



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

Thursday, May 28, 2020 7:00 pm
Via Electronic Means Due to COVID-19
Government Center Closed to the Public

MINUTES

PRESENT: Mr. Lawhorne, Riverheads District
Mr. Henderson, Pastures 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. Craig, Wayne District
Mr. Powell, Middle River District
Mr. Journell, Beverly Manor District
Ms. Thornton, North River District
Ms. Susie Miller, Sub-Committee

VIRGINIA: At the regular meeting of the Augusta County Internet Initiative (Broadband Committee) held on Thursday, May 28, 2020 at 7:00pm via electronic means. The Government Center was closed to the public on the date of the meeting due to COVID-19.

Call to Order

Meeting started at 7:00pm. A quorum was not present.

Adoption of the Minutes

Minutes from the January 23, 2020 and February 27, 2020 meeting were not approved due to the lack of a quorum.

Comments by the Public

Christina Rivera introduced herself and noted that she was very close to high density development but does not have high speed internet. She has worked with several providers to try to alleviate the issue.

Mr. Henderson introduced Tina Kiracofe, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction and Technology for the Augusta County Schools. Mr. Kiracofe noted that the lack of broadband was not just an Augusta County issue but a Statewide issue. The Schools plan to ask parents during the registration process to complete a survey about broadband access in the student's home. Wifi is available at the School locations and teachers and students have permissions to access the service from the parking lots.

Special Presentations

None

Matters to be Presented by Sub-Committees

None

Matters to be Presented by Staff



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Ms. Whetzel reviewed the draft VATI 2021 grant guidelines. Several improvements to the program have been made by DHCD. The County will plan to issue an RFI to see if any providers are interested in partnering on a project.

Ms. Whetzel shared website information from Commonwealth Connect that summarizes provider response to COVID-19. Providers have offered a variety of assistance, including free data, payment programs or hot-spot locations in the community.

Ms. Whetzel updated the Committee on electric utility interest in broadband expansion. Provider information was sent to Dominion Energy, as that program requires a third party provider. SVEC is in the early stages of a feasibility study related to broadband.

Old Business

Ms. Whetzel welcomed feedback for the website data.

New Business

Mr. Henderson spurred conversation about how the County can make low cost broadband available throughout the County. Access would create an environment that would make the County an attractive place to live. He received thoughtful responses to his earlier e-mail, including those who noted that we need to build the interest from the bottom up. Mr. Cater noted that we may need someone to identify the costs of buildout in the County.

Adjournment

The next meeting will be held June 26, 2020 at 7 pm in a format to be determined. With no further discussion by the committee, the meeting adjourned.