

A regular meeting of the Albemarle County Broadband Authority was held on June 24, 2020. The meeting was held electronically using Zoom and telephone starting at 5:00 p.m.

PRESENT AND ATTENDING REMOTELY: Mr. Bucky Walsh, Mr. Waldo Jaquith, Ms. Liz Palmer, Mr. Trevor Henry, Ms. Donna Price, Mr. Bill Fritz

ABSENT: None

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

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

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

Mr. Culp announced the following for the record:

Everyone on the phone and attending via Zoom from the public is in listen only mode. During public comment period - please enter your comment in the Chat and it will be read into the record. Include your full name and the magisterial district in which you reside, if you don't know your magisterial district please provide a general location or your home/business street address. We will run through the chat comments first and then take comments by phone. For those on the phone, please use *9 to indicate you'd like to make a public comment. We will ask you to provide your full name and magisterial district or general location of your home or business and then allow up to 3 minutes for your comment.

Mr. Walsh announced the following for the record:

Because of the continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic and the limitations on group gatherings imposed by the Governor's Executive Orders, this meeting is being held by electronic communication means on the Zoom platform. It is authorized by the County's April 15th and June 17th Continuity of Government Ordinances, this Authority's Resolution of April 22nd, and the Virginia statute signed into law on April 24th permitting this Authority to meet electronically to discuss and transact business necessary to continue its operations.

The public has real time audio-visual access to this meeting over Zoom and real time audio access over telephone, both as provided in the lawfully posted meeting notice. The public is always invited to send questions, comments, and suggestions to the Authority through the County's Information Technology. This meeting is being recorded and will be made available on the County's website.

Mr. Walsh requested that each member and officer identify the location from where they were attending the meeting.

Mr. Fritz stated he was attending from home.

Mr. Henry stated he was attending from home.

Ms. Price stated she was attending from home.

Mr. Jaquith stated he was attending from home.

Ms. Palmer stated she was attending from home.

Mr. Walsh stated he was attending from home.

Agenda Item No. 2 Approval of Agenda

Mr. Walsh **moved** to the modified agenda.

Ms. Palmer **seconded** the motion.

The motion was **approved** unanimously.

1. Agenda Item No. 3 Approval of Approval of May 27, 2020 Minutes

Mr. Walsh **moved** to approve the minutes.

Ms. Palmer **seconded** the motion.

The motion was **approved** unanimously.

Agenda Item No. 4 Public Comments

Mr. David Ludwig thanked ABBA for its work.

Agenda Item No. 5 Old Business

Agenda Item No. 5a Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) 2019 Update (CVEC)

Mr. Culp stated that work continues for Cashes Corner, Zion, Martins Store and Midway. Mr. Culp noted that the Kent Store project is scheduled for completion in 2020.

Mr. Culp stated that the Red Hill, White Hall and Schuyler projects are scheduled for completion in 2022.

Mr. Culp noted that Midway is a VATI project and there has been a COVID delay which has been approved by DHCD. 220 out of 370 connections have been made.

Agenda Item No. 5b. VATI 2020 (CenturyLink) Project Status

Mr. Culp introduced Derek Kelley from CenturyLink Government Affairs. Mr. Kelly stated that an FAQ has been posted online. Mr. Kelley stated that there had been a conference call with 21 attendees for the Green Creek Road project and more calls are scheduled.

Ms. Palmer asked how many homes are in the Green Creek project.

Mr. Kelley stated that there are 155 homes in the project.

Ms. Palmer noted that cost was a question in conference call. Ms. Palmer asked what percentage of the 155 homes participated in the call.

Mr. Culp noted that 37 emails went out and 21 of those participated in the call.

Mr. Kelly stated that CenturyLink is in the process of getting bids for the projects and after the bids are evaluated CenturyLink will be able to give out better information and a construction schedule.

Ms. Palmer noted that it was important for those living on private streets to get with CenturyLink so that the system can be designed to extend down the private streets.

Mr. Walsh asked if any problems have been identified.

Mr. Kelly stated that no problems had been identified.

Ms. Palmer stated that \$1.55 a foot for fiber was a good rule of thumb for connection. Ms. Palmer asked what is the rule of thumb for no cost connection.

Mr. Kelley stated that 650 plus or minus is free.

Ms. Palmer asked if the connection is over 650 feet is the cost determined on the total length or just the portion over 650 feet.

Agenda Item No. 5c. VATI 2021 How to Apply Webinar

Mr. Culp stated that he had attended a virtual webinar with DHCD. Mr. Culp noted that DHCD is encouraging feedback and had made changes based on comments they had received.

Agenda Item No. 5d(i) Request for Proposal Status - Preproposal Recap

Mr. Culp stated that preproposal conferences had been held with 9 companies. Proposals are due June 30. Addendums were posted to respond to the preproposal conference input.

Mr. Culp stated that he, Mr. Jaquith and Pria Wood (Albemarle County Schools) will review the proposals and provide comments to ABBA.

Mr. Walsh requested that the work group have something to ABBA before the next meeting.

Agenda Item No. 5d(i) Request for Proposal Status - Updated Broadband Strategy Plan

Mr. Walsh noted that the Strategy Plan is a communication vehicle describing what ABBA is about and how it will get there. It is general in nature.

Mr. Walsh stated that the plan was prepared with the help of previous documents and welcomed input.

Mr. Jaquith stated he had minor comments that will be sent separately. Mr. Jaquith noted that it is important to lay middle mile fiber and ABBA and schools may need to do that. Mr. Jaquith asked if ABBA can lease fiber or does this make ABBA an ISP.

Mr. Walsh stated that there is no scenario where ABBA competes in service. ABBA wants to facilitate service. Before any leasing could be done ABBA would need to go back to the Board of Supervisors for approval.

Ms. Palmer stated that the County looked at doing some middle mile fiber and it was too expensive. The County does not want to get into the business and there are potential state limits on local government authority to install and lease fiber.

Ms. Price stated that providing ISP service is not the primary service of the County which increases the cost and difficulty. Providing service or leasing fiber would require ABBA to go back to the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Jaquith asked if the goal should be to extend competitive affordable broadband and not just affordable broadband.

Mr. Walsh noted that the documents talk about affordability.

Mr. Jaquith noted that if an area is served is not eligible for a grant. Mr. Jaquith asked if ABBA should not have this standard so that grants would be available for competition.

Mr. Walsh stated that while anyone has nothing we should not be working on competition.

Mr. Jaquith asked when we reach that point.

Mr. Henry stated that the pandemic has brought connectivity to attention. Mr. Henry noted that in the Urban Area there are people that could connect but cannot financially.

Ms. Palmer stated that she has received questions from the public about barriers to deployment, including towers and how to work with the General Assembly. Ms. Palmer also noted that getting the necessary equipment in the home should also be considered.

Mr. Fritz stated that maybe the issue should be restated as fiber in the home not fiber to the home.

Mr. Walsh noted that the charter was to get broadband to the home and make it accessible. This does not guarantee service. Mr. Walsh asked if ABBA should go to the Board of Supervisors to determine if equity and actual connection is the goal.

Ms. Palmer noted that the wireless providers complain about the ability to install new towers. The limited height of towers limits the number of users.

Mr. Fritz noted that the wireless providers face an issue of density and if people will use the service if a tower is built. The process of approval for towers does not appear to be the issue.

Mr. Walsh stated that middle mile, competition and accessibility in the home are issues that have not been addressed and need to back to the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Culp noted that a Strategic Plan is important for the VATI grant.

Mr. Walsh stated that he will work with the comments provided and submit for review and adoption at the July meeting.

Mr. Jaquith asked to reconsider the 10/1 floor and asked what an appropriate floor was for wireless.

Mr. Walsh stated that 25/3 is our floor but we will use 10/1 for a matching grant.

Ms. Palmer noted that fixed wireless is a concern because the actual speeds provided are not known. ABBA doesn't want to fund a 10/1 project that may take years to build.

Ms. Palmer, Mr. Fritz, Mr. Henry and Mr. Jaquith stated that ABBA should not forgo 10/1 speed if it satisfies a need.

Agenda Item No. 6 New Business

Agenda Item No. 6a Meeting Scheduling Discussion

Mr. Walsh stated that the next regular meeting is July 22. A special meeting may be held on July 8 to discuss ABBA's intent to apply to DHCD.

Agenda Item No. 6a Approval of 2nd Quarter CY ABBA Status Report for Board of Supervisors

Mr. Fritz requested that the report note that ABBA has continued to meet during the COVID pandemic.

Mr. Walsh **moved** to approve the report as amended.

The motion **passed** unanimously.

Agenda Item No. 7. Adjourn

With no other business before the Authority, Mr. Walsh adjourned the meeting at 6:26 PM.