



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

**Thursday, December 3, 2020 7:00 pm**  
In Person and Via Electronic Means Due to COVID-19

## **MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** Mr. Powell, Middle River District  
Mr. Lawhorne, Riverheads District  
Mr. Carter, South River District  
Mr. Henderson, Pastures District  
Mr. Journell, Beverly Manor District  
Mr. Kirby, Wayne District  
Ms. Thornton, North River District  
Ms. Carter, Board of Supervisors Liaison  
Mr. Morelli, Board of Supervisors Liaison  
Ms. Whetzel, Deputy County Administrator

**ABSENT:** Ms. Kiracofe, Asst. Superintendent for Instruction & Technology

VIRGINIA: At the regular meeting of the Augusta County Internet Initiative (Broadband Committee) held on Thursday, December 3, 2020 at 7:00pm via in person and electronic means. The Government Center was open to the public on the date of the meeting but some attendees participated through electronic means due to COVID-19.

### **Call to Order**

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

### **Adoption of the Minutes**

Minutes of the September 24, 2020 and October 22, 2020 were approved.

### **Comments by the Public**

Mr. Barley and Ms. Quillen of the Sherando area and the Hams from the Verona area expressed the need to improve internet services to their homes. All have actively contacted providers and are interested in how they can assist in getting better service to their areas of the County.

### **Special Presentations**

None

### **Matters to be Presented by Sub-Committees**

None

### **Matters to be Presented by Staff**

Ms. Whetzel updated the Committee on projects submitted by providers interested in the Governor's CARES Fast Track Broadband program funding by the State. Three projects were submitted to the County and all three were awarded funding:

1. New Hope Telephone Cooperative for 36 FTTH connections, \$440,166 total project, \$352,133 (80%) grant funding, County and company match of \$44,018 each, average cost of \$12,227 per

connection. Ms. Whetzel attended a progress meeting on December 2, 2020 and toured the project area. Application submitted 10/28/20 and awarded 11/5/20.

2. Lingo Networks for fiber to a tower in Swoope area that could serve 310 customers in the coverage area, fiber to the tower and 10 FTTH connections, \$268,662 total project, \$214,929 (80%) grant funding, County and company match of \$26,866 each, average cost of \$839 per connection. Ms. Whetzel visited the project area on December 2, 2020. Application submitted 10/30/20 and awarded 11/5/20.

3. Lingo Networks for 36 FTTH connections and middle mile fiber, \$416,722 total project, \$333,378 (80%) grant funding, County and company match of \$41,672 each, average cost of \$11,576 per connection. Ms. Whetzel visited the project area on December 2, 2020. Application submitted 11/16/20 and awarded 11/20/20.

Total: Project cost of \$1,125,550, Grant of \$900,440, 392 potential connections. The projects are on track to be completed by Dec. 25, 2020, the program deadline.

DHCD has not posted the VATI 2021 awards to date.

Ms. Whetzel sent information to Dominion Energy about the status of projects for VATI and CARES Fast Track Broadband Grant.

Ms. Whetzel followed up with Shentel about their allconnect program and they sent information link.

Representatives from the Augusta County Service Authority, Dr. Middleton (Chairman) and Mr. Martin (Director), attended the meeting and discussed their interest in assisting with broadband expansion in the County. The Service Authority owns assets and has construction projects within the County that may allow for partnerships. Mr. Martin has working knowledge of the Broadband Authority in the Roanoke area. A future presentation by that Authority can be scheduled.

### **Matters to be Presented by the Committee**

Mr. Lawhorne noted the Senator Warner was sponsoring a bill on broadband that includes truly rural needs.

Ms. Thornton and Ms. Whetzel had a meeting with Augusta Health and their Foundation about a FCC Care Connect Pilot Program opportunity. The Program would allow for the payment of internet connection for patients that qualify as low income and veterans. The connection would be for chronic disease management, which is an area of need. The funding is available to certain Census tracts of the County. It does not allow for a large project to be completed. Hospital leadership noted that it would be good to have a set of projects ready in case grant funding becomes available and they can be of assistance.

### **Old Business**

None

### **New Business**

### **Adjournment**

The next meeting will be held January 28, 2021 at 7 pm in a format to be determined. With no further discussion by the committee, the meeting adjourned.