



## MATHEWS BROADBAND ADVISORY BOARD MEETING 6 JULY 2021 9AM - 10AM on ZOOM

### MINUTES

**Present:** Judy Rowe, Rob Quartel, Nancy Welch, Jeff Beekhoo, Tyler Beekhoo, Michael Anthony, Amy Dubois, Dee Russell, Willie Love, Joe Syslo, Debbie Falco, Sherry Hamilton, Julie Kaylor, David Blanks, Donnie Lewis and Cynthia Hayes

**MINUTES:** Judy noted the June 15, 2021 Meeting Minutes were emailed to members for review. Judy asked for a motion to accept the Minutes as presented. Rob Quartel made a motion to accept the Minutes as presented, and Nancy Welch seconded the motion. The motion carried.

### OLD BUSINESS:

- Report from BOS Meeting – Jeff Beekhoo reported the BOS decided to continue moving forward with phase 3 of the strategic plan, start identifying grants to get the rest of the unserved households served, and to extend the contract with Broadband Telecom Services.

### Updates:

- VATI Grants with ABBand OBB – Julie Kaylor thinks we need to review the project management plan. There is a scheduled meeting for Thursday with ABB and OBB to finalize the plans before the July 14, 2021 deadline for submitting to VATI. Jeff suggested waiting until he, Judy, and David Blanks have an opportunity to discuss moving Mathews to the last activation before giving an approval on timelines.
- Radio System – Willie Love reported that contracts are signed and Harris has applied for the license for the frequency.
- Signs and Website – Dee Russell reported the website will be run by the county. Dee will continue to do everything through Facebook. Plans are to install the signs on Thursday or Friday of this week, depending on the weather. Judy noted an increase in the use of the SMART Poles (including Atlantic Broadband workers). Dee Russell asked Judy to take photos of business trucks and send them to her for use in advertising.
- MiFis To Go – Greg is not available this morning, but Nancy Welch shared that she and Michael Anthony were able to figure out a “work-around” in order to use the school division’s subscription for summer learning (summer school). She has also been looking at new E rate guidelines for libraries and public schools and for applying for additional funding to support the WiFis for future usage.

### NEW BUSINESS:

- GoVA: Workforce Development projects & funding - Judy noted Rob Quartel has encouraged BBA to pursue GoVA grants and several conversations have taken place with Jennifer Morgan at GoVA. Judy, Joe Syslo, and David Blanks have attended several of the GoVA webinars. The focus is on the workforce development part and what BBA can possibly do to bring business to Main Street. This ties into BBA with technology and home-based businesses. Rob stated one of the purposes of GoVa is to encourage counties in the region to work together. Judy's goal is to get the right people together to look at the GoVA project and funding. Rob noted he cannot be involved in this effort because of his service on the GoVA board.
- Digital Literacy: Judy shared that she and Jeff have been talking about lagging behind in going public with digital literacy, but it will be more timely as things roll out. Judy noted people will need digital literacy as more people are connected.
- Market Days, Main Street Markets?, Triad Senior Fair? Judy wants to start this summer with displays and information booths. We (BAB) are registered for Market Days. Contact has been made with Markets on Main, but they are not sure they want information booths (Judy is waiting a response). Judy has spoken with Alice Stewart about the Triad Senior Fair. Judy asked members to please share any ideas they have regarding going public/giving information on how to access the new technology. Dee Russell noted that information booths have always been approved for Farmer's Market.
- Meeting Schedule for remainder of 2021: Judy is working on securing meeting places for the remainder of 2021. She noted that while Zoom has been a successful meeting platform, we need to meet in person and be able to include people who are unable to attend the daytime Zoom meetings. Judy suggests one Zoom meeting and one in-person meeting per month. Judy has received approval from the Rescue Squad for meeting and is waiting a response from Ms. Dillehay for using the Library. Send Judy your suggestions. It is Judy's goal that the in-person meetings be hybrid. Jeff, Rob, and Greg will discuss how this can be accomplished.
- Planning for the two towers: Judy noted we have the approval of the Board of Supervisors, the plan to move forward, Broadband Telecom Services contracted for 12 months (with the option for an additional six months), and now ready to take the big step forward, Judy stated this will require careful management (planning for the two towers and securing grants). Judy noted that Jeff suggested pursuing the VATI grant and the American Rescue Plan (ARP) grant funding. Jeff advises that we make the decision asap if we are going to pursue VATI grant funding for one tower and ARP grant funding for the other tower. After the BAB Board discusses and decides, this will need to be presented to the Board of Supervisors. Jeff noted the next VATI grant will soon be available, and we need to decide if we are going to pursue the VATI grant with ABB at the next BAB meeting.

\*FYI - Judy noted that ABB has released the Emergency Broadband funding and are promoting this on their website, as well as the Internet Assist program.

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

**CALENDAR:**

BAB Meeting: 20 JULY 2021 9:00 AM on Zoom

BOS Meeting: **WEDNESDAY**, 28 JULY 2021 6:00 PM at Harry Ward Auditorium in person  
**August - December 2021 TBD**