

**LOUISA COUNTY BROADBAND AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
LOUISA COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
1 WOOLFOLK AVENUE
LOUISA, VIRGINIA
September 7, 2016 7:00 P.M.**

Present: Melvin Burruss, Steve Duren, Bernie Hill, Mary Johnson, Mark Luttner, Garth Wermter, and Bob Hardy

Absent: Brian Sullivan

Others Present: Christy Monolo, Assistant County Attorney; Stephanie Koren, Mineral District Supervisor; and Fitzgerald Barnes, Patrick Henry District Supervisor

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Wermter called the September 7, 2016 regular meeting of the Broadband Authority (BBA) Board of Directors to order at 7:02 p.m.

Mr. Wermter led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

On the motion of Ms. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Hill, which carried by a vote of 6-0, the Board voted to adopt the September 7, 2016, agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

August 3, 2016- Regular Meeting

It was clarified that several places listed the vote at 6-0 where it should have been listed as 5-0. It was noted that Mr. Luttner was not in attendance at the August 3, 2016 meeting, and that Mr. Sullivan seconded the adjournment of the meeting.

On the motion of Mr. Hill, seconded by Mr. Durren, which carried by a vote 5-0-1, with Ms. Johnson abstaining, the Board approved the August 3rd minutes.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business to discuss.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Discussion Item/Status Update – Contract with Wide Open Networks for Construction of Wireless Network Infrastructure and Ongoing Network Services (Phase I)

Mr. Hill stated that Mr. Massie, Louisa County Procurement Officer, sent Mr. Wermter and Mr. Hill a draft contract for their review. They responded with several questions. The proposed contract was set to expire within a year with possible renewals after that. Mr. Massie explained that was standard operating procedure.

Mr. Hill also questioned whether the Board of Supervisors needed to approve the management consulting contract as it is not a capital project. After speaking with Mr. Goodwin, Mr. Massie reaffirmed that the consulting contract must be submitted to the Board of Supervisors. Mr. Hill stated that Mr. Massie was planning to place the item on the agenda for the September 19, 2016, Board of Supervisors meeting.

Mr. Wermter stated that by Thursday, September 8, 2016, they would be able to finalize the contract details to go before the Board of Supervisors. The Board of Supervisors would be approving the expenditures in order for the Broadband Authority to sign the contract. Mr. Wermter stated that the terms of the contract mimicked what had been previously discussed; the intention was to deliver it to the Authority prior to submitting it to the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Barnes asked when Phase 1 of the contract would be implemented after the contract would be signed. Mr. Wermter stated that Wide Open should implement within the first thirty days. The biggest concern that Wide Open had expressed was that one tower might take longer than another one which Mr. Wermter stated made perfect sense.

Mr. Barnes asked where the first location of Wide Open would be. Mr. Wermter stated that they would all be started simultaneously, although the towers located near airports would take more effort and time. Mr. Barnes stated he had been getting some calls about the location of Reedy Creek and the terrain there. Mr. Wermter stated that is an issue with wireless everywhere as it cannot catch everyone.

Ms. Johnson asked if it was known which locations of towers needed to be relocated. Mr. Wermter stated that portion was deferred until after the Board of Supervisors approved funding as there was no reason to spend \$30,000 on surveys if it was not the will of the County.

Mr. Barnes asked how much the Broadband Authority was asking for. Mr. Wermter stated that the requested amount for project management and construction would be about \$160,000. The remainder would likely be \$1,000,000.00 to follow for different construction firms that will be engaged.

Mr. Hardy asked whether that amount included operations for the year and what operations in subsequent years would be. Mr. Wermter stated that it was currently not known as it depended on how the implementation went. The initial preference would be first-come-first-serve. Mr. Wermter stated that people would be put on either one, three, or five year contracts.

It was asked whether price estimates for ongoing operations would be given. Mr. Wermter stated that that would be appropriate.

Mr. Barnes asked how the relationship with the schools would be impacted as they just re-upped with Verizon. Mr. Wermter stated that it could still be accommodated.

Mr. Hardy stated a correction as the schools had not re-upped with Verizon; they simply had not chosen the proposed RFP and had one remaining year on a five year contract with Verizon. He stated that they were planning to re-do an RFP process in the fall of 2016 for the following year's analysis and approval in the spring of 2017. Mr. Hardy stated he believed they wanted to clarify a little more what they were looking for in terms of technology.

Mr. Barnes suggested each member reach out to their Board of Supervisors representatives in order to keep them up-to-date on the project.

Mr. Wermter stated that the Broadband Authority would be presenting to the Board of Supervisors on September 19, 2016 at 6 p.m., and he encouraged Authority members to attend to show support.

Discussion Item/Status Update – Letter to Rappahannock Electric Cooperative

Mr. Wermter stated that the letter would be mailed to Rappahannock Electric Cooperative on Thursday, September 8, 2016.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were none.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

CHAIRMAN/GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Wermter stated that he would like each of the committees that were discussed several months ago to be revisited and see how each of the committees could be used to leverage the current status of the project, especially with the anticipation that the Board of Supervisors would be approving soon. Mr. Wermter named specifically the PR Committee, ISP Outreach Committee, and others.

Mr. Luttner stated that he had reached out to the Spotsylvania County Cable Telecommunications Commission. He stated that they had been around for quite a while and that their charter was similar to Louisa County's, but that their emphasis was on telecable tv expansion. He stated that they run into the same sorts of issues that Louisa County is faced with. The city of Fredericksburg has great coverage, but the rest of the county does not.

Mr. Luttner stated that the Spotsylvania County Administrator made a strong pitch for making the Belmont Ruritan Club and Belmont Club of Women's building that is co-owned to be used as a county library. They offered to extend the fiber to the Belmont building and have county library staff staff the building one week night per week in order to provide internet access to county residents. This would allow the opportunity to see what the public reaction would be and to possibly expanding to more nights. It was proposed that Spotsylvania County would run the fiber, install the switch, and have librarians provide laptops to interested citizens. Mr. Luttner stated that this was a good example of a county trying to find a solution to provide internet to citizens in a rural community.

Mr. Wermter asked whether there was any opportunity for Louisa County to be able to work with Spotsylvania County, especially in the northeastern portion of the County. Mr. Luttner stated that he had not worked with them long enough to know if this was possible. He stated that Spotsylvania had similar difficulties with getting the school system to join hands with the county. Each Spotsylvania school is run by the principal and senior staff of the building in terms of opening the school building to residents to gain access to internet. By in-large, Mr. Luttner stated that Spotsylvania principals are not willing to do this.

Mr. Wermter stated that it is a matter of collective power. The letter to Rappahannock Electric Cooperative would be intended to facilitate discussion and get the ball rolling on items that were six to nine months out.

WEBSITE UPDATES

Mr. Wermter asked Mr. Hardy whether the maps had been added to the website. Mr. Hardy stated that there were maps on the website and that he needed to add new minutes to the website.

FINAL COMMENTS

Mr. Luttner stated that one of the County's small wireless providers was IWISP and that their services had deteriorated over the last couple of months, and that people were thinking about going back to a Verizon "air-card". Mr. Luttner stated that they had not heard from the company other than that they were working on the issue.

Ms. Koren stated that services with IWISP had actually improved in the past few weeks. Mr. Luttner stated that he only brought up this issue as an example of something that should be anticipated with small companies providing service for the project.

Mr. Durren stated that there had been administrative issues expressed in the past when the small company had tried to provide service in Louisa County specifically. However, Mr. Wermter stated that this was a separate issue and that the Authority was interested in a business relationship.

NEXT MEETING

The next Broadband Authority meeting will take place on Wednesday, October 5, 2016, at 7:00 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

On the motion of Mr. Hill, seconded by Ms. Johnson, which carried by a vote of 6-0, the Board voted to adjourn the September 7, 2016, regular meeting at approximately 7:46 p.m.

BY ORDER OF:

GARTH WERMTER, CHAIRMAN
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
LOUISA COUNTY BROADBAND AUTHORITY