



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
Board of Public Utilities
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**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES**

A regular Board meeting of the Board of Public Utilities was held on December 1, 2021, via online @ <https://youtu.be/MQjDXSMGfaE>

Public notice was given pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-18 by posting notice of the meeting at the Board's Trenton Office, on the Board's website, filing notice of the meeting with the New Jersey Department of State and the following newspapers circulated in the State of New Jersey:

Asbury Park Press
Atlantic City Press
Burlington County Times
Courier Post (Camden)
Home News Tribune (New Brunswick)
North Jersey Herald and News (Passaic)
The Record (Hackensack)
The Star Ledger (Newark)
The Trenton Times

The following members of the Board of Public Utilities were present:

Joseph L. Fiordaliso, President
Mary-Anna Holden, Commissioner
Dianne Solomon, Commissioner
Upendra J. Chivukula, Commissioner
*Robert M. Gordon, Commissioner

*Commissioner Gordon participated by phone.

President Fiordaliso presided at the meeting and Aida Camacho-Welch, Secretary of the Board, carried out the duties of the Secretary.

It was also announced that the next regular Board Meeting will be held on December 15, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. via livestream on youtube.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

After appropriate motion, the following matter, which involved contract negotiation and/or attorney-client privilege, was discussed in Executive Session.

9. MISCELLANEOUS

A. Docket No. TO21111233 – In the Matter of the Broadband Access Study Commission (P.L. 2021, c. 161), Staff Recommendation to Issue a Request for Responses to Provide Broadband Access Study Commission Needs.

Discussion: DAG Matko Ilic presented this matter and it involved an approval for the Office of the Chief of Staff to release a Request for Responses (RFR) to New Jersey state colleges and universities to assist the Broadband Access Study Commission in identifying geographic areas within the state where reliable broadband is not accessible and/or unaffordable. The RFR sought a needs-based assessment based upon existing infrastructure, costs and barriers to adoption.

Governor Murphy signed P.L. 2021, c.161 into law on July 7, 2021, creating the Broadband Access Study Commission within the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities.

The Commission will consist of 19 members led by President Fiordaliso, who will serve as Chairperson and include other key personnel in State Government, such as the Office of Information Technology, the Director of the New Jersey Division of Rate Counsel, as well as other departments and private sector appointments made by the Governor with input from the Speaker of the General Assembly and President of the Senate. The diverse appointments will ensure that all areas of the state, i.e., the north, central and southern portions, are properly represented by the Commission.

The 19-member Commission will evaluate the impediments of access to broadband service throughout New Jersey and look at issues, including but not limited to, physical access, deployment, and affordability of broadband service.

It will also assess the most cost-effective methods to facilitate the establishment of ubiquitous broadband and explore possible federal, state and private funding sources to ensure that all residents, regardless of their ability to pay, have these vital services at their disposal to work and learn at home and take advantage of all the Internet has to offer.

The RFR consists of four distinct tasks:

- 1) A project launch which will consist of an initial and then regular meeting between the institution and the State Contract Manager and attendance at the monthly meetings of the Broadband Access Study Commission;
- 2) Require the institution to conduct outreach and stakeholder meetings with counties, municipalities and groups to identify and map at the street level to illustrate broadband availability and where gaps may exist;
- 3) Investigate affordability and barriers to adoption; and
- 4) Submission of a draft report for the Commission's review.

The release of the RFR and ultimate report will provide the Commission with an initial tool to begin its work and prepare to hire a consultant who will carry out a more in-depth investigation and analysis. We are also in the process of drafting a Request for Quotation

to hire a consultant and have identified at least nine potential bidders. The New York Public Service Commission is currently conducting a similar study, and we are arranging a Teams or Zoom call with it to learn from their experiences. In addition, we have reached out to National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners and its member states to identify other potential consultants.

Staff recommended approval of the release of the RFR in the public session.

The Commission is slated to report its findings, conclusions, and recommendations to the Governor and to the Legislature no later than one year following the first meeting of the Commission and will expire upon release of the report.

After appropriate motion, the Board reconvened to Open Session.

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned.



AIDA CAMACHO-WELCH
SECRETARY

Date: January 26, 2022