

MINUTES

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

July 22, 2021

Board members in attendance were: John Reiter, Mike Mason, 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: Patrick Coady, Mike Zodun, Carol Moran, Sue Mastyl

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

AGENDA ADOPTION

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Carol Moran (Central) asked for an explanation on the amount she was quoted for install and the process after the fiber is installed.

REVIEW OF MINUTES

Ms. Meil moved to approve the Annual Meeting Minutes and the Regular Board Meeting Minutes from May. Mr. Mason seconded. Motion passed unopposed.

SYSTEM STATUS & BUILD REPORT

1. WiFi Hotspots- There are currently 25 hotspots in service. The construction for McComas Park should be completed in the next few weeks.
2. Residential Broadband- Mr. Bridgham reported that the Authority has 1670 active residential customers. He stated that there are 50 customers in service in Harborton, 22 in Bobtown,

70 in Church Neck, 58 in Sanford, 34 on Cheapside, 4 on Cobbs Station, 80 in Accomac, 6 in Townsend, 67 in Greenbackville, 62 in Atlantic, 49 in Wattsville/Horntown, 64 in Oak Hall, 78 in Hallwood, 40 in Painter/Quinby, 48 in Eastville, 44 in Nassawadox, 9 in Oyster, 161 in Exmore, 52 in Belle Haven, 44 in Cheriton, 30 in Wachapreague, 254 in Onancock, 207 in Cape Charles, 95 in Parksley, 5 in Nocks Landing, 33 in Saxis, and 4 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.

Mr. Bridgham announced that the Authority has brought on 2 additional underground contractors to help complete the Micro Communities.

3. WISP EVPL Program- Mr. Bridgham informed the BOD that 56 sites are in service, 4 new sites on-order and underway.
4. Microcommunity Program- There are 13 communities that are in service and 5 others that are in various stages of progress.
5. EBB Program- The program had 6 subscribers in June and 24 subscribers in July.
6. 2021 CARES projects in Accomack and Northampton- Mr. Bridgham reported that materials have been ordered and engineering has been complete for 37 of 56 miles and the engineering for Captains Cove has been completed.

OLD BUSINESS.

a. Rate Hearing-

Mr. Bridgham reviewed the new terms for Ethernet Transport and Dedicated Internet.

Mr. Mason moved to adopt the rates as advertised. Ms. Meil seconded. Motion passed unopposed.

NEW BUSINESS.

- a. **Schedule new rate hearing-** Mr. Bridgham explained that last year all of the residential bandwidth speeds were doubled to help the community. He's requesting that the bandwidths stay doubled permanently at the same rate.

Mr. Mason motioned to advertise the new residential rates. Ms. Meil seconded. After discussion, motion passed unopposed.

The Special Meeting is scheduled for October 28, 2021 at 2pm.

- b. **Consider budget amendment-** Mr. Bridgham presented the 3 budget amendment requests to the BOD.

Ms. Meil motioned to carry forward the \$40k to spend on a van.

Mr. Reiter seconded. Motion passed unopposed.

Ms Meil motioned to increase the line item to \$8k from the fund balance. Mr. Pettit seconded. Motion passed unopposed.

Mr. Mason suggested holding off on item 3 until a final announcement has been made about how the state funds will be allocated

- c. **Consider ESVBA assistance program-** Mr. Bridgham presented the assistance program to the BOD.

Ms. Meil stated that Section 8 and USDA are not federal public housing. Ms. Meil also commented that the limits on the job loss requirement were too high.

Mr. Mason motioned to approve the perimeters for the Installation Assistance Program as provided by the Executive Director. Ms. Meil seconded. Motion passed unopposed.

- d. **Consider shore wide expansion plans-** Mr. Bridgham presented models and suggested having a subcommittee to direct the plan. Mr. Reiter requested that the subcommittee be made up of the Treasurer and the Chair. Mr. Reiter stated that the subcommittee will meet and report results by the next board meeting.

- e. **VATI application-** Mr. Bridgham explained that VATI will fund 80% of a project and the grant would help the Authority expand. He suggested building a cost project for 2 areas in Accomack county and an area in northern Northampton. Ms. Meil asked how much in funds the Authority is able to match. Mr. Bridgham replied that the Authority could match \$600k and the counties have ARPA funds available.

Ms. Meil moved to Authorize the Executive Director to develop and submit a VATI application and the Letter of Intent by the due date. Mr. Mason seconded. Motion passed unopposed.

TREASURER'S REPORT

None

BOARD COMMENTS

None

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

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

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:26pm.

These minutes were approved at the September 23, 2021 meeting of the Board of Directors of ESVBA.



Presiding Officer

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Leah Hoopes, Secretary