



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

Thursday, January 23, 2020 7:00 pm
Augusta County Government Center
County Administration Conference Room

MINUTES

PRESENT: Mr. Lawhorne, Riverheads District
Mr. Henderson, Pastures District
Mr. Powell, Middle River District
Ms. Thornton, North River District
Ms. Carter, Board of Supervisors Liaison
Mr. Morelli, Board of Supervisors Liaison
Ms. Whetzel, Deputy County Administrator

ABSENT: Mr. McHaffa, South River District
Mr. Journell, Beverly Manor District
Mr. Craig, Wayne District
Ms. Susie Miller, Sub-Committee

VIRGINIA: At the regular meeting of the Augusta County Internet Initiative (Broadband Committee) held on Thursday, January 23, 2020 at 7:00pm in the County Administration Conference Room at the Augusta County Government Center, Verona, Virginia.

Call to Order

Meeting started at 7:00pm. A quorum was present.

Adoption of the Minutes

Minutes from the August 22, 2019, September 26, 2019 and October 24, 2019 meetings were approved.

Comments by the Public

None

Special Presentations

None

Matters to be Presented by Sub-Committees

None

Matters to be Presented by Staff

Ms. Whetzel noted that DHCD upheld the challenge on the VATI 2020 grant. DHCD had all the information that they needed and the Deerfield portion of the application was still under consideration.

The Governor announced the award of the VATI 2020 grant to 12 projects. The County did not receive an award. The Committee reviewed the list of applicants and criteria of the applications, including local match and number of connections. DHCD will schedule a debriefing with County staff to note how to strengthen the next application.

A list of the 2020 Committee meeting dates and locations was distributed.



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

Staff is gathering information for a Broadband section on the website, with the layout similar to the Courthouse pages. The Committee reviewed the list provided by staff and noted to include a contact list, link to front page, FAQs and maps.

Old Business

Ms. Whetzel reviewed the concept of the Local RFI with the Committee, including the form and a sample flowchart. The paperwork and guidelines is onerous to citizens, which may limit the amount of interest in pursuing small projects. Mr. Lawhorne suggested staff review the Parks & Recreation Grant program guidelines and forms to see if they would be applicable to small broadband projects. No matter the format, it was suggested that sample forms be completed to make it easier for applicants to complete their own forms. Scoring criteria and grant amount per connection should also be clarified.

New Business

The County submitted an RFI for the Dominion Energy pilot project and Dominion is scheduling a call to discuss the County's interest.

Mr. Henderson requested a review of the mission of the Committee. Ms. Whetzel compared the mission in the by-laws to the work completed in 2019:

Purpose

Section 1. The Augusta County Broadband Committee shall be established to advise the Board of Supervisors on the County's broadband initiatives, specifically to identify, promote, facilitate and accelerate improvements to broadband infrastructure in Augusta County. *Mr. Lawhorne attended two Board of Supervisors meetings.*

Section 2. The Broadband Committee shall collect and maintain comprehensive information on the state of broadband in households, businesses, schools and public gathering areas in Augusta County. *Committee revamped and distributed survey, which received over 1000 responses.*

Section 3. The Broadband Committee shall analyze internal data to identify areas negatively impacted by lack of availability and quality of broadband services in Augusta County to identify areas for improvement. *Identified project areas for the VATI 2020 RFI.*

Section 4. The Broadband Committee shall report to stakeholders on the current status and improvements to broadband services in Augusta County. *Development of website page/information.*

Section 5. The Broadband Committee shall facilitate and accelerate improvements by identifying and pursuing public and private funding opportunities to improve infrastructure through partnerships with private broadband providers through the most efficient process possible. *Applied for two VATI grants and submitted RFI to Dominion Energy pilot program.*

Elections were held for 2020 officers. Mr. Henderson nominated, and Ms. Thornton seconded, Mr. Lawhorne as Chairman and Mr. Powell as Vice-Chairman.

Adjournment

The next meeting will be held February 27, 2020 at 7 pm in the South Board Room. With no further discussion by the committee, the meeting adjourned.