



## Lancaster County Broadband Authority

### Minutes of Board Meeting

March 20, 2019

**1. Call to Order & Approval of Minutes:** The meeting of the Lancaster County Broadband Authority convened at 4:30 p.m. in the public meeting room at the County Administration Building. Cassie Thompson, Gary Silverman, Kevin Bean and Margie Armen were present along with Supervisor Bob Westbrook. Frank Mastel, Chuck Rusinak, and Jon Dixon attended as guests. Chris Henley, and Kevin Gentry of the Middlesex Broadband Authority also attended as guests. Minutes of the prior meeting were approved as corrected.

### 2. Discussions:

- A. Gary reported that VDHCD has not yet made a decision about awarding the planning grant we applied for. He will continue to follow up.
- B. Kevin suggested that we might want to publish another information piece in the Rap Record, as a recent Letter to the Editor indicates there may be some misunderstanding in the public sphere about our role.
- C. Gary presented his analysis of recently-acquired geospatial data. He presented slides that correlate existing CATV lines with the County's information identifying both the location and assessed value of residences in the County and the location of homes where students enrolled in the County's public schools live. The integrated map clearly shows that there are large unmet needs within the County. It also raises some further problems and questions. We agreed that we would discuss these in a brief closed meeting at the end of our public meeting. Members of the Authority unanimously thanked Gary for his hard work. Gary also credited Glenn Rowe and Virginia Booth of LCPS for providing much assistance. Cassie will write letters to Dan Russell and Don Gill acknowledging Glenn and Virginia's valuable contributions.
- D. Kevin Bean advised that the Lancaster Schools have signed a contract with Atlantic Broadband to provide gigabit internet service to all the county schools. Atlantic will replace Windstream as the schools' internet provider.
- E. In Dave's absence, Margie reported that Joe Urban had contacted her about the website after the last meeting. She has sent him all the BOS Reports and Minutes for posting.
- F. Margie updated the Authority on the status of her research on the statewide Dominion Energy plan to support rural broadband. Dominion was required by law to develop a plan

to assist broadband in unserved areas. It delivered that report on December 1, 2018. Dominion considered a range of 5 options to assist deployment of broadband in areas where service is either non-existent or less than the FCC minimum of 25/10 mbps. Dominion indicated its preference to support the least demanding of the options, as follows: When it brings fiber to its substations (which it will do in any event), it will add some fiber strands to the fiber bundle that are excess to its own needs. It will allow local or regional providers to lease those excess strands to use for local broadband. Dominion also made it clear that even this minimal commitment is contingent on 1) full cost recovery and 2) complete indemnification from any liability. Dominion's Grid Transformation Plan (which included the rural broadband item) was approved in part and rejected in part by the State Corporation Commission, but it is not clear whether the proposal to install and lease excess fiber was approved or not. Without knowing the approval status, Margie is reluctant to weigh in on Dominion's plan. She offered to draft a letter to neighboring counties and broadband authorities stating our concerns and inviting mutual cooperation.

- G. Bob indicated that we can expect the Board of Supervisors to ask us to defend our budget request. He also offered to propose a motion at the Board of Supervisors meeting that will officially designate the Authority as the Board's agent charged and required to collect all pertinent information that the Board of Supervisors will need in preparation for contract discussions with ABb. The motion will also publicly state that the Authority will be expected to advise the Board during those discussions. This should encourage ABb to deal with us more appropriately and forthrightly.
- H. Cassie invited the guests to share any information they wanted to. The Middlesex representatives shared that they have a much smaller portion of their residents that do not have service. They weren't completely sure, but they think they got ABb to agree to provide service at 15 – 20 homes per mile (hpm) rather than the state law threshold of 30 homes per mile. They are considering a loan program that would help unserved communities that don't meet that 15/20 hpm threshold to afford the cost of bringing Atlantic Broadband to their neighborhoods. They have also freed up vertical assets that the county controls to mount antennas. Additionally, they wanted us to know about the two major Tier 1 lines that are being installed in the county to connect the US with Europe and Brazil. Gary shared that we had already asked Dominion to include some of that fiber for broadband use when they run their conduit under the Rappahannock, and that Dominion had refused. Kevin Gentry invited us to attend their next Broadband Authority meeting on Friday the 22<sup>nd</sup> at 5 p.m. in the Courthouse at Saluda.

Jon Dixon reported that Eagle Landing has contracted with Signa Wave to provide internet to their residents, but there are significant problems with that service. Frank Mastel asked for a copy of the Introduction that was prepared to accompany our CDBG grant application.

- I. At 5:50 p.m., Cassie thanked our guests, and let them know that we were about to convene our brief closed meeting to discuss contract matters. Cassie moved and Kevin seconded a motion to enter a closed session under section 2.2-3711.6 and .32. Bob

Westbrook was invited to remain for the closed discussion. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss ABb contract matters. At the conclusion of the meeting, the participants unanimously certified that no other matters were discussed.

**3. Action Items:**

- A. Margie will draft a report for the Board of Supervisors and Gary will deliver it.
- B. Margie will draft a letter to the neighboring counties and broadband authorities.
- C. Margie will follow up to get a copy of the White Stone ABb contract and send the grant Introduction to Frank Mastel.
- D. Gary will contact VDHCD to get a read-out on when we might expect to hear about the planning grant.
- E. Cassie will draft another piece for the Rappahannock Record and prepare “thank you” letters to Don Gill and Dan Russell.
- F. Bob will draft and offer a motion to the Board of Supervisors.

**4. Schedule Next Meeting(s) and Adjourn.** The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m. The next meeting will be held at 4:30 p.m. April 3, 2019, in the public meeting room. Margie and Gary both advised that they will be absent for the next meeting, and not able to participate by phone.

Respectfully submitted,



Secretary