

MINUTES

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

February 15, 2022

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 (via zoom) and Leah Hoopes (Secretary)

Members of the public attending were: Larry Breech, Sue Mastyl, Pat Coady

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

AGENDA ADOPTION

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Larry Breech (Doe Crossing) asked if residents were allowed to sign up with a Micro Community after it's been approved.

Sue Mastyl reported that Verizon will be turning off non 4G towers around the world. Ms. Mastyl encouraged the Authority to try and lower the installation costs to customers.

Pat Coady spoke about the need for middle mile funding and installation costs being included in capital costs of future funding. Mr. Coady suggested a survey for the Eastern Shore residents to provide accurate information about coverage in order to succeed in getting funding.

REVIEW OF MINUTES

Ms. Meil moved to approve the Regular Board Meeting Minutes from December. Mr. Kolakowski seconded. Motion passed unopposed.

SYSTEM STATUS & BUILD REPORT

1. WiFi Hotspots- There are currently 27 hotspots in service.
2. Residential Broadband- Mr. Bridgham reported that the Authority has 2,059 active residential customers. He stated that there are 54 customers in service in Harborton, 22 in Bobtown, 73 in Church Neck, 69 in Sanford, 41 on Cheapside, 4 on Cobbs Station, 89 in Accomac, 7 in Townsend, 113 in Greenbackville, 64 in Atlantic, 70 in Wattsville/Horntown, 61 in Oak Hall, 77 in Hallwood, 62 in Painter/Quinby, 56 in Eastville, 74 in Nassawadox, 8 in Oyster, 218 in Exmore, 51 in Belle Haven, 45 in Cheriton, 34 in Wachapreague, 285 in Onancock, 213 in Cape Charles, 139 in Parksley, 5 in Nocks Landing, 37 in Saxis, 6 on Chincoteague, and 82 on Tangier. Mr. Bridgham presented a new report showing the number of turn-ups per month and the average install per month.
3. WISP EVPL Program- Mr. Bridgham informed the BOD that 56 sites are in service, 2 new sites on-order and underway.
4. Microcommunity Program- There are 30 communities that are in service and 4 others that are in various stages of progress. Mr. Mason asked about the criteria for the VATI grant. Mr. Bridgham explained that the Authority came up with an average cost for construction for any resident that exceeded a 300-foot buffer. Also, only a 30% take rate was calculated for the funding. Mr. Mason asked for an update on marketing. Mr. Bridgham reported that the website is constantly being updated, mailers are going out, and there is an interview scheduled with a radio station next week.
5. EBB Program- The program had 68 subscribers in the month of January.
6. CARES projects in Accomack and Northampton-

OLD BUSINESS.

- a. **VATI Grant** - Mr. Bridgham reported that the Authority does not have to rescope the network. They are now working on getting together all the necessary documents to present to the state. Mr. Koala presented the board with information on the grant application process.
- b. **Review FY22 Objectives**- Mr. Bridgham reported that the Authority has had 2 previous interns and they have been

working with Eastern Shore Community College to possibly form an internship program.

Mr. Bridgham explained that the Authority has not been able to ramp up customers as much as expected but we are starting to put more effort into advertising to raise the number of signups. The third objective was to come up with a plan to buildout the shore by 2026, which has been done.

The last objective was to reduce lead times, which has been reduced by nearly 50% since July.

- c. **Staff Compensation Study-** Mr. Bridgham reviewed the study with the board. He stated that if the plan was implemented, there would be an incremental change in payroll of \$47,501 annually.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr. Mason presented the Treasurer's Report. He reported that most of the bond proceeds have been spent and the Authority continues to effectively spend more cash than it's taking in due to construction costs.

Mr. Reiter reported that compared to a year ago, the Authority is doing well with revenue and expenditures. The cash projection in the budget is almost exactly equal to the cash at the end of 2021.

Mr. Bridgham stated that the Authority has had to expand inventory and expenditures in order to stay ahead of the curve.

BOARD COMMENTS

Ms. Meil asked if there is a particular quarter when cash dips and is then recovered.

Mr. Bridgham explained that the \$500k Bond payment is due in November each year.

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, Mr. Kolakowski, 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 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, Mr. Kolakowski, and Ms. Meil and voted affirmative.

ADJOURNMENT

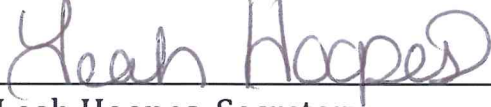
The meeting was adjourned at 3:13pm.

These minutes were approved at the March 24, 2022 meeting of the Board of Directors of ESVBA.



Presiding Officer

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Leah Hoopes, Secretary