CONNECT NEW MEXICO COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
Virtual
Date, July 31,2023, 10:30 – 11:30 PM

1. WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Video recording time: 00:00:03
This Special Meeting of the Connect New Mexico Council was called to order by Renee Narvaiz, at 10:34 a.m., on Monday, July 31, 2023, in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Ms. Narvaiz introduced herself and reviewed general rules and procedures regarding the meeting.

MEMBERS PRESENT-

Kimball Sekaquaptewa, Chair	Godfrey Enjady
Secretary Peter Mantos	Eli Guinnee
Launa Waller	Tico Charlee
Ovidiu Viorica	

MEMBERS ABSENT-

Leonard Manzanares	Steve Grey
Nora Sackett	Jim Ruybal
Joseph Navarrette	Katherine Crociata
Bogi Malecki	Luis Reyes

OTHERS PRESENT

Renee Narvaiz, IT, Public Information Manager
Vanessa Willock, DoIT General Counsel
Joanne Hovis, CTC
Jennifer Nevarez
Carlos Herrera, , Ross Chaney, Jerry Smith, Jerrold Baca, Nathan Cogburn, Jeff Albright, Brian Isom, Kassandra Huhn, John Conley, Manh Pham, Teresa Hopkins (Sacred Wind)

2. APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA AND MINUTES

No quorum, no motions entertained.

3. CHAIR UPDATES/COMMENTS - Kimball Sekaquaptewa

Video recording time: 00:01:42
Ms. Sekaquaptewa asked Ms. Jennifer Nevarez to continue the meeting.

Jennifer – Introduced herself, stating she works on the support team for broadband and digital equity and she is holding the working document for the Broadband Knowledge and Digital Equity Analysis and Plan (BKDEAP). She explained that she may be making comments on the document as she reviews it and the document will be edited and refined later, so viewers may see comments typed in during the review.

Jennifer – Explained that this is the State of New Mexico report on Broadband Knowledge and Digital Equity Analysis and Plan (BKDEAP), pursuant to section 5 of the Connect New Mexico Act. This report is due August 1st. Noted this document has an extensive table of contents and will scroll through this quickly. Most important to remember is that this document is mandated by legislation as a required report. The Connect New Mexico Act requires three things in this document: 1) outline some of the challenges to digital inclusion that are posed by the lack of affordable service, quality service, broadband enabled devices and the knowledge to how to use the devices, 2) resources available, particularly funding coming down the pipeline or already in process, 3) programs that are

beginning to arise and are already working in communities to address the challenges.

Document gives a quick definition of digital equity in New Mexico and called attention to text highlighted in blue where that definition is given. This was written into the 3-Year Plan and submitted by the Office of Broadband on January 1st, however, this did not outline the pre-conditions for equity, which are; access to affordable services, ownership of sufficient appropriate devices, working knowledge of how to use the internet and basic understanding of online privacy and security. In this document it is also noted that due to the U.S. Digital Equity Act the State of New Mexico is currently in the process of also creating the State Digital Equity Plan. This Digital Equity Act provided funding for the planning process and three grants which are stacked. First is the Digital Equity State Planning Program which is how the current planning process is being funded to write the State Digital Equity Plan due to NTIA by November 30, 2023. This will unlock access to the second wave of federal funding, the Digital Equity State Capacity Program, which will provide funding to the states across the nation, and will then be funneled through to organizations and community entities that are mobilizing to support digital inclusion and help meet the measureable objectives identified in the plan. There will then be another stream of funding through the Digital Equity Competitive Program facilitated by the federal government, which non-profits, tribes, communities or agencies may apply for directly with the federal government.

This current document also gives the timeline for the State Digital Equity Plan. The requirements for this plan include extensive stakeholder engagement and extensive data collection as was also required in the Connect New Mexico Act. The State Digital Equity Plan will then be published for comment in the Fall of 2023, with submission to NTIA by November 30th.

Reviewed all of this as frame of reference. The report that is due this week is resting in-between the plan submitted in January and the Digital Equity State Plan due November 30th. Stakeholder engagement is under way and these activities are required to determine measureable objectives that will be in the plan, which will be used to allocate funding moving forward into the second wave of federal funding. Called attention to a small grid in the document showing some of the reporting deadlines. Noted that many of these deadlines do not line up. Reviewed details of these and expressed hope that some of these can be simplified and better aligned moving forward.

Asked if there were any questions at this point.

Kimball – Reminded attendees to jump in with comments or questions as this is a free-flowing conversation.

Asked if the Federal Digital Equity funding will be similar to BEAD where the State will vet the projects coming in from New Mexico, or will it be independent where individual projects go directly to NTIA.

Jennifer – Reviewed the three processes:

1) The Planning Grant, which is already under way.

2) Digital Equity State Capacity Grant will eventually flow funds to the State and through the State will be distributed through a State Digital Equity granting process. Partners may be involved in that and how this will be structured will be up to us to determine and also write into the Digital Equity Plan due November 30th.

3) National funnel where agencies, non-profits, tribes, etc., will also be able to take their programs for building digital equity and support for digital equity activities directly to the federal government, where $1.25 billion will be available through a competitive grant process at the national level.

Encouraged attendees to jump into the conversation or post questions in the chat. Asked Ms. Narvaiz to relay chat questions.

Trying to move fast for overview of this very long document.

The Connect New Mexico Act and the Broadband Access and Expansion Act established this Council and the Office of Broadband. The office was set up and Director Schlegel took office last July. The Office has established, Mission, Vision and Values, and is currently in the process of staffing up with approximately 17 positions currently filled, with additional positions yet to be filled. Also discussed the working groups under the Council that meet regularly. Reviewed other details within the Act such as the Connect New Mexico Initiative, the logo created and website for gathering all things broadband. Reviewed the massive map challenge initiative involving DoIT, particularly Natalie Runyan, which directly affected the distribution of BEAD funding. Noted that this challenge is still underway and lots of resources created relative to the map challenge are available on the website, https://connect.nm.gov/map-challenge.html. Gave details of map challenges. More than 246,000 availability and location challenges just within DoIT and OBAE were submitted with 174,000 successfully accepted by NTIA. Gave details of stakeholder engagement for both the Connect New Mexico Act and NTIA requirements for both BEAD and DE planning with respect to the impact of broadband and the barriers and needs, particularly for what is called the eight covered populations listed in this document, and these are also listed on the website https://connect.nm.gov/digital-equity-plan. Also required to show the impact of broadband and how impact areas will be addressed, which are also listed. With respect to stakeholder engagement on Broadband Day at the Round House, in spite of bad weather, approximately 400 attended with presentations and information tables. Six regional meetings took place across the state this spring in what was called the Spring Sprint, as well as 13+ listening sessions and industry focus groups at the Permian Basin Network Operators Conference in Albuquerque, in addition to the statewide summit in May. Have been told that this was the largest statewide summit across the nation that NTIA had partnered with and they were thrilled to see the engagement and level of enthusiasm. There were two "Let's Get Going" boot camps, one in the north and one in the south, in June. Tribal consultation and engagement is also under way, which is extensive, the details of which are in this document. Lots of other engagement taking place with presentations at other associations, other departments and other events such as award ceremonies. Data collection has involved six asset inventories which were distributed, developed by CTC, looking for resources and programs in communities. Resident phone survey currently in process to reach some of the unconnected communities to gather data which will hopefully prove helpful in establishing what needs or barriers are the biggest for the populations or communities that are underserved. Important to note that data collection is ongoing so this report does not address this. Further summaries of this ongoing data collection will be submitted November 30th to NTIA.

There is a list of municipalities, counties, etc., which may have reports of broadband needs assessments, surveys of their own and projects underway. If anyone has a report, a survey they have done or data collected related to infrastructure adoption and use please share it with the support team. This information is being collected and the findings are being funneled into the planning process. There are some examples of community mobilization included for reference, such as those related to infrastructure, digital skills, adoption, ACP, etc. Wanted to highlight some of the communities and local efforts such as the empowerment congress, the Mamacitas, Las Colonias Empowered by Broadband, etc.

There is a list of the required measureable objectives which are in NTIAs NOFO. These must also be addressed for each of the covered populations in the Digital Equity Plan due November 30th. The team will go on to examine some of the challenges to digital inclusion, but in this particular document they have highlighted some of the baseline information included in the 3-Year Broadband Plan

submitted in January, however, the data gathering and stakeholder engagement still underway will inform this more completely by the time the State Digital Equity Plan is due in November.

Reviewed the data included in the document, which is mostly national findings, census, NTIA, broadband use input, but does inform where New Mexico is in general, noting that most attendees today are aware of this and may have seen some of this information in previous reports and updates at previous Council meetings. Data shown that relates to federal funding opportunities to include USDA, US Dept. of Commerce, Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program funding which has already come in, Connecting Minority Communities Program which has also come in, EGA funding, FCC funding, as well as state funding opportunities which highlights the Connect New Mexico Fund process and the pilot programs, and gives additional details regarding this. Mentions philanthropy and other funding support. Orange text represents notes as this is being finalized and comments are coming in which need additional attention or clarification. Acknowledges the preliminary work done by the Broadband Collective in the philanthropic community who got the ball rolling and started building the ecosystem before this Council existed. They raised and distributed almost $500,000 in 2022. The National Digital Inclusion Alliance has also funded a project with Jemez Pueblo for a Digital Navigator Corp. Federal Reserve Bank has been supporting the state in localized efforts with the Border Tracks Connect Initiative and training for state agencies which are administering this.

Reviewed Digital Equity Program stating there are programs already underway by some of the ISPs. Programs also coming in through the asset inventories and surveys identifying, local, regional and statewide efforts by agencies and colleges across the state. This grid is growing. Information in the report is a sample of what has been learned so far. There are adoption programs and ACP support, helping families to get the ACP stipend or get a subscription, as well as affordability programs.

Ended the document review. Asked for any thoughts, input, ideas, comments, concerns or recommendations of anything else which should be addressed in this document.

Stated there are addendums: A summary of the Digital Equity Stakeholders Engagement has been done as well as a summary of the ISPs which are offering affordable options or a variety of low-cost options for community members in need.

4.   Discussion and input for BKDEAP – CNMC Members
Video recording time: 00:22:51
Kimball – Mr. Baca requested a link to the document in the chat.

Impact areas or at risk areas, not seeing clear strategy for those groups yet. Realizes still in data gathering stage, so may still be emerging.

Wondering how to seed or position topics at the state level to be beneficial with respect to advocacy or support; how can this report help the greater mission.

Asked Digital Equity working group for comments.

Offered additional comment that this is a Council for accountability under HB10. Ms. Schlegel at one point was considering a request for an extension to time this with the Fall Digital Equity Report, but CTC decided to proceed because they felt it was nearly ready. Appreciates that Jennifer has been going back in with her team to detail this with particulars relevant to New Mexico. Will proceed with submission of the report per HB10 requirement now. Offered this explanation as context. Asked Digital Equity working group team to comment.

Guinnee – Had to step away momentarily. Asked for clarification of Kimball's request for comment from the Digital Equity working group.

Kimball – Opinions of whether this document is where they would like it to be or if there are other contributions they would like to make, just general feedback.

Guinnee – Some members have provided comments. Not sure if drafts sent back by members of the working group have been included in this document. Has not had a chance to go through the most recent version carefully enough to ascertain this. At a high level personally impressed with the document and thinks it is a good document. Measurements of success going to be the most difficult to get exactly right. Will probably be talking more about this in the working group. Perhaps Jennifer has comments on this.

Jennifer – Some comments shared in the very first version have been included and updated. She was not managing all of these but will go back to see if anything may have been overlooked. Thanked everyone who weighed in on this, was circulated quite extensively in its most raw form and has been through quite a few versions so far. Regarding measureable objectives the state will be held accountable and have to measure progress, utilizing the measureable objectives chosen for the State Digital Equity Plan submitted November 30th. Need to choose wisely, but choices need to be informed by what is being heard and learned from communities, especially the biggest challenges or barriers to access adoption and use as shared by the most unserved or underserved communities. Possibility of half day in-person workshop in September was discussed in last Digital Equity working group meeting to workshop those measureable objectives together eye-to-eye. Hopefully some at today's meeting will be able to join that and spread the word to invite others who are engaged and concerned about equity and inclusion issues, or may be involved in programming which could be supporting this already.

Guinnee – At last Digital Equity workgroup meeting he reviewed the matrix they have been working on which has the NTIA target populations and NTIA primary categories. Has asked group members to take another look at this and make sure they have the different boxes filled out for whichever population they focus on in their work. Next step will be for him to look at that in its entirety and see if there is anything that the current reports and plans are missing. Will be examining this systematically in the next couple of weeks.

Kimball – Opened this matrix and found it very helpful. Started typing information in but questioned whether she should do so and took this out.

Guinnee – She is allowed to type. Encouraged to do so.

Kimball – Thought this was a great vehicle for data collection and get the grass roots efforts. Those outside the Digital Equity working group who are also working on digital equity encouraged to contribute.

Guinnee – No right or wrong answers. Helpful to have all the categories and the populations. A great way of thinking through digital equity as it aligns with federal funding requirements. Very broad topic, helpful to have this systematic way to do this.

Kimball – She and Mr. Enjady met with Ms. Schlegel recently brainstorming a little to make sure the work of the working groups is being honored in the daily operations of OBAE and is being sent to these reports. Ms. Schlegel has hired a process analysis consultant for OBAE, named Kim, and time with her, along with Ms. Willock, has been requested to talk about how to get working groups work products embedded in the daily operations of OBAE, the report writing, and actions, etc. Will

welcome feedback in this regard, too. Giving heads up to Council members as they may be asked to participate in this discussion.

Willock – Spoke with Kim and she is fully onboard with this. Meeting will get scheduled.

Kimball – This report looks great. Feels like this is a framework or baseline and as the data gathering progresses and the input from the Digital Equity working group and others comes in it will be rounded out very nicely. Good reporting on previous meetings, data and history of the ongoing conversations very helpful. Thinks it will show state legislators there has been a lot of activity in this space.

Asked for further comments.

Mantos – Sent a page of comments in writing, mostly regarding formatting, etc. Gave example of the OBAE mission does not have the word "security" in it. Somewhat confused about references to resources and programs, however, "resource" refers to programs and leaves out the state programs and wonders why. Will send these to Jennifer as well. Renee already has them.

Great that websites and surveys available in both English and Spanish but 80% of the unserved New Mexicans are on tribal lands. Should consideration be given to using one or more native languages? Is this necessary? Do non-English, non-Spanish speaking people need access?

Kimball – Even some of the Asian communities.

Mantos – Yes. We don't know who these might be. Is it worth the effort to do so? Should take a look at this. Good that information is already available in both English and Spanish.

Kimball – Gave example of many pueblo communities not having a written language, but this is not true of the Dine/Navajo communities, so this might be an area to discuss. Getting into measureable objectives, how to engage and what the outreach will be; is it good enough to put a survey on a website. Current surveys being collected for BEAD are more organizational, are evidential level. With digital equity not sure what the expectations will be. Will only get a certain amount of people who will respond to a link on a website, a certain amount of people who will call in to a help desk. Is this good enough? Not sure. How much effort should be put into data gathering for a report or should the effort be expended on the implementation side in getting people to apply for the projects a little later on? Where should the resources and effort be expended?

Mantos – Put something in the chat for Jennifer to look at. Questions regarding wording, i.e., not everyone able to benefit equally. The law specifies three factors, racial grouping, socioeconomic status and cultural identity do not get in the way. But, there are a lot of other factors that determine how much someone is going to benefit from access. Not sure if this is the place to address this. Goes back to, is everyone created equal? No, not exactly, everyone has different capabilities, but that doesn't mean that everyone should not have equal opportunity. Yes…no question. Wonders if there is a need to rethink or wordsmith exactly what is being expressed by digital equity.

Kimball – Further comments or thoughts on this?

Viorica – Agrees that this is a vast topic, only scratching the surface at this time. This report includes a tremendous amount of information and represents a tremendous amount of work. Kudos to Jennifer, other consultants, the digital working group and nonprofits who contributed to this. This is only the beginning, though. Due to the length of the report recommended synthesizing the findings and the recommendations in a way that would be more easily accessible. Knows this is on Jennifer's mind and whenever that information becomes available it will be helpful to those who are not able to

review the entire report. Many data points in the report that should be publicized. Suggested this Council look at some of this data and try to make sense of it. People need to hear enough that they can actually wrap their minds around it. Sees what may be an overstatement on page 20, which states that 84% of New Mexicans have access to broadband. Compared to neighboring states this is a very low number. This is a low income population problem primarily. We have to figure out how to solve this. Subsidies will be necessary. Those with income of less than $20,000/year income are not going to pay any amount for internet access. This is a big challenge. Another data set that caught his attention was access to devices. Seem to be some conflicting pieces of information in the data points. Map on page 23 shows 40% or more not having access to a device but the table gives some different numbers and a nuanced approach that is a little hard to understand. May need to take another look at this information. This will require quite a bit of time and resources, illustrating that this is just the beginning and there will be an evolution with the Digital Equity Plan which is due to NTIA in the winter. Will have a better picture then of what the actual need is. Need all the resources we can get to change the current situation. Need to invest in this, money and resources, otherwise there will be no progress. As this information is gathered there needs to be a database established which is kept up-to-date, which is a lot of work. This is something that will have to be supported, otherwise data-driven decisions cannot be made as information is always in flux. Collecting and keeping this information up-to-date has to be a priority at the State level and there needs to be funding support for this effort to provide measureable progress and make adjustments along the way.

Mantos – Also noted the discrepancy in the numbers with respect to devices and sent a note to Jennifer. Suspect this has to do with whether or not phones are counted as devices.

Jennifer – Thanked Mr. Mantos for his comment. Will go back to CTC who provided the data and get clarification to either explain it better in the document or remove it for now and save it for November 30th. Expressed her appreciation for the attention to detail, even grammar, punctuation, spacing, etc. She used to be a teacher so is encouraged that others are actually reading the report. Need everyone's eyes on it to make sure and put our best foot forward. Will follow up on this.

Kimball – Be cognizant of narrative being shared. Knows that the philosophy is based on national data sets. Don't want to inherit them and over-speak for a topic. Don't know how to get better data. Wondered if document could be shortened by putting the federal and state funding opportunities in the appendix as these tend to change over time. Could a two page document be prepared to share with legislators to highlight general strokes of strategy which might help as well.

Jennifer – One page document was done with respect to what the NTIA required Digital Equity Plan is. Will send to Kimball to see if this would be useful.

Kimball – Need to be strategic in how infrastructure for digital equity gets presented in the state legislative conversations.

Jennifer – Wanted to add a few notes she overlooked earlier. In addition to all the other stakeholder engagement, currently numerous one-to-one ISP meetings occurring, as well as official tribal consultations. Quite a heavy lift. Has lists of meetings taking place. Also focus groups and interviews taking place, but more can be added. These focus groups and interviews help with data qualitative insight. If anyone is working with covered populations or communities that are unserved or underserved and would like to schedule a focus group or quick interview, her team would like to work with them on these. These will continue through August and possibly September. Building up to Digital Inclusion Week, the first week of October. Will get date for Digital Inclusion Week to Kimball for distribution, as this could be a rallying point for other activities already scheduled. A few more reports from focus groups were received on Friday and should have copies of the updated report to Council members. Mamacitas Ciberneticas held focus groups this Spring with face-to-face input from

some of the least served community members. The findings and the process were beautifully done. The report shared was in English and Spanish. Will be adding some of their comments today. As they gathered input from the community they were also building their infrastructure for deploying the solution. They are all engaged now and poised to make changes and committed to the process. In this case stakeholder engagement is actually turning into infrastructure for making a difference in the long-run. Wanted to acknowledge this amazing work and bringing some seriously deep community voice and commitment to this.

Kimball – Awesome to hear. Certain that the data from these focus groups is very rich, would love to see it.

Final questions? Thanked Jennifer for meeting with the Council this morning and walking them through this.

Viorica – Regarding Mamacitas Ciberneticas would love to see similar efforts in other parts of the state. There has to be investment in developing that type of engagement. It not only helps on all the aspects of the work of this Council but it also creates that community. Interested in exploring how to invest in a similar type effort. This takes time. This type of engagement does not happen overnight. The sooner this gets started the better. In many areas of the state this is the only way to engage the populations that need this assistance the most; trusted groups, trusted people from the community with the drive, passion, knowledge and know-how to go door-to-door and talk to people and help them develop the understanding of why this is important, how this is going to work and make progress with it. Definitely in support of funding similar efforts throughout the state in communities that need this type of assistance the most.

Kimball – Glad Mr. Viorica brought this up. This could be the role of philanthropy. Noted broadband collective that was done with projects funded through the philanthropy initiative, with funds going through the New Mexico Community Foundation. New Mexico Community Foundation was not the only one in that conversation. During these meetings there were small philanthropy organizations involved from across the state. They have the people networks in these communities they are already serving. If funding is made available why not get this to the philanthropy organizations to support programs such as Mamacitas Ciberneticas. These are already grant awarding organizations with connections already embedded in the rural communities. Would like to see this as strategies develop. This takes a while, as noted by Mr. Viorica, and there is outreach funding already available so why not proceed. Suggested Jennifer could take this suggestion back to her meetings with OBAE.

Jennifer – Agreed to do so.

Kimball – Asked Renee to close the meeting.

5.   **Public Comment**
      Combined in #4 above

6.   **Adjournment – Renee Narvaiz**
 Video Recording time: 00:56:33
      No quorum ever achieved. No formal adjournment. Meeting dismissed by Ms. Narvaiz at 11:31 a.m.

      Jennifer – Thanked Renee for coordinating and providing infrastructure for this meeting.