of Public Policy, CenturyLink – (ILECs serving more than 40,000 access lines in Washington)

Staff in attendance/or participating by phone:

- Sean Bennett, Commission Staff
- Tim Zawislak, Commission Staff

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 a new member, and thanked all the members for their service on the board. Each board member made a brief introduction.

AGENDA:

Rulemaking to Implement 2SSB 5511:

Jing Roth highlighted key changes to the Program. Key changes include: Streamlined eligibility criteria and new methodology for support distribution, flexible and forward-looking broadband buildout requirements, and the ability of “Other Providers” to seek support from the program.

Summary of Fund Distributed and Timeline for Year Seven (7) 2021 Fiscal Year:

Sean Bennett summarized the amounts distributed on an annual basis and provided the total amount of funds distributed. There was some discussion about the four different eligibility criteria.

Program Results:

Sean Bennett described the program milestones as presented in the attachments for the board meeting agenda. Additional takeaways included the following:

- FCC Form 477 reporting indicates that the percentage of Class B company broadband customers in aggregate, the percentage and number of subscribers to speeds greater than 25/3 Mbps continues to increase while the number of subscribers to speeds less than 10/1 Mbps continues to decline.

Open Discussion and Comments:

Jing Roth and Sean Bennett responded to several board member questions regarding broadband speed requirements, accountability, and the action and process that would be taken if an “Other Provider” seeks program funding. All board members agreed that if a company seeks eligibility as an “Other Provider” as defined by the rule, additional board meetings would be held to determine including, but not limited to, petition and filing requirements, distribution amount, and compliance reporting.

Conclusion:

The meeting adjourned at approximately 10:40 am, January 27, 2021.