

MINUTES

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

May 27, 2021

Board members in attendance were: John Reiter, Mike Mason, Charles Kolakowski, Kelvin Pettit, 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: Karen Downing, Patrick Coady, Donna Bozza

Ms. Reiter called the meeting to order at 2:16 pm.

AGENDA ADOPTION

Mr. Mason moved to adopt the agenda. Ms. Meil seconded. After discussion, Mr. Kolakowski motioned to add an item under Closed Session (paragraph 29). Ms. Meil seconded. Motion passed unopposed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Karen Downing (VA Organizing) is working with the community to address challenges for residents, including broadband.

Patrick Coady suggested that the ESVBA move forward with a 30-year bond and complete engineering and order materials and use grant funds to lower the debt.

Donna Bozza (Citizens for a better Eastern Shore) encourages the Authority to move in the direction of building out the remainder of the Eastern Shore for the residents.

REVIEW OF MINUTES

Mr. Kolakowski moved to approve the Regular Board meeting minutes from March and the Work Session Meeting Minutes from April. Mr. Mason seconded. Motion passed unopposed.

SYSTEM STATUS & BUILD REPORT

1. WiFi Hotspots- There are currently 26 hotspots in service.
2. Residential Broadband- Mr. Bridgham reported that the Authority has 1593 active residential customers. He stated that there are 53 customers in service in Harborton, 20 in Bobtown, 69 in Church Neck, 55 in Sanford, 2 on Cheapside, 4 on Cobbs Station, 85 in Accomac, 6 in Townsend, 72 in Greenbackville, 57 in Atlantic, 48 in Wattsville/Horntown, 60 in Oak Hall, 75 in Hallwood, 37 in Painter/Quinby, 47 in Eastville, 35 in Nassawadox, 7 in Oyster, 160 in Exmore, 44 in Belle Haven, 44 in Cheriton, 31 in Wachapreague, 256 in Onancock, 195 in Cape Charles, 90 in Parksley, 5 in Nocks Landing, 33 in Saxis, and 3 on Chincoteague.
Ms. Meil asked what is the average install cost for residents.
Mr. Bridgham stated that the Authority is funding about \$1200-\$1300 per install.
3. WISP EVPL Program- Mr. Bridgham informed the BOD that 52 sites are in service, 8 new sites on-order and underway.
4. Microcommunity Program- There are 9 communities that are in service and 12 others that are in various stages of progress.
5. 2021 CARES projects in Accomack and Northampton- Mr. Bridgham reported that they did an inspection and some of the routes for Accomack already had coverage with other providers. This freed up about \$176k of funds in Accomack and \$43k in Northampton. The Authority is progressing these projects and a summary will be provided in future packets.
Mr. Bridgham announced to the board that the EBB program will be available for residential customers and some have already signed up.
Mr. Bridgham has been working with Accomack County on a support program to offset installation charges.

OLD BUSINESS

- a. **Authorization of use of remaining bond proceeds-**
Mr. Bridgham went over the different options for the bond proceeds.

Ms. Meil asked for an update on the new underground vendor. Mr. Bridgham explained that it is a one crew vendor and they will only be doing small jobs. Mr. Bridgham stated that the Authority will still be using internal and external resources to complete the underground jobs.

Mr. Kolakowski motioned to purchase equipment for \$160k.

Mr. Mason seconded. AYE:4 NAY:1. Motion passed.

Mr. Mason motioned to create an installation assistance program with the remaining funds using the EBB eligibility guidelines but expanding the income level guideline to a more liberal amount. Mr. Kolakowski seconded. Motion passed unopposed.

NEW BUSINESS.

- a. **FY2022 Budget** – Mr. Bridgham presented the budget to the board.

Ms. Meil asked how much the rent increased to in FY22.

Mr. Bridgham stated that the annual rate increased to \$30,600 for rent and pole attachment fees increased by \$280k.

Ms. Meil asked if the drop in Cash Flow in November was due to the bond payment.

Mr. Bridgham confirmed that is was.

Mr. Mason asked if they could merge subscriber deployment into one line item. He reminded the board that the Budget will change if the Authority starts to receive funding.

Mr. Reiter is concerned about the residential income and the amount of customers being hooked up.

Mr. Kolakowski motioned to approve the FY22 Budget. Mr. Mason seconded. Motion passed unopposed.

TREASURER'S REPORT

None

BOARD COMMENTS

Mr. Pettit is concerned that there is no overall plan for expansion.

Mr. Mason recommended that they start putting together models and projections based on potential future funding.

Ms. Meil suggested finding out how much the Authority would be able to borrow.

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; and evaluation of performance of departments or schools of public institutions of higher education where such evaluation will necessarily involve discussion of the performance of specific individuals. Any teacher shall be permitted to be present during a closed meeting in which there is a discussion or consideration of a disciplinary matter that involves the teacher and some student and the student involved in the matter is present, provided the teacher makes a written request to be present to the presiding officer of the appropriate board. Nothing in this subdivision, however, shall be construed to authorize a closed meeting by a local governing body or an elected school board to discuss compensation matters that affect the membership of such body or board collectively. Paragraph 29: Discussion of the award of a public contract involving the expenditure of public funds, including interviews of bidders or offerors, and discussion of the terms or scope of such contract, where discussion in an open session would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body. 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. Mason, seconded by Mr. Kolakowski. The following board members were present: Mr. Kolakowski, Mr. Mason, Mr. Reiter, Mr. Pettit, and Ms. Meil and voted affirmative.

After closed session, the Chair reconvened the meeting. Motion was made by Mr. Kolakowski, seconded by Ms. Meil that the Board had entered the closed session for that purpose as set out in Paragraph 1, 29, and 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 1, 29, and 33. The following board members were present: Mr. Kolakowski, Mr. Mason, Mr. Reiter, Mr. Pettit, and Ms. Meil and voted affirmative.

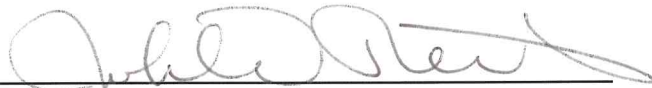
Mr. Bridgham stated that the ESVBA will be beginning to start applications for the VATI and the NTIA Broadband Infrastructure

grants

ADJOURNMENT

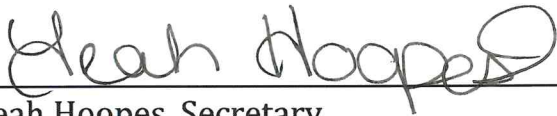
The meeting was adjourned at 5:09pm.

These minutes were approved at the July 22, 2021 meeting of the Board of Directors of ESVBA.



Presiding Officer

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Leah Hoopes, Secretary