

LA PLATA ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION, INC.
Broadband Committee Minutes of Meeting
Tuesday, November 17, 2020
<https://lpea.coop/board-directors-committees>

CALL TO ORDER

The Broadband Committee of the La Plata Electric Association Board of Directors was held Tuesday, November 17, 2020 via webinar. Committee Chair, Kirsten Skeehan called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. The following committee members were in attendance:

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Kirsten Skeehan, Committee Chair
Tim Wheeler
Holly Metzler
Jessica Matlock, CEO
Ryne Waggoner, Staff Engineer

SUPPORT STAFF

Dan Harms, VP of Grid Solutions
Karl Ramsey, VP of Finance
Graham Smith, LPEA Staff Attorney

EXCUSED ABSENCE None

GUESTS: FastTrack Communications General Manager Kelly Hebbard, Director of Network Engineering and Operations Natambu Obleton, Garrett Hammer, Ted Compton, Deb Shishler, Eric Hittle, Guinn Unger, Cynthia Dow, Steve Truebner, Clay Atkisson

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Committee Chair Skeehan addressed the November 17, 2020 Broadband Committee meeting agenda. A request was made to add an agenda item V.C. Executive Session as Needed.

Motion: Committee member Wheeler moved to approve the November 17, 2020 Broadband Committee meeting agenda as modified. Motion seconded and carried without dissent.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Committee Chair Skeehan addressed the February 13, 2020 Broadband Committee minutes of meeting. A modification was noted to the minutes.

Motion: Committee member moved to approve the February 13, 2020 Broadband Committee minutes of meeting as modified. Motion seconded, and carried without dissent.

Committee Chair Skeehan addressed the October 6, 2020 Broadband Committee minutes of meeting.

Motion: Committee member Wheeler moved to approve the October 6, 2020 Broadband Committee minutes of meeting as presented. Motion seconded, and carried without dissent.

BROADBAND PRESENTATIONS

CEO Matlock led a discussion on ascertaining the problem and possible solutions that the Broadband Committee is attempting address; whether LPEA has any risk, strategic drivers, or a role to play; and lessons learned from LPEA's subsidiary, FastTrack Communications and cooperatives such as Delta Montrose Electric Association. VP of Grid Solutions Harms gave an overview and took questions on the multitude of players that provide an array of services: for LPEA's operational use, Fiber Optic Network Agreements (FONA), dark fiber services, long haul services, regional lit fiber services, local commercial lit fiber services, and local broadband to the home.

FastTrack Communications General Manager Hebbard presented a deeper dive into the state of broadband, experience with barriers to deploying fiber-to-the-home (FTTH), and potential fiber expansion plans for last mile connectivity. Discussion ensued on internet access and download speeds in the LPEA service territory, advantages and disadvantages for FTTH in the utility model, funding sources, hybrid services that give wireless internet service providers (ISP) a fiber access point to deliver FTTH, and new technologies with the Starlink low orbit satellite internet network that is in the testing stages with Space X. FastTrack Communications General Manager Hebbard noted that FastTrack Communications has qualified for a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) auction to bid for funding in exchange for providing FTTH connectivity and voice services, with winners expected to be announced before the end of the year.

The committee took member questions and discussed possible next steps of receiving an update on FastTrack Communications' FCC pilot project, reviewing the HR Green Report, considering a community survey on broadband, reviewing national case studies, and conducting a Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) analysis to define a broadband path that the committee will recommend to the board in April 2021.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

REVIEW OF STRATEGIC WHITEPAPER INPUT AND CHANGES – Committee Chair Skeehan highlighted member input on the LPEA Broadband Strategic Whitepaper. Staff Attorney Smith gave an update on Colorado SB 2019-107 Broadband Infrastructure Installation which allows telecommunications carriers to piggyback on utility infrastructure; touched on legislative intent, implications, and decision points for LPEA; and took questions on LPEA's options, considerations, and limitations.

ITERATIVE PRESENTATIONS AND POSSIBLE RESOLUTIONS FOR LPEA BOARD – Committee Chair Skeehan advised that she will discuss options with committee members prior to the next meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION AS NEEDED – An executive session did not take place.

NEXT STEPS AND ASSIGNMENTS

The committee discussed agenda items for the next Broadband Committee Meeting which is scheduled to take place at 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., December 10, 2020 and plans to focus on defining and analyzing the broadband problem that need to be solved, possible solutions, and LPEA's role.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the Broadband Committee of the La Plata Electric Association, Board of Directors meeting adjourned at 3:02 p.m.

Recorded by C.E. Charistopoulos, and approved by:



Kirsten Skeehan, Committee Chair