

**LOUISA COUNTY BROADBAND AUTHORITY  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
LOUISA COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING  
1 WOOLFOLK AVENUE  
LOUISA, VIRGINIA  
AUGUST 5, 2015  
7:00 P.M.**

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

Others Present: Christian Goodwin, County Administrator; Bob Hardy, Information Technology Director; Stephanie Koren, Board of Supervisors, Mineral District; Fitzgerald Barnes, Board of Supervisors, Patrick Henry District; and Sandra Robinson, County Attorney

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**CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Burruss called the August 5, 2015, regular meeting of the Broadband Authority (BBA) Board of Directors to order at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Burruss led the invocation, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT OF THE AGENDA**

On the motion of Mr. Hill, seconded by Mr. Wermter, which carried by a vote of 6-0, the Board approved the August 5, 2015, agenda as amended

- Added the presentation by Eastern Shore ; and
- Discussion of internship for the BBA.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**July 7, 2015**

On the motion of Mr. Hill, seconded by Ms. Johnson, which carried by a vote of 6-0-1, with Mr. Wermter abstaining, the Board approved the minutes of the July 7, 2015, meeting.

**July 15, 2015**

On the motion of Mr. Hill, seconded by Ms. Johnson, which carried by a vote of 7-0, the Board approved the minutes of the July 15, 2015, meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS**

## **Presentation – Nick Paskeretti, Eastern Shore**

Mr. Paskeretti, with Eastern Shore Broadband Authority, presented the technology and analysis of Eastern Shore's model which included the following:

- Public Authority formed in 2008;
- Overview of operation as a utility not regulated by the FCC;
- Initial use of seed money from Appomattox and North Hampton Counties for operational costs in the amount of \$266,000.00;
- Additional use of Economic Development Agency (EDA) and Department of Housing Community Development (DHCD) grant funding in addition to NASA appropriations;
- Approximate population of 30,000 citizens;
- Explanation of startup costs of approximately \$8,000,000.00;
- General Assembly and Wireless Act allows BBA's to provide any service with the exception of cable television;
- No obligation payback for \$266,000.00 from the two counties, final payment will be made December 2015;
- Cash flow positive in year 3;
- Consumers complained of high prices;
- Lowered rates in last two years by 35% for internet and 20% for transport access;
- First and largest customer was Virginia Beach Schools;
- Operational costs;
- Product offers sold are Ethernet and SONA transport and Dedicated internet;
- Explanation of school connection and transport;
- Listed current customers including NASA, Virginia Beach Schools, Appomattox hospitals and healthcare facilities, Community Service Boards and Government Facilities;
- Largest source of revenue is Wholesale;
- Largest customer is Cox Communications;
- Reviewed sales plan;
- National carriers included Cox, Windstream, and Level Three;
- Explained methods of cost management;
- Recommended cost preparation for expansion and network change out; and
- Implement product flexibility to sell what customers request.

Questions and comments were presented by the BBA in regards to the following, which were addressed by Mr. Paskeretti:

- Usage of initial grant funding;
- Explained experience and background;
- Clarified project startup;
- Plan to run BBA was not initially intended;
- Explained relationship difficulties and pluses;
- Justified one set price for all customers;
- Addressed concerns of access to all school enrolled children;
- Explained difficulties to provide service residentially due to sparse population;

- Types of coverage currently provided to residents;
- Breakdown of cost to customers;
- Explained revenue from wholesale transport;
- Breakdown of use and leasing of cell towers;
- Description of initial payback period included no obligation;
- Whether school involvement would have stalled the project;
- Relationship and arrangement with power company; and
- Costs of Ariel transport and poll agreement.

The BBA thanked Mr. Paskeretti for the presentation.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Joann Hickman, Louisa District, noted concerns regarding available grant funding and lack of residential service and feels that North Hampton’s model does not fit well with Louisa County’s. She also noted the geographical differences between North Hampton and Louisa which has allowed the Eastern Shore to serve Cox, NASA, and NOAH. Ms. Hickman also stated that she does not feel this would accomplish what the original initiative was all about.

Brian Gilbreth, Town of Louisa District, shared information to the BBA regarding a recent RFP bid for a repair line and response which may be useful information.

John Taylor, Louisa District, asked the BBA when the information presented tonight and recent contractor’s proposal would be available for public review. Mr. Burruss and Mr. Hardy confirmed the consultant’s report has been posted on the website.

Mr. Taylor questioned the BBA in regards to what was proposed for next year. The BBA declined to answer during the Public Comment period.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Discussion - Feedback from the August 3, 2015, Board of Supervisors Meeting**

Mr. Sullivan reported the update was effectively presented to the Board of Supervisors and due to ERate Funding the BBA was in a holding pattern and described an overview of the presentation.

Mr. Burruss asked Mr. Barnes for comments regarding the Board of Supervisors position. Mr. Barnes noted the Board of Supervisors was waiting to move forward due to recommendations, future budget, and the information presented.

Further discussion ensued between the members regarding North Hampton’s model, service area and prices.

Mr. Burruss inquired about the information presented to the BOS regarding the Jefferson Area Planning District Committee (JAPDC) which were addressed by Mr. Sullivan, Mr. Hardy, and Mr. Goodwin regarding:

- JAPDC in comparison to Louisa; and
- Utilizing the JAPDC as a viable resource for grant funding.

### **Discussion – Internship for the BBA**

Ms. Johnson presented to the BBA that it was recommended to hire an Intern to compile information on existing towers and capability. Ms. Johnson distributed a temporary contract for internship to include potential grant writing the BBA for review. Ms. Johnson requested feedback from the members.

Questions and comments were presented in regards to the follow:

- Whether to have an intern possessing an Undergrad Degree or pursuing one;
- Plan for funding if available;
- Concerns if legally an unpaid internship could be offered;
- Recommendation of advertising as a benefit for the county; and
- Whether it is feasible to advertise as unpaid then possibly paid if needed.

### **Discussion – Engagement of Design Nine for completion of the plan**

Mr. Burruss noted due to presentation by North Hampton as well as the need for funding, it is recommended to incorporate someone to locate the funds necessary to move forward. Mr. Burruss requested of the members, research on the USDA grant, Connect America and World access funding.

Questions and comments were present in regards to the following:

- Clarification if cost were attached to proposed service;
- Design Nine requested implementing the first 6 month extension to the contract with the rate used in the initial contact period;
- Concerns of working with an open ended contract;
- Recommendation of Dr. Cohill to aid with grant research and writing;
- Whether the BBA was satisfied with the work completed by Dr. Cohill;
- Concerns remained regarding funding and grants;
- Recommendation to approach the Board of Supervisors to allocate funding;
- Proposal to present to the Board of Supervisors for funding for a Project Manager;
- Suggestion to issue an RFP approaching multiple consultants then select appropriate plan for Louisa County; and
- Recommendation to extend the Design Nine contract without commitment to work or dollar amount.

One the motion of Ms. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Sullivan, which carried by a vote of 7-0, The BBA approved the concept of obtaining the services of a temporary acting Project Manager with Mr. Sullivan, Mr. Goodwin, Mr. Barnes, and Mr. Koren to work with Human Resources.

One the motion of Mr. Wermter, seconded by Mr. Sullivan, which carried by a vote of 7-0, The BBA approved to extend existing contract with Design Nine for the term of 6 months with no commitment of additional funding unless work is performed and hourly rates are that in existing contract.

**WEBSITE UPDATES**

No updates at this time.

**ADJOURNMENT**

On the motion of Mr. Wermter, seconded by Ms. Johnson, which carried by a vote of 7-0, the Board voted to adjourn the August 5, 2015, work session at approximately 9:00 p.m.

BY ORDER OF:

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MELVIN BURRUSS, CHAIRMAN  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
LOUISA COUNTY BROADBAND AUTHORITY