



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

Thursday, March 25, 2021 7:00 pm
In Person and Via Electronic Means Due to COVID-19

MINUTES

PRESENT: Mr. Lawhorne, Chairman, Riverheads District
Mr. Henderson, Vice-Chairman, Pastures District
Mr. Carter, South River District
Mr. Kirby, Wayne District
Mr. Powell, Middle River District
Mr. Journell, Beverly Manor District
Ms. Carter, Board of Supervisors Liaison
Ms. Whetzel, Deputy County Administrator
Ms. Kiracofe, Asst. Superintendent for Instruction & Technology

ABSENT: Ms. Thornton, North River District

VIRGINIA: At the regular meeting of the Augusta County Internet Initiative (Broadband Committee) held on Thursday, March 25, 2021 at 7:00 pm 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 February 25, 2021 meeting were approved.

Comments by the Public

None

Special Presentations

Mr. David Smith, Vice President of Technical Ops and Planning for Lumos, gave a presentation about the Company and projects in Augusta County. Lumos Networks is a Segra Company that serves residential and small business customers in Virginia and North Carolina. The local exchange area in Augusta County includes about 19000 addresses; 9000 are served with fiber with the rest being DSL or ADSL. Recent projects in Augusta County included installing fiber at Chinquapin, Fishersville and Grandview. Future projects include fiber buildout in Waynesboro (1000+), permitting for Blue Ridge Parkway for an Afton project and potential VATI application for the Lyndhurst area. Focus is on ACAM areas for funding through 2028.

Matters to be Presented by Sub-Committees

Mr. Henderson drafted a bulletin to assist in a presentation to the Board of Supervisors. He also made contact with Senator Warner's office and received an update on potential federal stimulus funding for

broadband. Ms. Thornton followed up on this lead and noted that USDA may receive additional information in 2-3 weeks.

Matters to be Presented by Staff

CARES Fast Track Broadband Update – Lingo Project #2 36 FTTH Installation –65% has been paid to date (grant and County match). Localities that received Broadband funding will be required to prepare reports on their projects within CAMS, the grant software managed by DHCD.

SVEC continues to work on the middle mile fiber project and has identified starting locations in several counties, including Augusta. We do not have locations as this time.

The FCC announced a new website to collect broadband availability experiences. The form includes an e-mail address, subject, description of the problem, name, state and zip code. There is concern that the data is not accurate enough to provide useful information to the FCC.

BARC Electric Cooperative invited a representative of Augusta County to attend a roundtable with Senator Warner on April 7, 2021. Ms. Whetzel inquired if anyone from the Committee wishes to attend and Ms. Carter volunteered.

Information related to the new stimulus package, the American Rescue Plan, is limited. It does note that investments in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure are eligible uses of the funds. Staff is waiting for the final guidance to be released.

Matters to be Presented by the Committee

None

Old Business

Ms. Whetzel further clarified the Electronic Meeting Policy. Virginia Code Section 2.2-3708.2 allows remote participation of a public body if 1) the member has an illness or disability that prevents the member's attendance or 2) the member is unable to attend due to a personal matter and identifies with specificity the nature of the matter (member may participate remotely under this provision only twice per year). It was originally stated that the twice per year was for both 1 and 2, but it only applies to 2.

New Business

Mr. Henderson had a conversation with a representative of a Committee at the Chamber that is interested in broadband expansion and they want to know how to help.

Adjournment

The next meeting will be held April 22, 2021 at 7 pm at the Government Center and via Zoom. With no further discussion by the committee, the meeting adjourned.