



**MATHEWS BROADBAND ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
4 MAY 2021 9AM - 10AM on ZOOM**

MINUTES

Present: Rob Quartel, Judy Rowe, Jeff Beekhoo, Pearl Foster, Sherry Hamilton, Julie Kaylor, Amy Dubois, Joe Syslo, Dee Russell, Carole Steele, Nancy Welch

MINUTES: Judy Rowe distributed Minutes from the 4/20/21 meeting by email. Judy asked for a motion to approve the Minutes as presented. Rob Quartel made a motion to approve the Minutes as presented, and the motion was seconded by Dee Russell. The motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS: Updates

VATI Grant with Atlantic Broadband - David Blanks (point-of-contact for ABB) was not available for an update. Judy reported that David made a good point about the VATI Grant: this is an 18 month project, 3 phase (contractual, engineering, and build-out). We are presently in the contractual phase. You will see folks around the county taking measurements for the contractual phase. Julie Kaylor is pleased with the lead that ABB is taking getting information out and she referenced the latest press release from ABB. Judy noted our Management Team will be monitoring and bringing back reports to BBA.

Signs - Dee Russell reported she has cancelled the order with the previous company because they were not communicating effectively and complained of not having stock available. Dee has since ordered the signs from another company with a slightly more expensive cost. She has been able to track this order and anticipates receiving the signs by the end of this week. Dee noted she has heard a rumor of an investment company developing property behind the Get and Zip Store (FasMart) on route 198, and she suggest we monitor this because it might have an impact on what BBA is trying to do in the county. Dee asked Jeff Beekhoo how often the Smart Poles are being monitored, and Jeff responded the management system he uses checks every two days. Jeff noted that he received a notice from AT&T telling him they are deactivating the sim cards in the poles and are sending new ones for use. Jeff noted he attended a wireless show in Texas and he learned about new, cool things being done in other rural areas. He anticipates the cost analysis should be completed in the next two weeks.

NEW BUSINESS:

Stakeholder Focus Groups:

Public Schools (Digital Literacy) Judy shared with the group about two public school stakeholder focus group meetings she attended and the brainstorming definitely took place (lots of great ideas were obtained). Nancy Welch shared that the conversation centered on "imagine this" (imagine leveraging our community assets for instruction: i.e. using school buses and the school buildings outside of school time for everything that is broadband). Judy noted she will be

working with Greg Lewis to organize the ideas that came from the two meetings, including internship or service opportunities for high school students and graduation requirements. Joe Syslo shared the focus group meetings worked out pretty well and he has plenty of notes. Judy thanked Joe for facilitating and providing the structure for the meetings.

Telemedicine - Donna Dittman Hale, Bay Rivers Telemedicine – Judy noted that Rob Quartel and Donna Givens have been very involved in these discussions. It has been suggested that Donna Dittman Hale of Bay Rivers Telemedicine Alliance be invited to speak to this group, and Judy is in the process of extending that invitation.

VATI Grant with Open Broadband - Carol Steele, Acting Gloucester County Administrator, suggested calling this fixed wireless. Carole shared that this group is working similarly, but with one exception, the other group has franchise agreements with ABB, and this presents a slight hurdle to jump. In this case, Open Broadband is a brand new business to Virginia and this group is the pilot program. Carol stated they are now in the discussion phase. They are using the Gloucester county tower for the VATI grant and because this is a county asset, public hearing must take place. Carol will be at the Gloucester County Board of Supervisor's meeting tonight requesting the public hearing be held on June 1, 2021. This meeting will be the public hearing and adoption of the contract (drafts of the contracts will go out to Board members prior to the June 1st meeting). The deadline for the fixed wireless to the state is July 5, 2021. Carole is looking at making the second Monday of the month the standing meeting date for the Team. Carole will confirm this with Judy. The only thing she anticipates will need to be done this fiscal year is to ask permission to have the engineering evaluation of the tower. For Mathews, the existing tower owner (Arts Crown) is being contacted and negotiations will take place for renting use of the tower. Other important things to know: not all 313 households that will be served by this grant will know how to access the Internet and receive proper training. Carol wants to survey residents in Gloucester County and suggests Mathews does the same thing (a Robo call announcement and survey). The survey will ask residents do they want the service and what type of help do they need. Carole noted that on Gloucester's website, there is a link that takes you to a press release that includes a map of the areas (Gloucester and Mathews) that will be included in the VATI grant project, and she suggest Mathews does something similar.

Next Steps - Jeff Beekhoo reported a meeting tomorrow of the Mathews Broadband Advisory Board Management Team at Jeff's office in Kilmarnock at 1:30 pm.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Carol noted the Treasury Department is supposed to have their ruling on the billions of dollars for broadband by May 11, 2021. Carole has held the first VATI Stakeholders meeting and will do a second today.

Rob Quartel suggested we list criteria that keeps us from being eligible for certain grants. This list can hopefully be presented to Congress in the form of attachments to major bills. Rob suggested that he and Joe Syslo talk with Julie Kaylor to pursue this further.

ADJOURN: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

CALENDAR:

BAB Meeting: 18 MAY 2021 9:00 AM

BOS Meeting: 24 MAY 2021 6:00 PM at Harry Ward Auditorium in person

BAB Meeting: 1 JUNE 2021 9:00 AM

BAB Meeting: 15 JUNE 2021 9:00 AM

BOS Meeting: 22 JUNE 2021 6:00 PM at Harry Ward Auditorium in person

THERE ARE 5 TUESDAYS IN JUNE: no meeting 29 June!