

Lancaster County Broadband Authority

Minutes of Board Meeting

March 25, 2021

**March 25, 2021**

1. **Call to Order.** Cassie Thompson called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. in the Board/Commission meeting room of the County Administration Building. Cassie Thompson, Kevin Bean, Cherie Kiser, Dr. Gary Silverman, and Michele Craddock were present; and Cherie Kiser was present via video conference. James Cornwell, Esq., Don Gill, attended as guests. The purpose of the meeting was to present the 2021 budget request to the Board of Supervisors and to engage in a working session with the Board of Supervisors. Therefore, the members of the Board of Supervisors, Jack Larson, Ernest Palin, Jr., Jason Bellows, William Lee, and Dr. Robert Westbrook were present.

1. **Presentation of the budget request and work session regarding broadband.** Cassie Thompson presented the attached budget request. She explained the largest item is the salary for the position of Executive Director. Cherie Kiser explained the increase in legal services and contract services is due to the increase in transactions due to the VATI grant and the build out of the network. The LCBA has two lawyers on the board, however, the lawyers do not represent the LCBA and the LCBA requires the advice of legal counsel, James Cornwell, Esq., on certain issues. Mr. Cornwell notes that although he has the requisite experience to advise the LCBA, having represented the Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority (“ESVBA”), he may need to rely on outside counsel in certain circumstances. Cassie Thompson also explained the increase in marketing costs are needed to maintain the LCBA website and to educate the community on broadband issues.

William Lee stated that the LCBA should reach out beyond the Rappahannock Record and it should communicate in a manner the public will understand. For example, the LCBA should specify which roads broadband will be available rather than referencing general geographic locations. Jason Bellows suggested public mailings. Dr. Silverman explained that with the VATI project the build out is a total of approximately two years, however, and we will appropriately communicate with the public.

Cassie Thompson explained the increase in mileage expenses is necessary for the Executive Director to perform his duties. The conference costs are increased because conferences were cancelled last year. Dr. Silverman explained that personal attendance at a key conference enabled him to meet individuals who have been instrumental in assisting the LCBA, including the director of the ESVBA. Cassie Thompson explained the increase in computer software is due to the LCBA’s need for GIS mapping software.

Cherie Kiser presented information on the position of Executive Director. The LCBA advertised for the position. The highly qualified candidate the LCBA identified is the former Director of the ESVBA. Cherie Kiser explained the candidates’ qualifications, salary needs, and her success in negotiating a reasonable salary with the candidate.

Jack Larson stated that the LCBA is a separate entity and will need to be self-sufficient. He views the funding as some sort of loan and the LCBA should hire the best person possible. Jack Larson noted he hadn’t been a fan of ABB and hopes the LCBA can work things out with ABB. He stated that it is his understanding the LCBA will pay its bills and the County’s person will not be involved in disbursement.

Dr. Westbrook stated his concept is for the Board of Supervisors to borrow millions of dollars, which the taxpayers will have to pay. The LCBA and its Executive Director will deploy the funds. He will present a plan to the Board of Supervisors. He stated the LCBA can be working on VATI at the same time. He welcomes the Executive Director.

William Lee stated the LCBA is a separate entity, but the Board of Supervisors will take the heat. The Executive Director is a smart move, but the community will have to be informed. He stated he is glad the LCBA is discussing fiber to the home.

Cassie Thompson stated the LCBA will keep moving forward and it will continue to explore additional funding opportunities for multiple projects at the same time.

Dr. Westbrook stated the problem with State and Federal grants is they require the LCBA to work with ISPs.

Jason Bellows asked if the LCBA has a plan of where it will start. Dr. Silverman and Kevin Bean explained the LCBA has a detailed plan for building out broadband to three regions of the County identified by the LCBA, which it will review with the Executive Director. Jason Bellows stated that the County/LCBA can borrow money inexpensively now and eventually when the LCBA has enough customers it can pay back the loan. Michele Craddock stated the citizens should understand that by signing up for service to their homes and businesses, they will be supporting their investment in broadband. James Cromwell added that the investment in broadband will increase property values in the County.

Ernest Palin, Jr. stated the citizens want fiber to the home and the Board of Supervisors wants the LCBA to accomplish this. He asked for the LCBA to work with the Board of Supervisors to develop a vision statement, mission statement, and business plan.

The budget/work session ended at 7:10.

1. **Meeting continued in Don Gill’s conference room.** Cassie Thompson announced the LCBA meeting would continue in Mr. Gill’s conference room.
2. **Closed Session:** At 7:15 p.m., we entered a closed session pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711 (A) (29) to discuss specific contractual matters. The specific matters discussed were limited to the specific contractual matters. The closed session concluded at 7:30 p.m., and each member certified that only contractual matters were discussed.

**4. Schedule next meeting and adjourned:** Dr. Silvermanmadea motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 p.m.; Cassie Thompson seconded the motion; and all members voted in favor of the motion. The next regular meeting will be held on

Respectfully submitted,



Secretary

**LCBA Budget Request - submitted by Cassie Thompson to Don Gill via email dated 3/24/2021.**

**CATEGORY**                                           **FY2022**

3150 Legal Services                                $100,000\*

3199 Contract Services                            $100,000\*

3600 Advertising/Marketing                    $15,000\*

5510  Mileage                                           $2500\*

5540  Conference/Education                    $7500

6001  Office Supplies                               $500

8207  EDP Hardware                                $2500\*

8209  EDP Software                                 $5000\*

Ex Dir Salary                                            $161,900 (plus expenses)\*

LCBA Administrator                                $50,000\*\*

Total:                                                         $444,900\*

Those with one asterisk denote an increase over the previous submission.

The one with two asterisks show a new position.

The increase in mileage cost is to cover the Ex Dir need to drive the County for assessment, deployment operations and work with other counties and ABB on VATI.\*

The EDP increases show a computer for the Ex Dir and additional software.\*

The total is $226,900 over our previous submission.\*