ARKANSAS AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Zoom Meeting

Monday, December 13, 2021 – 10:00am-11:00am

**IN ATTENDANCE**

**STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Larry Walther, Secretary, Department of Finance & Administration

Johnny Key, Secretary, Department of Education

Cindy Gillespie, Secretary, Department of Human Services

Mike Preston, Secretary, Department of Commerce

Wes Ward, Secretary, Department of Agriculture

A.J. Gary, Director of the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management

Stacy Hurst, Secretary, Department of Parks, Heritage & Tourism

Daryl Bassett, Secretary, Department of Labor & Licensing

Dr. Jose Romero, Secretary, Department of Health

Senator Bill Sample

Senator Keith Ingram

Senator Ronald Caldwell

Representative Kenneth Ferguson Representative Jeff Wardlaw

Representative Frances Cavenaugh

**ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES**

Alan McVey, Chief of Staff, Department of Finance and Administration

**AGENDA**

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks – Secretary Larry Walther

2. Approval of Minutes – Secretary Larry Walther

3. Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism Request – Secretary Stacy Hurst

**WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS**

Secretary Walther welcomed the Committee to the meeting and called the meeting to order.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Secretary Walther presented the minutes from the November 10, 2021 meeting. *Secretary Hurst motioned to approve; Secretary Romero provided a second; Secretary Walther called for a vote; the minutes were approved.*

**DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, HERITAGE & TOURISM REQUEST**

Secretary Walther introduced Secretary Hurst to submit her request for consideration by the Committee. The Department of Parks, Heritage, and Tourism requested $2.6 million for all state parks and recreation areas to have broadband connectivity. She stated her request was to provide connectivity to 28 locations including state parks and welcome centers that do not have broadband. She said these locations were publicly owned and would provide internet access that would be free to the public. She continued by stating this would provide additional connectivity for those who did not have the connectivity anywhere else, and it would provide additional connectivity to homes and businesses in the immediate area. She pointed out that all the data regarding the proposal was in the packet that the Committee was given. Secretary Hurst continued by stating these locations were shovel-ready. Secretary Hurst stated that the Diamond State Park wrote a letter to the Committee that indicates that they believe this would allow homes and businesses to all have the connectivity available to them. Secretary Hurst stated this was the perfect opportunity to increase broadband in Arkansas and asks the Committee to support the Department of Parks, Heritage, and Tourism in this request.

*Secretary Walther entertained a motion to approve; Secretary Jose Romero motioned to approve; Director Gary provided a second; Secretary Walther called for a vote; the motion passed.*

**The meeting was adjourned.**