



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

Thursday, May 27, 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. Kirby, Wayne District
Ms. Thornton, North River District
Ms. Carter, Board of Supervisors Liaison
Ms. Whetzel, Deputy County Administrator

ABSENT: Mr. Journell, Beverly Manor District
Mr. Carter, South River District
Mr. Powell, Middle River District
Ms. Kiracofe, Asst. Superintendent for Instruction & Technology

VIRGINIA: At the regular meeting of the Augusta County Internet Initiative (Broadband Committee) held on Thursday, May 27, 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 April 22, 2021 meeting were approved.

Comments by the Public

None

Special Presentations

None

Matters to be Presented by Sub-Committees

The presentation to the Board of Supervisors will be scheduled.

Mr. Henderson discussed having each Committee member review their District and get feedback from citizens as to where service is needed. This will assist in providing a wish list by location that can be shared with providers.

Ms. Thornton noted that the federal funding for broadband will be allocated through the State. Ms. Whetzel reviewed an excerpt about broadband funding from the Treasury's Interim Final Rule. Interim guidance notes that eligible projects are expected to be designed to deliver service that reliably meets or exceeds symmetrical upload and download speeds of 100 Mbps. Users are treated as unserved or underserved if they lack access to a wireline connection capable of reliably delivering at least minimum speeds of 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload. There is some concern that the interim guidance notes that the "Treasury also encourages recipients to prioritize support for broadband networks owned,

operated by, or affiliated with local governments, non-profits and cooperatives” as the County has multiple providers that are actively building out service.

Matters to be Presented by Staff

CARES Fast Track Broadband Update – Awarded projects will need to submit close out reports including shapefiles and speed test results for 10% of passings through CAMS. Closeout reports are due January 2022.

VATI 2021 Update – MGW and the County are still working on documents for the DHCD contract. MGW has submitted permits for pole attachments in the Morris Mill project area and have heard back on half of the permits to allow them to finalize engineering in those areas. They are actively working on permits for other pole attachments in the Morris Mill and Middlebrook areas. They have started the process of contacting landowners for easements. Once the DHCD contract is finalized, the County will work with MGW on a public announcement, potentially rolling announcements as the project areas are to be built out.

VATI 2022 Update – Ms. Whetzel reviewed the County comments submitted for the VATI 2022 guidelines. The County will issue an RFI to gather proposals from area providers to partner on a grant. The proposals are due July 23 so that notice can be sent to DHCD by July 27. Applications are due in early September. Ms. Whetzel attended a DHCD webinar on the guidelines.

Matters to be Presented by the Committee

None

Old Business

None

New Business

Lonnie Hamilton with DHCD contacted Ms. Whetzel to discuss the status of broadband in the County.

T-Mobile contacted Ms. Carter for a brief call, noting the push for 5G.

Lumos is interested in grant opportunities.

Mr. Martin with the Service Authority noted that at a recent conference he asked if there would be any interest to lobby to update the Virginia Water and Wastewater Authorities Act to allow for fiber installation by Authorities. There didn't appear to be much interest.

Adjournment

The next meeting will be held June 24, 2021 at 7 pm at the Government Center and via Zoom. With no further discussion by the committee, the meeting adjourned.