

A regular meeting of the Albemarle County Broadband Authority was held on June 26, 2019, at 5:00 p.m., in Room 235 of the County Office Building, McIntire Road, Charlottesville, Virginia.

PRESENT: Mr. Bucky Walsh, Mr. Mike Culp, Ms. Liz Palmer, Mr. Rick Randolph, Mr. Waldo Jaquith, Mr. Bill Fritz

ABSENT: None

Also Present: Mr. Richard DeLoria (Senior Assistant County Attorney)

Agenda Item No. 1. Establish Quorum and Call to Order.

Mr. Walsh established a quorum and called the meeting to order.

Agenda Item No. 2 Approval of Agenda

Ms. Palmer **moved** to accept the agenda.

The agenda was **approved** by a unanimous vote.

Agenda Item No. 3 Approval of April 24, 2019 and May 22, 2019 minutes

The minutes were not available.

Agenda Item No. 5 Public Comment

Tom Sikes introduced himself as a resident of the White Hall district on Frays Mountain Road. Mr. Sikes discussed the lack of broadband service and the impact of foliage on the quality of service.

Mr. Sikes commented that Verizon seems to only provide service on Route 29 and once you get away from Route 29 service is not available. Service is only available if he goes outside.

Mr. Sikes stated that he had been told that cell towers were prohibited on ridge tops but that times had changed and camouflage techniques could be used to hide and disguise towers.

Mr. Sikes stated that when he moved here in 1992 he could get DSL but the service dropped to a level that was unusable. It has been improved and speeds of up to 8 mbps could be achieved but it usually less.

Mr. Sikes stated that fiber had been extended to houses near him but stops before his existing house.

Richard Price introduced himself as a resident of Old Garth Heights.

Mr. Price stated that he has four neighbors in his area that have no choice but Century Link.

Mr. Price state that his service cost the same amount as others even though the speed is limited to 2 mbps. Alternatives such as satellite are not viable.

Mr. Price stated that he has been told that he is eight feet from the loop and that service will not be extended. The neighbors have high speed internet but these four residents do not have access to high speed internet.

Mr. Price stated that he has put a \$10 deposit with TING but is aware that service is likely not to be extended soon.

Ms. Palmer asked if power lines were available to extend service.

Mr. Price stated that the neighbors would be willing to have poles installed.

Mr. Walsh noted that these types of problems are all to common and that is why ABBA was created. The goal is to provide service to everybody in the County so that everyone has one or more options for high speed internet.

Agenda Item No. 3 Strategy to announce CVEC/Virginia Telecommunication Initiative Project 2019

Agenda Item No. 3a. Discussion with Emily Kilroy, Director Albemarle County Communications and Public Engagement Department

Mr. Culp announced that Clarke County had done an announcement about a VATI project in Clarke County and we are looking to do something similar for the CVEC Midway project.

Mr. Culp suggested using the Coveseville store as a location to make the announcement.

Mr. Walsh suggested a location where construction was actually occurring.

Ms. Kilroy commented that scheduling can difficult to do and parking can also be a problem. Ms. Kilroy suggested that a location with good parking be used and then the news crews could go individually to a location where work is occurring to obtain the video they want.

Mr. Walsh noted that parking where construction is occurring will be a problem because the project is linear and along rural roads that do not have areas for parking.

Mr. Culp stated that one option would be to use a Friday when the equipment is staged because Friday is not a work day for CVEC.

Ms. Palmer and Mr. Randolph suggested that one or two people from ABBA could attend.

Ms. Kilroy stated that she would work with Mr. Culp to determine what works best for ABBA and CVEC.

Mr. Jaquith suggested that new potential customers should also be invited to attend the announcement.

Mr. Culp stated that he had a list of potential customers that could be contacted.

Mr. Walsh asked for consensus that a Friday at a staging site would be the best option and that Mr. Culp and Ms. Kilroy would work with CVEC to arrange the announcement.

All members agreed that this is the appropriate way to proceed.

Agenda Item No. 6. Old Business

Agenda Item No. 6a. VATI 2020 Update

Mr. Culp stated that VATI applications need to be worked on over the summer. The deadline is September 3 which is earlier than last year. A total of \$19 million is available from the state.

Mr. Culp stated that the RFI has been publicly released and he will work with the incumbents to encourage them to submit applications and gather the necessary information for submitting an application.

Mr. Walsh stated that he was concerned that an award could not be made in an area that had previously been designated for an award. Providers had been awarded the money but were not actually spending the money. Mr. Walsh asked if this prohibited new awards from being made.

Mr. Culp clarified that if the money was not spent in an area then the area was not considered as having been awarded a grant and a new grant could be approved.

Mr. Culp stated that is important to receive speed data and public comment for the VATI applications.

Mr. Culp noted that the Telecommunications Plan was last updated in 2015 and needs to be updated. The plan is not in the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan has the Personal Wireless Service Facilities Plan. The topic of updating the Telecommunications Plan will be scheduled for a future agenda.

Mr. Culp stated that VATI is encouraging the Dominion/APCO test projects to apply for grants.

Mr. Randolph encourage inviting APCO representatives to attend the next ABBA meeting to discuss potential VATI applications.

Agenda Item No. 6b. EDA/ABBA Joint Meeting

Mr. Culp stated that the purpose of the meeting was intended to discuss the grant initiative pass thru process.

Mr. Randolph noted that this topic does not need to be a joint meeting and could just be an agenda item for the EDA and one or two ABBA members could attend.

Mr. Culp stated that this is a better approach and this it not a time sensitive topic.

Agenda Item No. 7 New Business

Mr. Culp stated that he had a job description for a temporary support position for ABBA. In order to fill the position ABBA needs to authorize the approval of a payroll code for the position.

Mr. Walsh **moved** to authorize the creation of the code and authorize up to \$4,000 to be paid for the support position.

Liz Palmer **seconded** the motion.

The motion **passed** unanimously.

Ms. Palmer stated that she would not be at the July meeting.

Mr. Jaquith asked if the County is using business licenses to identify business that are located in areas applying for VATI grants.

Mr. Culp answered that the information is being used but that the information is not completely accurate, work is ongoing to improve the accuracy.

Mr. Jaquith volunteered to assist in collecting data by doing drive tests looking for open wifi.

Mr. Jaquith asked if household level of service data is provided by the vendor when a VATI application is made.

Mr. Culp stated that vendors do not provide information about where they do not provide service.

Mr. Jaquith asked if VDOT will permit micro-trenching.

Ms. Palmer pointed out that the land on many roads in the county is not owned by the County or VDOT. Easements would have to be negotiated with the property owners.

Mr. Randolph said that he would contact Joel DeNunzio at VDOT to find out if VDOT has any objection to micro-trenching if easements are in place or where VDOT controls the right of way.

Mr. Jaquith asked if ABBA would like to invite Evan Feinman to the August meeting. All members indicated this would be a good idea.

Ms. Palmer noted that recently she had lost service for several days. When the service technician was restoring service he pointed out that the service box had multiple feet of additional wire on her connection. The technician removed the excess line and it appears to have improved the service.

Agenda Item No. 8

Richard Price introduced himself as a resident on Barracks Road near Colthurst Farm. He is served by Century Link and is one of four houses that don't have access to nearby broadband because they are just too far away. Service is unreliable and slow and he doesn't know who to talk to.

Mr. Jaquith noted that Century Link is regulated by the State Corporation Commission and he has had some good luck talking to them and to Senator Deeds.

Mr. Price said that Xfinity offered to extend service for \$40,000.

Mr. Culp noted that VATI is aware that there is an issue with isolated locations like this with four or five houses. Applications can be bundled to include multiple isolated locations within a larger VATI applications.

Agenda Item No. 9. Adjourn

Ms. Palmer **moved** to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. Walsh **seconded**.

The motion **passed** unanimously.

With no other business before the Authority, Mr. Walsh adjourned the meeting at 6:12 p.m.