

# MINUTES

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

September 24, 2020

Board members in attendance were: John Reiter, Kelvin Pettit, Mike Mason, Charles Kolakowski 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: Montaigne Cree, Suzanne Conway, Dan Davids, Mark Tubbs, Norman Culpitts

Ms. Meil called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm.

### **AGENDA ADOPTION**

*Mr. Reiter moved to amend the agenda to add a financial report after item 3. Mr. Mason seconded. Motion passed unopposed.*

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Montaigne Cree: Ms. Cree expressed her interest in the small business rates and her dissatisfaction with the Dedicated IP rates. She suggested offering a refund to the small businesses that have been signed up with the commercial rates. She also suggested the Authority be more proactive in signing residents up so that the install costs are lower.

Suzanne Conway: Ms. Conway explained that she has been working with the Authority to get a Micro community in her area. She needs broadband as soon as possible so that her daughter can attend college classes online.

Dan Davis: Mr. Davis represents the Exmore Baptist Church and in order to live stream the church services, they need reliable broadband. He also wants the Authority to consider adding a different product for churches.

Mark Tubbs: Mr. Tubbs is part of the Watts Bay Micro Community and is waiting on an install date.

Norman Culpitts: Mr. Culpitts expressed the need for broadband on the Eastern

Shore.

### **REVIEW OF MINUTES**

*Mr. Reiter moved to approve the Meeting Minutes from July. Mr. Pettit seconded. Motion passed unopposed.*

### **FINANCIAL REPORT**

Mr. Mason asked what percentage of homes on the Eastern Shore are able to get broadband service.

Mr. Bridgham explained that 60-65% of homes have access to broadband, compared to the 33% from before.

Mr. Reiter asked how much it would cost to cover the remaining 35-40%.

Mr. Bridgham replied that it would take close to \$30M to complete.

### **SYSTEM STATUS & BUILD REPORT**

1. WiFi Hotspots- There are currently 15 hotspots in service. The Authority is looking at 2 additional hotspots.  
Mr. Mason explained that the extension of the public WiFi hotspots are being funded by the Cares Act. These funds have to be expensed by December 30<sup>th</sup> and therefore will take priority over residential installs.
2. Residential Broadband- Mr. Bridgham reported the Authority broke the 1000 residential customer mark and currently have over 300 residents waiting to be installed. He stated that there are 52 customers in service in Harborton, 21 in Bobtown, 39 in Church Neck, 38 in Sanford, 3 on Cheapside, 3 on Cobbs Station, 69 in Accomac, 6 in Townsend, 15 in Greenbackville, 33 in Atlantic, 29 in Wattsville/Horntown, 47 in Oak Hall, 52 in Hallwood, 22 in Painter/Quinby, 33 in Eastville, 26 in Nassawadox, 6 in Oyster, 93 in Exmore, 33 in Belle Haven, 36 in Cheriton, 27 in Wachapreague, 203 in Onancock, 157 in Cape Charles, 64 in Parksley, 5 in Nocks Landing, and 2 on Chincoteague.
3. WISP EVPL Program- Mr. Bridgham informed the BOD that 55 sites are in service, 9 new sites on-order and underway.
4. Microcommunity Program- Mr. Bridgham stated that Watts Bay, Church Neck, and Wallops Millpond Microcommunity have been approved and turned-up. There are nine other communities that are in various stages of progress.
5. Audit-The audit has been completed and we are awaiting

feedback.

### **OLD BUSINESS.**

- a. **Cell Phone Stipend Policy-** Mr. Bridgham made a few corrections to the policy draft.

On page 2, the travel section should read “Employees who frequently travel and need to be available to communicate with the ESVBA associates or constituents at any and all times while traveling on ESVBA business.”

On page 2, under the Monthly Stipened Amount, there should be a comma or after the first 2 options.

On page 2, the last sentence should read “The total monthly allowance amount will be based on one of the appropriate allowance options from above as determined applicable by the employee’s manager.”

*Mr. Mason motioned to adopt the policy with the above amendments. Mr. Reiter seconded. Motion passed unopposed.*

### **NEW BUSINESS.**

- a. **Enhancing Installation Capacity-** Mr. Bridgham talked about a contractor that is interested in working with the Authority. Mr. Reiter asked when the company would be able to start. Ms. Meil asked how many installs they would be able to handle per month. Mr. Reiter asked if the ESVBA still has a line of credit. The board agreed to add this topic on the next meeting agenda.

- b. **Infectious disease preparedness and response plan-**

Mr. Bridgham presented the BOD with the plan.

*Mr. Mason motioned to approve the plan. Mr. Reiter seconded.*

*Motion passed unopposed.*

### **BOARD COMMENT**

None

*Mr. Kolakowski motioned to amend the agenda to remove the Closed Session item. Mr. Mason seconded. After some discussion, the motion does not pass.*

**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. Kolakowski. The following board members were present: Mr. Pettit, Mr. Reiter, Mr. Mason, Mr. Kolakowski, and Ms. Meil and voted affirmative.

After closed session, the Chair reconvened the meeting. Motion was made by Mr. Mason, seconded by Mr. Kolakowski 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, Mr. Kolakowski, and Ms. Meil.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:17 pm.

These minutes were approved at the December 3, 2020 meeting of the Board of Directors of ESVBA.



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Presiding Officer

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Leah Hoopes, Secretary