

MATHEWS BROADBAND ADVISORY BOARD 24 NOVEMBER 2020 9:00 AM ZOOM MEETING

Present: Judy Rowe, Rob Quartel, Cynthia Hayes, Chuck Huntley, Greg Lewis, Michael Anthony, Willie Love, Joe Syslo, Donna Givens, Dee Russell, Donnie Lewis, Amy Dubois, Jackie Ingram, Mindy Conner, Julie Kaylor, Thomas Jenkins, Jeff Beekhoo, Tyler Beekhoo, Elizabeth Tollis, Deborah Falco, Sherry Hamilton

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by the Chair.

The Chair read the minutes in the absence of Barbara VanOver. They were approved as read.

Old Business:

Tyler reported that Mathews was in the top five for receiving the \$15,000.00 International City/County Management Association, ICMA , BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE grant. It will be awarded Friday.

Melissa Mason and Tyler will attend.

The BAB and BTS will present From Luxury to Necessity: Bridging the Digital Divide on Thursday, 19 November at 7:00 PM in the MHS auditorium and live on Facebook. Jeff Beekhoo and his staff have put together a program of speakers who will address exciting ideas and technologies that are possible for Mathews County. Representatives from Segra and AT&T Firstnet are of key interest. Masks and social distancing will be required.

Amy Dubois reported that the BOS had approved a special fund for revenue coming from and for broadband in Mathews.

Governor's \$30M Broadband Offer will be applied by Jeff and Tyler. We will pursue the use of Smart Poles and the lending of Mifis with antennae through our library. All must be in hand and operational by 25 December.

Julie Kaylor reported on a meeting with ABB about serviceability and the need for help to navigate their system to get service. She reported that a meeting with Sean Brushett was very productive and he had followed up with an offer to partner with us to troubleshoot why potential customers were repeatedly being told they couldn't get service only to find out later that they could. They will use Mathews to test a program they will set up to help with this issue.

New Business:

Jeff Beekhoo reported on the development of the overall plan that Broadband Telecom Services is preparing for the county. He noted that we would have a draft at the beginning of December and the final version by 12/31/20.

The Chair asked for volunteer help in reviewing the By-Laws in light of virtual meetings and the continuously changing environment for meetings.

The Chair asked about the many locations in the county with no address and if that should be remedied. Thomas Jenkins noted that large tracts of land could not really have addresses unless broken into lots. Future proofing is a concept coming out of conversations with Planning and Zoning and with ABB. The question remains how to account for vacant lots in trying to assure the future broadband service to them.

Telehealth stakeholders will meet to brainstorm ideas: Rob Quartel, Donna Givens, Glenda Burroughs. Christian Wathen, M.D. has agreed to meet with us to share her perspective.

The Chair is trying to put together a group of stakeholders to brainstorm possibilities for alternative funding for broadband expansion.

Next meeting: 24 November at 9:00 AM.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Judy Rowe on behalf of Barbara VanOver