



Joint Commission on Racial Justice and Equity Information Technology Sub-Committee



AGENDA

September 21, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.

Peoria Public Library

Hybrid Meeting/Zoom Access

RJE IT Subcommittee Mtg. #1

Time: Sep 21, 2023 05:30 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

<https://us05web.zoom.us/j/81131697118?pwd=twLBhiZ4475ZSSTFHn69SbiLvg7mY9.1>

Meeting ID: 811 3169 7118

Passcode: mv4LN1

1. **Call to Order**

2. **Approval of Minutes**

- April 13, May 11, June 15, July 13, August 14

3. **Informational Items and Reports**

- Brief recap of Sept. 7 meeting with Mayor Ali
- Public Comment Period for BEAD Initial Proposal

4. **Discussion**

Outline work on request from Steering Committee on developing a proposed 'Statement of Rights' for the community which would:

1. Express the rights that everyone in the community has with respect to internet access; and
2. Be usable as a benchmark against which all proposals to the city and county regarding internet access can be evaluated and gauged.

Decide on alternative day for our Subcommittee Meetings in the future.

5. **Recommendations to the Steering Committee**

6. **New Business**

Next meeting date TBD.

7. **Adjournment**

Zoom meeting extension if needed:

Topic: RJE IT Subcommittee Mtg. #2

Time: Sep 21, 2023 06:00 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us05web.zoom.us/j/89850243621?pwd=55odspboxLSU9LgFCF6j1ObfSYdK17.1>

Meeting ID: 898 5024 3621

Passcode: P6sU3E



Joint Commission on Racial Justice and Equity



Information and Technology Sub- Committee

MINUTES

Thursday, April 13, 2023

5:30pm – Via Zoom

Members Present:

X Dan McCloud	X Lisa Marie Schultz, Co-Chair
X Theresa Koehler	X Sunny Pearson
X Jamiel Shelton (joined 5:50)	X Jessica McKean (joined 5:50)

Also present: Zayn Hashmi – Data Analyst, ICC Cradle to Career

1. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 5:41 pm by Lisamarie Schultz

2. Approval of Minutes

April 2023 minutes were approved at end of meeting, once we had a quorum

3. Informational Items and Reports

4. Discussion

LM – Discuss Springfield, IL Digital Equity Plan to see if there are things we can take from their work. Kathie Brown suggested they might speak to our subcommittee regarding outreach. LM will reach out to them.

DM – Has ICC reached out on grants for IT Accelerate/Good Jobs Grant

TK – Can provide status update for next meeting. David Bess is in charge of that.

DM – felt methods of outreach from Springfield would be helpful, TK agreed.

LM – Would any survey questions from the GPEDC's BB survey of August 2022 be useful in shaping some of our questions for the Steering Committee?

DM – Those folks have more knowledge of issues. Keep us from repeating work that's been done prior.
LM – Reiterated that these are questions to be asked of public in upcoming Listening Sessions to get qualitative info from the community about their lives/issues/needs, across all of Peoria County/City of Peoria.

LM – can we be more involved in the Illinois Office of Broadband listening sessions?

DM – need to stay in tune with what's going on – designate people to be at each meeting.
Suggested calendar set up for Important events.

Zayn H – Asked about building out a survey or what phase we're at in terms of timeline.

DM & LM – we've collected quantitative data we now need qualitative.

SP – Qualitative data will always make most effective persuasive impact.

GPEDC's survey wasn't representative – only 1300 homes surveyed.

ZH – only 400-600 individuals

SP – virtual/digital survey and paper exit survey to use at various meetings with public are necessary.

DM – need to find out what limitations/barriers were to survey. Use survey as resource for ideas/ask open ended questions.

JM – In Meeting with City, learned they are applying for a multi-million dollar grant to put fiber in 61605

TK – I3 applying for grant money

JM—they'll have to match part of it – Will invite Joe Dulin, City of Peoria Community Development Director, to our next meeting. City helping I3 write grant. Unused ARPA funds from Covid may be used.

LM – need to discuss in-person/hybrid/zoom meetings in future. Benefits to meeting in person

SP – add location question to survey for days/times, etc.

LM – grant questions sent to Melodi Green and Andre Allen. If we can get grants what should we look to do?

PC's for People/Directory of those in Peoria & Illinois working on BB & DE issues/

SP – build out trusted partners spreadsheet / see what trusted partners are working on.

JS – Comcast Cares Day – rehab areas/add broadband/donate computers. Comcast might be partner to provide to community centers, etc.

DM – Reach out to partners at areas it would be helpful.

LM – PC's for People need Financial Partner (maybe Corporate entity)

JS – Goodwill training classes. Create pamphlets/brochures to distribute lists of resources. Set up tables.

SP – meet with smaller agencies and develop outreach in this niche area

TK – to get computers from PC4P, they need to be signed up for ACP prior.

7. Adjournment

Adjourned meeting at 6:41 pm



Joint Commission on Racial Justice and Equity



Information and Technology Sub-Committee

MINUTES

Thursday, May 11, 2023 @ 5:30pm
Via Zoom

Members Present:

Shawn Johnson	X Jenny Replogle
X Theresa Koehler	X Lisa Marie Schultz, Co-Chair
Dan McCloud – Co Chair	X Jamiel Shelton (5:41 joined)
Jessica McKean	X Datikka Wright (5:44 joined)
X Sunny Pearson	

Also present: Andre Allen – Peoria County
Zayn Hashmi – ICC

1. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 5:35 pm by Lisamarie Schultz

2. Approval of Minutes

3. Informational Items and Reports

Discussed grant writing possibilities/funding request legalities. Question went to the City and answer should come through within next couple of weeks.

4. Discussion

- Talked about meeting locations/possibility of hybrid meetings in wake of lifting Covid Emergency Declaration. Andre said City/County investigating meeting requirements.

- Lincoln Library is only library open during our meeting times, St. Paul's Episcopal on North Street off War Memorial. Is meeting time convenient for people? Jamiel is working 2-10:30 M-F
- Andre needs to be at County Board meeting which conflicts with this, but colleague may cover
- Talked about Illinois Office of Broadband Listening Sessions – Theresa and Jenny were on meeting.
- Galesburg seems to have similar issues to us. Facilitators didn't realize there were entire zip codes that lack highspeed broadband. Interactive maps were helpful – link in chat. Talked about barriers – enough devices, knowledge, how to use it, challenge of accessing telehealth
- LM – lack of any broadband in rural areas of county, terrible internet/terrible test scores for Pleasant Valley School. Challenge for both rural and city getting broadband from the street to the dwelling. Will talk to Farm Bureau Chair of Committee looking at Broadband.
- Illinois Office of Broadband Listening Sessions were prep for funding disbursements/needs
- Workforce Accelerator at ICC – creating larger pool of IT workers
- SP – Goodwill has program to do at own pace, designed by Meta for certification in Social Media Marketing 100% free, can't get anyone to enroll – similar to the Caterpillar Foundation training in IT. Money is available for training –why are people not being reached?
- SP – people are working 2 part time jobs or full-time plus part-time job – don't have time to work on education.
- LM – ICC & OSF are doing more apprenticeships – is that a way to replace one of the part-time jobs?
- Andre Allen left meeting 6:11pm
- Sunny spoke about trying to reach out to high schools about programs and not getting buy-in
- Zayn – Cradle to Career -- ICC survey finalized, Beta surveys done within team, community outreach at afterschool events but hard to get responses. Put together plan to reach out to reps at schools/community partners to combine resources to have people respond to surveys. Education side is main focus, but workforce & internet are included in survey.
- Map on IL Broadband inaccurate -- show service (LT & 5G) where we know there is none
- How do we share info about lack of accuracy with orgs that are going to provide dollars for BB installation?
- Steering Committee listening sessions/forums are looking for first-person stories about how Broadband affects their lives.
- Any interest in forming small groups?
- SP talked about last PC's for People event. Trouble with ACP registration, which ran counter to instructions on flyers which had been distributed; people gave up. Wifi hotspots didn't come to event as promised, event started 3 hours late. Wrap Around Center did their best to help. Love concept/hate execution
- Will Tikka reach out to Dell regarding donation of items, need for documentation, etc.
- We need to know who's doing what and who's doing it well regarding IT

- Datikka asked about PC's for People management & concerns. SP – staff is Chicago based, disconnected from our community. Consultant suggested we reach out to East Bluff Center.
- Jenny – are we gathering info or actually trying to do things related to IT Justice & Equity
- LM – our charter is to gather info and make recommendations to Mayor & County Board, but if there are areas we can help and we can access grants (per lawyers at City & County) we need to look into that. We won't be financing, but we need to make connections based on deeper knowledge of how things are in the community
- Datikka Wright left meeting at 6:50
- JS – spoke to Comcast Cares Community Days
- Are there ways to connect Comcast with trusted partners in need
- Jamiel – brochures about where to get services. We need to know who's working on these issues in City and County and what their reputations are in community
- SP – Our subcommittee is constantly growing, moving field -- it grows so fast. Between Christmas and now, AI interface use at drive-throughs, navigating non-profit through Chat GPT
- JS – would Workforce be a resource?
- SP – can we do townhall with agencies/orgs that are working in this area, and make them aware of us? JS – can we do public outreach lunch that helps give out info.
- Can we provide additional info to people who attend our listening sessions. We don't have time to put together resource book by this summer. HOPE Network group email – send email to group with needs of client, etc.
- Jenny left meeting at 6:52
- Give ideas about possible ideas for small groups over next weeks
- ZH – What is methodology for marketing to groups? LM – we'll need to discuss that further
- SP – Goodwill did primary Social Media ads -- targeted boosted ads within Zipcodes they were trying to reach, had zero response with FB boosted. Did Linked IN, Instagram but no trad media. Marketing Director doesn't believe in investing in media marketing local services.

5. Recommendations to the Steering Committee

6. New Business

Next Meeting July 13, 2023

7. Adjournment

Adjourned meeting at 6:54 pm



Joint Commission on Racial Justice and Equity



Information and Technology Sub- Committee

MINUTES

Thursday, June 15, 2023 @ 5:30pm

Lincoln Public Library

(Hybrid Meeting w/Zoom Access)

Members Present:

Shawn Johnson	Jenny Replogle
X Theresa Koehler	X Lisa Marie Schultz, Co-Chair
X Dan McCloud – Co Chair	X Jamiel Shelton (via Zoom)
Jessica McKean	Datikka Wright
Sunny Pearson	

1. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 5:33 pm by Lisamarie Schultz

2. Approval of Minutes

There being no quorum, minutes were not approved.

3. Informational Items and Reports

4. Discussion

The committee members present agreed that virtual attendance is allowed and shall count toward the quorum.

Lisa and Dan presented information from the last Co-Chairs meeting with the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee thought that each sub-committee would benefit from having a liaison from the Steering Committee. Our Steering Committee liaison is Heather McMeekan . County liaison is Andre Allen. (One of

Andre's colleagues will cover for when he has County Board meeting conflicts.) City is hiring someone to do liaison work.

The Steering Committee noted that sub-committees are having difficulties getting a quorum, so they are considering rewriting the Charter to turn the "sub-committees" into "working groups", in which case the Open Meetings Act would not apply to the working groups. This would allow work to get done faster since we wouldn't be stymied by lack of a quorum. Working groups would still make recommendations to the Steering Committee who would move those recommendations on to City Council, Mayor, & County Board. There was some discussion about possible lack of transparency due to change in charter.

Peoria JCRJE has a webpage on Peoria County Government website. Each sub-committee has a section within the webpage. Hopefully one person will be managing that, and there will be one consistent voice on our webpage sections.

The Steering Committee is meeting with the NAACP, along with other partners on June 15. There is also potential for a partnership with the United Way.

Our subcommittee needs to be acknowledged as a partner in broadband but is having problems connecting with people, especially in City/County Government. Lisa will email Andre Allen to ask about access to county meetings and individuals involved.

Lisa reminded subcommittee that Kathie Brown (Greater Peoria Economic Development Council) suggested that a grant financing the creation of a comprehensive list of organizations/individuals working on broadband issues would be a benefit to our work and to our community partners.

Discussed what we learned through Illinois Office of Broadband listening sessions, which many of us attended. Manual High School has created a digital equity lab to prepare students to get internships in the field. Denise Moore has some digital equity classes at the Minority Business Development Center. We will reach out to her.

LM met with Kiersten Sheets, a board member from Peoria Farm Bureau. She indicated that they are looking into internet accessibility in rural areas and have interviewed 5 ISPs. Farm Bureau did a broadband feasibility study last year. Installing buried fiber cable is considered the best way to future-proof digital access, but it's expensive -- \$480,000 per mile. With satellites there are line-of-site issues caused by weather or other interference, plus cost issues, so they're looking for alternatives. There is hesitancy on the part of land owners to allow cable to be buried as they've been burned in the past -- led to believe cable would help them and their neighbors but they can't access the cable that's laid on their property as it's for a specific (corporate) use. (e.g. OSF has fiber going through properties, but residents cannot attach to it because it is only used by OSF.) Pleasant Valley School has terrible internet service which may disrupt the students' education.

It was interesting to note that the Farm Bureau has 10,000 city members and only 1,500 county members.

The Benton Institute selected Peoria/Woodford County for the second cohort of the Accelerate Illinois Broadband Infrastructure Planning Program.

5. Recommendations to the Steering Committee

6. New Business

There was some discussion about wire mesh network, especially Project Waves in Baltimore. They are using wire mesh, point-to-multi-point networks, and other ways to connect. Service is free to residents in low-income neighborhoods. LM will contact Project Waves to see if we can speak to them about their program.

Next Meeting July 13, 2023

7. Adjournment

Adjourned meeting at 6:11 pm



**Joint Commission on Racial Justice and Equity
Information and Technology Sub-Committee**



MINUTES

Thursday, July 13, 2023 @ 5:30pm

Lincoln Public Library

(Hybrid Meeting w/Zoom Access)

Members Present:

Shawn Johnson	Jenny Replogle
X Theresa Koehler	X Lisa Marie Schultz, Co-Chair
X Dan McCloud – Co Chair	X Jamiel Shelton (via Zoom—til 6:15)
Jessica McKean	Datikka Wright
Sunny Pearson	

Also present: Heather McMeekan (Steering Committee Liaison)

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:45 pm.

A motion was made by Dan McCloud and seconded by Theresa Koehler to approve Jamiel Shelton's attendance via Zoom. The motion carried.

2. Approval of Minutes

There being no quorum, minutes were not approved.

3. Informational Items and Reports

Lisamarie and Theresa attended Peoria County's presentation of the draft broadband survey report. With a response rate of 4.8%, it appeared that most responses were from rural residents. Theresa indicated that the pages from the draft report were difficult to read on the screen. Dan asked if the draft proposal will be posted on the website and Lisamarie said that it will not be, since it is only the draft. Also at the survey meeting, Art Svymbersky, Government Affairs Manager for Comcast, mentioned that Comcast provides community centers (like Carver Center and Proctor) with "lift zones" in their buildings which enable community members to safely access the internet

4. Discussion

Heather McMeekan arrived and introduced herself (5:55pm)

Changing our meeting date may be beneficial as the second Thursday of the month always conflicts with Peoria County Board meetings. Currently our County Liaison Andre Allen cannot attend, nor can we hear from Scott Sorrel (the County Administrator). Would first or third Thursday of the month work for our subcommittee?

Lisamarie learned that Scott Sorrell has turned in proposed changes to the CRJE Charter to the Steering Committee, in order to amend the Bylaws such that the Open Meetings Act would not apply to subcommittees. Therefore hybrid, in-person, or Zoom meetings would be allowed, and work could move forward at a faster pace.

Dan asked what stage the subcommittee is in. Are we still in the fact-finding stage?

Heather said that the Steering Committees want to have Listening Sessions, but she was not sure when.

Heather added that we don't need to be experts on our subject (broadband); instead, we look at how it's being set up and to use government to get broadband.

Dan said that there is a need and a lot of money available and that we need to get some actionable items. He asked how we can partner with others; how do we collaborate and who is making the decisions on money.

Heather suggested that we give our suggestion to the Steering Committee on best practices such as reviewing who gets vendor contracts, is there an equity statement, is diverse labor required. She also stated that all money goes through the government.

(Need Clarification: Heather talked about a fund that could be set up where every time someone moved, they would pay into a fund and teachers could determine which students needed the funds.)

Heather suggested that the committee meet with the Peoria Federation of Teachers and perhaps they could come up with a wish list of needs, and advise as to what student/family needs are. With the BEAD (Broadband Equity, Access and Development) money coming in, it could be used to teach how to use technology. She said the Brookings Institute did a study showing a correlation between newer equipment and poverty.

Heather said the concept of "dig once" allows a community to put conduit in the ground for future cables, although sometimes there is a caveat that it cannot be touched for 10 years. This could be a

recommendation for the proposed Waterfront Project. She said that it is our money, so it is okay to set standards to adhere to.

Heather suggested that we come up with 3-5 case studies that reflect the stories of the “typical everyday needs” of how high-speed internet is needed. For example, a person on dialysis who needs high-speed internet. How will our solutions solve this person’s issue? Dan said that he would work on these scenarios.

We discussed the issue of how difficult it is to complete the ACP documents, and how difficult it is to get Comcast. If a person has an outstanding bill, or the address of the residence has an outstanding bill, Comcast denies access. Art from Comcast stated that they can pull in Xfinity employees from various locations to help individuals sign up for the ACP (Affordable Connectivity Program). Housing authority facilities are a good place to sign people up as they can return to their apartment to get necessary documents. Art also said Comcast is working on ways to look at addresses that have been cut off from service due to non-payment and find ways to open up those accounts.

Heather suggested that we may want to recommend that the City create a Digital Access position or office and that it could serve as a watchdog.

5. Recommendations to the Steering Committee

6. New Business

Next Meeting August 10, 2023 at Lincoln Branch of Peoria Public Library

7. Adjournment

Adjourned meeting at 7:04 pm



**Joint Commission on Racial Justice and Equity
Information and Technology Sub-Committee**



MINUTES

Thursday, August 10, 2023 @ 5:30pm

Lincoln Public Library

(Hybrid Meeting w/Zoom Access)

Members Present:

Shawn Johnson	Jenny Replogle
X Theresa Koehler	X Lisa Marie Schultz, Co-Chair
Dan McCloud – Co Chair	Jamiel Shelton
X Jessica McKean (via Zoom)	Datikka Wright
Sunny Pearson	

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:37 pm.

A motion was made by Lisamarie and seconded by Theresa Koehler to approve Jessica McKean's attendance via Zoom. The motion carried.

2. Approval of Minutes

There being no quorum, minutes were not approved.

3. Informational Items and Reports

4. Discussion

JM - Mesh Network or other less-costly alternative to buried cable broadband need to be explored by the city.

LM - Change meeting to different Thursday or different time altogether. Lack of attendance seems to indicate it's not the best time for many. Work on keeping length of meeting reasonable.

TK -- Perhaps other commitments make it impossible for some to continue serving on committee.

LM - Scott Sorrell (Peoria County Administrator) submitted an adjusted charter to the Steering Committee for their review. Agreement and approval need to come from Steering Committee, City Council, and County Board, I believe.

Suggestion from Heather at last meeting was to find out if there is someone in the City or County with responsibilities as a Digital Access "Czar" or Watchdog. If not, who is coordinating digital access grants and distribution? Can City/County create such a position?

Kathy Brown's idea of study on who is doing what work in Peoria related to digital equity and accessibility.

TK - So many separate meetings; how can thing be better coordinated? How do we increase collaboration?

All agreed we need to speak to Mayor Ali.

Just as a reminder, Heather said at last meeting that we don't need to be experts on broadband -- we need to get it to the people. As broadband goes in, City/County need to make sure companies hired or given grant money have a diverse workforce. We need to look into whether that's already the law.

TK – meet with Peoria Federation of Teachers – what are their needs and suggestions.

Need to find out if listening sessions are still happening. Where & when?

LM – Dan was going to do some work on creating case studies to illustrate how the lack of digital access impacts people.

JM – We need to interview 3 vendors to determine cost and feasibility of other broadband options.

TK –Comcast problem that they cut off bb service to certain addresses for payment overdue, not necessarily who's in the unit now. How do they respond more quickly to those issues?

Action Plan: 1. Talk to 3 Internet providers
 2. Set up meeting with the Mayor after Sept 1.

5. Recommendations to the Steering Committee

6. New Business

Next Meeting September 14 at Lincoln Branch of Peoria Public Library

7. Adjournment

Adjourned meeting at 6:07 pm

Illinois Poised to Open Public Comment Period for BEAD Initial Proposal

Over the past year, the Illinois Broadband Lab, a collaboration between the Illinois Office of Broadband and University of Illinois System, has been methodical in building capacity, sustaining outreach and engagement, and applying sophisticated analytics to everything we do in preparation for the arrival of over \$1 billion in federal Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program funding.

In June, the Lab concluded a 54-stop statewide [listening tour](#) designed to engage Illinoisans on important aspects of broadband access and the digital divide. In July, we published a data-driven [Connect Illinois Five-Year Action Plan](#) for informal comment, and then, in August, we incorporated feedback and submitted the plan to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). Although the action plan is neither binding nor subject to thorough NTIA review, the next step to receiving federal BEAD funds, the *Initial Proposal*, will be.

The *Initial Proposal* will establish how Illinois runs a challenge process to the federal broadband map and then administers a subsequent BEAD subgrantee selection process constituting Round 4 of the *Connect Illinois Broadband Grant Program*. Both of these proposed processes, described in the BEAD Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), will be subject to formal public comment:

- The challenge process is “a transparent, evidence based, fair, and expeditious challenge process under which a unit of local government, nonprofit organization, or broadband service provider can challenge a determination made by the [the State] in the *Initial Proposal* as to whether a particular location or community anchor institution within the jurisdiction of the [State] is eligible for grant funds.”
- The subgrantee selection process says that “each [State] must establish fair, open, and competitive processes for selecting subgrantees. The selection of subgrantees is a critically important process that will determine which providers will bring service to all Americans.”

The challenge process will give local governments, community anchor institutions, and Illinoisans everywhere a way to engage internet service providers to improve our understanding of broadband access needs across the state. With formal approval of the full *Initial Proposal*, the clock for use of BEAD funds will begin. This starts a year-long sprint to determine how each BEAD dollar will be used to ensure basic internet access for all Illinoisans and improve connectivity for as many homes, businesses, and community anchor institutions as possible.

Draft *Initial Proposal* content and more detail regarding the public comment process will be available on

the [Connect Illinois website](#). Please direct any questions regarding the process to broadband@illinois.gov.

Together, we're connecting Illinois!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matt Schmit". The signature is written in a cursive style and is contained within a thin black rectangular border.