

# MINUTES

## Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority

January 18, 2018

Board members in attendance were: Pete Lalor, Elaine Meil, Mike Mason, John Reiter, and Charles Kolakowski.

ESVBA management participating in the meeting who were in attendance: Robert Bridgham and Leah Hoopes (Secretary)

Members of the public attending were:  
Terry Malarkey, Glen Salmon, Rob Harris, and Pat Coady

Elaine Meil called the meeting to order at 1:57 pm.

### **AGENDA ADOPTION**

*Mr. Reiter moved to adopt the agenda. Mr. Lalor seconded. After discussion, the agenda was amended to move the rate reduction from closed session to Item 8b and eliminate item 3. Motion passed unopposed.*

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Terry Malarkey- Mr. Malarkey provided the board with the research he's done on microwave lengths and suggested the possibility of using it to serve residents off of the towers in Accomack County from his 3<sup>rd</sup> floor deck. He states that it's not as reliable as fiber but the microwave option is about 90% cheaper than running FTTH.

Glen Salmon- Mr. Salmon asked that the ESVBA be more transparent in plans to rollout FTTH so that residents will be more aware and have time to talk with their neighbors about signing up.

Pat Coady- Mr. Coady notified the BOD that the new administration in Richmond has dissolved the office of secretary of technology and therefore the functions that revolve around internet access and broadband will be shifting. He also stated that a group that involves industry members has started a broadband coalition in Virginia that's needed to address rural broadband access in a more unified way. The meeting in 2010 that was hosted by DHCD was the first meeting of wireless authorities around the commonwealth and since then there

have been no subsequent meetings which would be an opportunity for wireless authorities to learn more and do more.

Rob Harris- Mr. Harris recommended that the Authority dedicate time and resources in working with wireless ISPs in order to dramatically increase the footprint and coverage to the residents.

### **REVIEW OF MINUTES**

*Mr. Kolakowski motioned to approve the Work Session Meeting Minutes from November and the Special Meeting Minutes from December and to amend the Regular Meeting Minutes from November on page 3 to state "Mr. Lalor moved to adopt Mr. Bridgham's proposal with a possible reprioritization of the list as appropriate to encourage WISP buildout". Mr. Mason seconded. Motion passed unopposed.*

### **STATUS REPORT**

1. Town Broadband Initiative Program (BIP)- Mr. Bridgham reported that all the programs have been completed except Bloxom, which expires in October 2018.
2. WiFi Hotspots- Mr. Bridgham gave an update that there are currently 11 hotspots in service
3. Residential Broadband- Mr. Bridgham reported that there are 23 customers in service in Harborton, 9 in Bobtown, 6 in Church Neck, and 4 additional areas have been opened (Sanford, Cobbs Station, Cheapside, and Accomac).
4. WISP EVPL Program- Mr. Bridgham informed the BOD that 29 sites are in service and bandwidth upgrades continue.
5. CBBT Fiber Cable Relocation- Mr. Bridgham stated that work is complete and the ESVBA should be clear of any work the CBBT is doing to add the second tunnel between islands 1 and 2.

Mr. Mason asked if all of Accomack County has been opened. Mr. Bridgham stated that the town of Accomac is open and maps on the website show the areas available.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- a. **Budget amendment request for new Bookkeeper position-** Mr. Bridgham explained that a full time bookkeeper is needed due to an

increase in customer volume and also to reduce the load of the contract Accounting Manager. *Mr. Lalor motioned to adopt the amendment and add the position. Mr. Reiter seconded. After discussion, motion passed unopposed.*

- b. Marketing Discussion-**Mr. Kolakowski suggested doing a follow up in areas that have already been marketed and marketing upcoming areas 3-6 months in advance. He also suggested using contractors or interns to make calls and help with marketing.

Mr. Mason agrees that it's important to market and make people aware of where services are available.

Mr. Lalor recommended adding marketing updates to the agenda or status report.

Ms. Meil spoke about looking into costs and seeing what's available at the Community College and bringing the information back to possibly get a budget for it.

Mr. Bridgham offered to reengage with the marketing firm and work with them to come up with additional strategies.

- c. Potential reschedule of March Regular Meeting to March 29<sup>th</sup>-***Mr. Reiter motioned to reschedule the March 15<sup>th</sup> meeting to March 29<sup>th</sup> at 2pm. Mr. Lalor seconded. Motion passed unopposed.*

Mr. Lalor asked that the possibility of the meetings being held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month be added to the agenda for next month.

### **OLD Business**

- a. CTC Strategic Plan Status Update-** Tom Asp reviewed the power point that was presented to the board. He stated that a draft document should be available by the end of February. CTC is currently working on confirming the costs and reviewing the feedback from the board and legal counsel.

- b. Rate Reduction Update-** Mr. Bridgham reported to the board that out of 46 commercial customers 1/3 have taken advantage of the rate reduction with a 6.1% impact in contracted revenue.

Ms. Meil asked if ESVBA has received enough new customers to make up the difference in decrease in revenue.

Mr. Bridgham replied that yes, they have.

**Treasurer's Report-** Mr. Mason suggested the ESVBA come up with a more advanced dashboard to chart financial information, customer basics, and fttth

project costs and recovery.

Mr. Bridgham recommending taking a few years off of the current chart to only show the data from the last 3 years.

Mr. Lalor stated that he would like to see how things have progressed over time and suggested having 2 graphs. One of the graphs would show the last 12 months and one would show the course of what's happened over the last 5 years.

*Mr. Mason motioned that ESVBA start putting together a dashboard for distribution at the monthly meetings. Mr. Lalor seconded. Motion passed unopposed.*

Mr. Lalor asked if anything has been done about normalizing the accounting so that there are no more spikes in cash flow in the future.

Mr. Bridgham stated that the purchase in May was a substantial purchase but if the report showed information based on quarters rather than months then purchases like that could be smoothed out some.

### **CLOSED SESSION**

Motion to enter into closed session according to Section 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia of 1950, as amended; ) Paragraph 1: Discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment; assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body. Paragraph 34: Discussion or consideration by a local authority created in accordance with the Virginia Wireless Service Authorities Act (§ 15.2-5431.1 et seq.) of confidential proprietary records and trade secrets excluded from this chapter pursuant to subdivision 19 of § 2.2-3705.6 made by Mr. Mason, seconded by Mr. Kolakowski. The following board members were present Mr. Kolakowski, Mr. Mason, Mr. Reiter, Ms. Meil, and Mr. Lalor and voted affirmative.

After closed session, the Chair reconvened the meeting. Motion was made by Mr. Reiter, seconded by Mr. Kolakowski that the Board had entered the closed session for that purpose as set out in Paragraph 1 and 34 of Section 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia of 1950, as amended. Roll call vote taken Vote was that no other business discussed than as advised in Paragraph 1 and 34. The following board members were present Mr. Kolakowski, Mr. Reiter, Mr. Mason, Ms. Meil,

and Mr. Lalor and voted affirmative.

**Board Comment**

Mr. Lalor questioned the system for broadband to Tangier.

Mr. Bridgham responded that the school has service but he doesn't know how the rest of Tangier is serviced.

Ms. Meil commented that Tangier uses Exede satellite. A northern neck guy did provide a microwave length off of the water tower but he isn't able to fix it when it goes down. Ms. Meil and Mr. Pascaretti discussed using a microwave length to a fiber system instead of a wireless system since it's easier than going to Tangier to fix equipment.

Mr. Lalor asked how much more expensive and inferior is it to provide a microwave length from the tower than putting up fiber.

Mr. Bridgham replied that ESVBA would have to incur pretty big costs to get trucks to Tangier and lay fiber since they have no materials or resources.

Mr. Mason questioned why Tangier would get fiber before areas that are more densely populated.

Mr. Lalor suggested using unlicensed frequencies from a pole and have everyone be liable for their own equipment. Mr. Lalor also suggested possibly finding a WISP to service the residents and have them be in charge of fixing equipment.

The board decided to defer this discussion until the draft business plan has been received.

**ADJOURNMENT**


*The meeting was adjourned at 4:49pm.*

These minutes were approved at the Feb 15, 2018 meeting of the Board of Directors of ESVBA.

Elaine K. Meil

Presiding Officer

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Leah Hoopes, Secretary

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