

MINUTES

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

July 23, 2020

Board members in attendance were: John Reiter, Kelvin Pettit, Mike Mason, and Elaine Meil.

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

Members of the public attending were:

Ms. Meil called the meeting to order at 2:02 pm.

AGENDA ADOPTION

Mr. Reiter moved to adopt the agenda. Mr. Mason seconded. Motion passed unopposed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

REVIEW OF MINUTES

Mr. Mason moved to approve the Annual Meeting Minutes from May, Regular Meeting Minutes from May, and Work Session Meeting Minutes from June. Ms. Meil seconded. Mr. Reiter abstained. Motion passed unopposed.

SYSTEM STATUS & BUILD REPORT

1. WiFi Hotspots- There are currently 13 hotspots in service. There is a new hotspot at ESO in Belle Haven.
2. Residential Broadband- Mr. Bridgham reported that there are 50 customers in service in Harborton, 21 in Bobtown, 42 in Church Neck, 34 in Sanford, 2 on Cheapside, 3 on Cobbs Station, 62 in Accomac, 5 in Townsend, 12 in Greenbackville, 27 in Atlantic, 16 in Wattsville/Horntown, 37 in Oak Hall, 44 in

Hallwood, 11 in Painter/Quinby, 27 in Eastville, 19 in Nassawadox, 6 in Oyster, 75 in Exmore, 27 in Belle Haven, 32 in Cheriton, 23 in Wachapreague, 177 in Onancock, 106 in Cape Charles, 35 in Parksley, 5 in Nocks Landing, and 1 in Chincoteague.

Mr. Reiter asked how many of the 221 signed customers were waiting on Underground equipment. Mr. Bridgham replied that about 30 customers have been waiting for underground.

Mr. Mason stated that the Authority is going to continue to fall behind as students need internet in order to attend school virtually and asked Mr. Bridgham what can be done.

Mr. Bridgham stated that he's looking into adding more contractors as well as employees. Telecommunication jobs are in high demand currently and materials, such as fiber, are taking up to 12 months to be delivered.

Mr. Mason suggested that the Authority prepare to get additional resources.

Mr. Mason asked for an update on Tangier.

Mr. Bridgham stated that Tangier cannot be reached from the Bloxom Tower, so the Authority will need to work with ANEC to connect from the Onancock Tower.

Ms. Meil suggested adding more performance metrics for new contractors and incentives to meet the metrics.

3. WISP EVPL Program- Mr. Bridgham informed the BOD that 48 sites are in service, 7 new sites on-order and underway.
4. Microcommunity Program- Mr. Bridgham stated that Watts Bay, Church Neck, and Wallops Millpond micro have been approved and turned-up. Whisperwood and Savage Neck communities are being built. Watts Bay has another Microcommunity with 11 homes that is being designed.
5. Bore Platform-Ditch Witch was awarded the bid and the drill should be delivered soon.
6. Audit-The Inventory Audit was completed and there were no issues. The Audit for the books will be scheduled for September.

Mr. Bridgham gave a buildout update to the board that 148 miles have been built so far. Several are close to being complete, aside from some underground work. Chincoteague is being redesigned.

NEW BUSINESS.

- a. **Cell Phone Stipend Policy-** Mr. Bridgham presented the Draft Cell Phone Policy to the board. Mr. Mason stated that the amounts seem a little high compared to Accomack County. Mr. Reiter asked for clarification on the sentence at the bottom of page 2.
Mr. Bridgham replied that he would remove that sentence. Mr. Reiter stated that he wants to be fair to employees but doesn't want to be excessive.
Mr. Mason suggested looking at a few other policies to compare amounts and looking into adding a security feature.
Mr. Pettit stated that ANEC provides cell phones to their on call personnel.
- b. **Telecommuting Policy-** Mr. Bridgham presented the Draft Telecommuting Policy to the board.
Ms. Meil stated that their insurance company didn't recommend letting employees make their own hours because of the liability issue when they're working at home.
Mr. Bridgham explained that the Authority is trying to be flexible in allowing parents to make their own hours when kids go back to school.
Mr. Reiter stated that the hours should be set, even if they're split.
Mr. Mason moved to adopt the Telecommuting Policy. Mr. Reiter seconded. Motion passed unopposed.
- c. **Schedule rate hearing for small commercial product-**
Mr. Reiter asked about the install cost for small business.
Mr. Bridgham stated that they would use the same model as used for Residential, which allows a 22-month payback.
Mr. Reiter moved to hold a Special Meeting and Rate Hearing on October 8, 2020 at 2pm. Mr. Mason seconded. Motion passed.
Mr. Reiter moved to reschedule the October Work Session Meeting to immediately follow the Rate Hearing on October 8, 2020. Mr. Mason seconded. Motion passed unopposed.
- d. **Consider serving community wireless hotspots-**
Mr. Bridgham stated that Northampton County has asked for 2 hotspot locations.
Ms. Meil asked how much the equipment costs to put up a hotspot.

Mr. Bridgham explained that it costs about \$1,500 per hotspot.

Mr. Mason asked what the range is to access them.

Mr. Bridgham replied about 200 to 300 feet.

Mr. Reiter suggested talking to the Sheriffs about if they want people having access to them at night.

Ms. Meil asked Mr. Bridgham what process did the towns go through to set up a hotspot.

Mr. Bridgham stated that the town would come up with a location and the Authority would calculate the engineering cost and decide if it's beneficial for the community.

Mr. Reiter moved to authorize Mr. Bridgham to offer up to 2 hotspots in Northampton County and up to 4 hotspots in Accomack County for the public schools and for the hotspot installs to have priority over residential. Mr. Mason seconded. Motion passed unopposed.

BOARD COMMENT

The board would like to welcome Kelvin Pettit!

CLOSED SESSION

Motion to enter into closed session according to Section 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia of 1950, as amended;) Paragraph 33: 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 information and trade secrets subject to the exclusion in subdivision 19 of § [2.2-3705.6](#), made by Mr. Reiter, seconded by Mr. Mason. The following board members were present: Mr. Pettit, Mr. Reiter, Mr. Mason, and Ms. Meil and voted affirmative.

After closed session, the Chair reconvened the meeting. Motion was made by Mr. Reiter, seconded by Mr. Mason that the Board had entered the closed session for that purpose as set out in Paragraph 33 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 33. The following board members were present: Mr. Pettit, Mr. Reiter, Mr. Mason, and Ms. Meil.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:36 pm.

These minutes were approved at the September 24, 2008 meeting of the Board of Directors of ESVBA.

Flaine Kumer
Presiding Officer

Copy teste:

Leah Hoopes
Leah Hoopes, Secretary