



County of Augusta
Internet Initiative (Broadband Committee)
PO Box 590
Verona, VA 24482

Thursday, June 27, 2019 7:00 pm
Augusta County Government Center
Smith West Room

MINUTES

PRESENT: Mr. Lawhorne, Riverheads District
Mr. Journell, Beverly Manor District
Ms. Carter, Board of Supervisors Liaison
Dr. Pattie, Board of Supervisors Liaison
Ms. Whetzel, Deputy County Administrator

ABSENT: Mr. McHaffa, South River District
Mr. Craig, Wayne District
Mr. Powell, Middle River District
Ms. Thornton, North River District
Mr. Henderson, Pastures District
Ms. Susie Miller, Sub-Committee

VIRGINIA: At the regular meeting of the Augusta County Internet Initiative (Broadband Committee) held on Thursday, June 27th, 2019 at 7:00pm in the Smith West Room at the Augusta County Government Center, Verona, Virginia.

Call to Order

Chairman Lawhorne called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. A quorum was not present.

Adoption of the Minutes

Minutes from the March 28, 2019 and April 25, 2019 were not considered.

Comments by the Public

Mr. Rogers noted the relevance of high speed internet to real estate values. Mr. Comes stated the Wall Street Journal spoke of a \$3,000-\$9,000 effect on real estate values. Ms. Carter has contacted SVEC about their plans in the future for internet service to member owners.

Special Presentations

None

Matters to be Presented by Sub-Committees

Ms. Whetzel updated the Committee on the internet survey marketing and summary of responses to date:

- Survey went live on May 14
- 1043 responses as of 6/27/19
- Marketing efforts include: county website, social media, Chamber of Commerce notification, newsletters of Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission and Augusta County Economic Development, School website, social media and telephone announcement, Parks & Rec summer guide
- Future marketing efforts include: School registration (short survey) and paper copy in Parks & Rec fall guide
- A summary of data from Survey Monkey was reviewed



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The Committee discussed further marketing efforts for the survey, including tax and water bill mailings, Parks & Rec and Library newsletters, posting at Shenandoah Valley Social Services, and info at fair booth.

Ms. Whetzel reviewed the Augusta County VATI 2019 grant submission and comments about the application from the Department of Housing and Community Development. The County projects scored well on speed offered and project readiness, but scored poorly on number of units served, analysis of 10% provider overlap and local match offered.

The Committee reviewed the guidelines of the VATI 2020 grant and changes from the prior year, including posting a public notice with DHCD by Aug. 6, raising the minimum speed requirement from 10/1 to 25/3 and changes to the challenge and FOIA process. A deadline for the grant application is September 3, 2019.

The Information Management and Analysis committee met on June 14 and reviewed survey responses to date and identified potential project areas. The Operations committee met on June 25 and determined a grant writing strategy focused on non-residential, dissatisfaction and no internet responses.

Ms. Whetzel reviewed maps prepared by GIS noting the Sub-Committees recommendations, as well as FCC data for those areas. Providers requested that some of the work be done on documenting the number of houses served, survey responses and providers in the project areas. It was decided that an RFI with project areas be issued, with the option for providers to bring other projects outside the project areas.

The Committee discussed the possibility of putting out an RFI that would remain active for a longer period of time, allowing area providers to submit a proposal for a project that may not suit a grant application. The County has small areas where service is needed that may be better suited for a local project. Providers would note what project they would like to do, the financial margin needed and market the project to the County. Local homeowner's associations could see if this would be an option to them also, if they can partner with a provider and fund a portion of the project.

Matters to be Presented by Staff

Mr. Henderson is waiting to hear from area legislators about setting up a meeting regarding Broadband.

Old Business

There being none, Mr. Lawhorne moved to 'New Business' on the Agenda.

New Business

None

Adjournment

The next meeting will be held on July 25, 2019 at 7 pm in the Smith West Room. With no further discussion by the committee, Chairman Lawhorne adjourned the meeting.