



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

Thursday, July 22, 2021 7:00 pm

## MINUTES

**PRESENT:** Mr. Henderson, Vice-Chairman, Pastures District  
Mr. Powell, Middle River District  
Ms. Thornton, North River District  
Ms. Carter, Board of Supervisors Liaison  
Ms. Kiracofe, Asst. Superintendent for Instruction & Technology  
Ms. Whetzel, Deputy County Administrator

**ABSENT:** Mr. Lawhorne, Chairman, Riverheads District  
Mr. Kirby, Wayne District  
Mr. Journell, Beverly Manor District  
Mr. Carter, South River District

VIRGINIA: At the regular meeting of the Augusta County Internet Initiative (Broadband Committee) held on Thursday, July 22, 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. Members of the Committee may participate in a meeting through electronic communication means in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Virginia Section 2.2-3708.2.

### Call to Order

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

### Adoption of the Minutes

Minutes of the June 24, 2021 meeting were not approved due to not having a quorum present.

### Comments by the Public

None

### Special Presentations

None

### Matters to be Presented by Sub-Committees

Ms. Thornton spoke with a citizen on Bald Rock Rd that noted a project was underway but had been stalled. She is trying to find out what provider is doing the work. Mr. Powell noted that the New Hope Telephone Cooperative Board was to promote the survey to their friends and family. Mr. Henderson corresponded with a citizen that is starting a vineyard near the Swoope area and is in need of broadband. They may try Starlink as an option and questioned if there is anything the County can do to provide substantial support to get service to homes, such as a homeowner subsidy. Ms. Whetzel noted that we had looked at a locally funded grant program to assist homeowners where we were working with a provider. So far, federal funding assistance tends to tie income levels.

Ms. Whetzel noted final guidance for the American Rescue Plan (ARP) is not yet available. She expects the Board of Supervisors to make an allocation to broadband.

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

VATI 2021 Update – The County and Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) finalized the contract for the grant and the first progress report was filed on July 15, 2021. Outreach for the project will be on a rolling basis as MGW begins work in an area. MGW noted that they have started to put cable in the ground in their ILEC area and have started spurs in the Parkersburg and Morris Mill area. They are working on permits and easements. It was requested that they map subprojects and present to the Committee over the project construction period.

VATI 2022 Update – Ms. Whetzel noted that proposals are due tomorrow in response to the County's RFI. The RFI was posted on eVA (state procurement site), so there has been interest from out of County providers. She received notification today from DHCD that a provider is working the Dominion on a SCC project and that information was posted to the DHCD website. She encouraged providers to review the information as it covers multiple counties. The Board will be updated on Monday.

The Committee reviewed the results of the 2021 Internet Survey. Over 1600 responses were received and show substantial need for broadband in the community. The survey will be posted on the County website.

Ms. Kiracofe updated the Committee on school broadband challenges. Connectivity at the schools themselves is good. The focus has been to get devices to each student and using a device at home may be a challenge if internet service is not available. The schools have provided about 250-300 students with mobile hotspots to assist in connectivity.

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

There was discussion on a Committee presentation to the Board.

### **Old Business**

None

### **New Business**

### **Adjournment**

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be canceled and a tentative meeting date of August 19 was discussed. With no further discussion by the committee, the meeting adjourned.