



Lancaster County Broadband Authority
Minutes of Board Meeting
July 14, 2021

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1. Call to Order: Cassie Thompson called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. in the Board/Commission meeting room of the County Administration Building. Cassie Thompson, Cherie Kiser, Dr. Gary Silverman, and Kevin Bean were present. Michele Craddock and Nicholas Pascaretti attended by video conference.

2. Public Comment: Cassie Thompson invited the public to make comments.

John McCalla read portions of Congressman Wittman's letter to Governor Northam regarding the APB/Dominion broadband projects in the Northern Neck and the availability of VATI funding. He asked for an update on the project and whether VATI funding will be made available for it. Mr. McCalla provided an update regarding the citizens from the Eagles Landing neighborhood's experiences with BTS, which have recently improved. BTS informed the Eagles Landing customers that signed up to participate in the CARES Act project that BTS will not attempt to charge additional fees to the customers beyond the cap contained in the contract between BTS and LCBA. Mr. McCalla reported BTS activated service for some customers and BTS is working on increasing the network speeds.

Dr. Gary Silverman stated:

- Lancaster County is part of phase two of the APB/Dominion project. The recent groundbreaking ceremony was for phase one.
- APB will apply for a VATI grant in connection with phase two because RDOF winners will be allowed to apply for a VATI grant on top of the RDOF funded areas.
- The VATI grant amounts are expected to be significant this coming year. The total grant funds available are expected to be announced soon and Virginia government officials indicated the total may be as high as \$1 billion.
- We believe that the "unserved" homes will be determined as of the date of the memorandum of understanding for SCC approval.
- APB will not release many details until the SCC approval process is complete due to concerns with competition.

Cherie Kiser thanked Mr. McCalla for his great (volunteer) work on the LCBA website.

3. Approval of Minutes: Michele Craddock made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 16, 2021 meeting. Cherie Kiser seconded the motion. The meeting minutes were approved by a vote of 4-0 (Michele Craddock abstained):

- Dr. Gary Silverman – voted in favor of the motion.
- Cherie Kiser – voted in favor of the motion.
- Cassie Thompson – voted in favor of the motion.
- Kevin Bean - voted in favor of the motion.

The directors discussed the June 2, 2021 draft minutes and agreed upon two minor revisions. Kevin Bean made a motion to approve the minutes, subject to the revisions. Cassie Thompson seconded the motion. The meeting minutes were approved, subject to the revisions, by a vote of 4-0 (Michele Craddock abstained):

- Dr. Gary Silverman – voted in favor of the motion.
- Cherie Kiser – voted in favor of the motion.
- Cassie Thompson – voted in favor of the motion.
- Kevin Bean - voted in favor of the motion.

4. Discussions:

- a. Cassie Thompson and Nicholas Pascaretti reported on the status of the VATI grant project. They and representatives from Atlantic Broadband, and Caroline, Lancaster, Mathews, and Middlesex counties (the “Regional Team”) submitted the project management plan to the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (“DHCD”). The next step is that DHCD will provide a draft contract for the project to the Regional Team for its consideration.

Nicholas Pascaretti reported the good news that we are seeing the benefits of increased competition. ABB is leaning toward including more fiber in its build out of the VATI grant project and it has plans to update some of its existing equipment. ABB may be building out to additional areas as well. Nicholas Pascaretti spoke to other companies that won RDOF in discrete areas of the County who provided general information about their companies. Dr. Gary Silverman added that DHCD is encouraging potential ISPs to apply for RDOF areas for VATI grants and the companies’ applications may include areas that another company has won. Any redundancy issues will be resolved in the challenge process directly with the submitter and challenger.

- b. Nicholas Pascaretti provided an update on BTS’s work on the CARES Act wireless project. BTS activated service to 16 homes. BTS activated signals from the water tower which should increase network speed. The directors discussed the logistics of the payments BTS will make to LCBA and monitoring the contract.
- c. Cassie Thompson led a discussion regarding whether LCBA could and/or should apply for an NTIA grant. The directors considered the following facts: (i) the grant requires a private partner; (ii) Nicholas Pascaretti approached numerous potential partners, they are not interested in applying for a NTIA grant; (iii) currently the grant funds must be directed at broadband infrastructure to “unserved” homes; (iv) we have partnerships in

place which cover all “unserved” homes in the County; (v) the applications are due in mid-August; (vi) and the next NITA solicitation may provide funds for broadband projects beyond infrastructure. Given these facts, the directors concurred that there is no benefit to applying for a NTIA grant at this time.

- d. **Closed Session:** At 5:30 p.m., we entered a closed session pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A) 29, discussion of public contracts. The specific matters discussed were limited to the discussion of public contracts. The closed meeting concluded at 6:40 p.m. Each member certified that the matters specified above were the only matters discussed.

4. Schedule next meeting and adjourned: Kevin Bean made a motion to adjourn the meeting Dr. Gary Silverman seconded the motion. The directors voted in favor of the motion by a vote of 4-0 (Michele Craddock abstained):

- Dr. Gary Silverman – voted in favor of the motion.
- Cherie Kiser – voted in favor of the motion.
- Cassie Thompson – voted in favor of the motion.
- Kevin Bean - voted in favor of the motion.

The meeting adjourned at 6:42. The next regular meeting will be held on August 11, 2021 at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Secretary