



**MATHEWS BROADBAND ADVISORY BOARD  
MEETING  
20 JULY 2021 9AM - 10AM on ZOOM  
MINUTES**

Present: Judy Rowe, Rob Quartel, Jeff Beekhoo, Nancy Welch, Joe Syslo, Dee Russell, Willie Love, Julie Kaylor, Greg Lewis, David Blanks, Michael Anthony, and Michael Lesinak.

**OPENING:** Chairperson Judy Rowe opened the meeting by welcoming guest Chris Mitchell with Segra and listing three topics that need to be addressed early in the meeting, as several members need to leave the meeting.

Jeff began the discussion by introducing his work with Segra to get back haul to the area which is necessary for connecting schools, county buildings, and gain backhaul to the towers. He noted the analysis completed was based on pricing going down when you have backhaul. To provide information on backhaul services, Jeff introduced Chris Mitchell of Segra to explain what they can offer. Chris Mitchell, the government and education account executive for Segra, noted he has been in discussions with leadership regarding high bandwidth backhaul in the Middle Peninsula area as a best way to serve underserved communities. Chris stated that Segra is committed to working with Mathews to make this happen. Jeff noted this will take the regional effort to use the Transatlantic cables and connect this area, giving Mathews (and other Middle Peninsula counties) a point of presence. Jeff noted this is important to economic growth. Nancy Welch noted the positive impact this will have on budgeting for Mathews County Public Schools, as the division pays high costs for broadband at the present, and this gives her hope. Chris noted that high-capacity not only impacts costs, but it will impact the ability to better support the schools. Willie Love asked Chris for a schematic for what it would cost to get backhaul into Mathews and take it to Gloucester and Middlesex. Chris, -“this is doable, as a lot of the studies have already been done.” Jeff noted about 80 percent of what Willie is requesting has already been done.

Judy noted we need to vote on the following:

**Building Two Towers** - Judy called for a motion to use the American Rescue Funds plan to build the towers. Nancy Welch motioned that we request the American Rescue Plan fund to build the two towers. Dee Russell seconded the motion. Nancy called for discussion. Judy shared the Tower Build Costs, based on Mindy Conner’s recommendation. Rob asked what contributed to the change in amounts, and Jeff responded it was the costs of materials. Joe noted a 20% contingency is high for government contracting and asked how this figure came about. Jeff noted the contingency is a part of the figure, and Joe advised that needs to be noted in the costs. Julie suggested including a “not to exceed figure” and this should not go into a capital improvement fund, but rather a broadband fund. Julie asked Jeff has he approached Gloucester and

Middlesex counties regarding contributing, as this is being deemed a regional project. Jeff responded it needs to be clear that if this is a regional effort, then there will need to be clarification because there are no requirements for matching funds. Nancy Welch amended her motion to request American Rescue Plan funds to build the two towers with a contingency plan not to exceed \$678,000 with a breakout of the 20% contingency. The vote on the first amendment to include the contingency passed. The vote on the second amendment not to exceed the \$678,554 passed. The motion to take this all to the Board of Supervisors passed.

**Pursue the VATI Grant** - Rob Quartel made the motion that we request approval from the Board of Supervisors to pursue the VATI grant to provide fixed wireless equipment on the towers with repeater poles and backhaul to the towers. Nancy Welch seconded the motion. Joe asked if the equipment cost is above the equipment costs in the Tower Build Costs. Jeff responded yes it is. Joe suggested a better description of the equipment. The motion passed.

**The Governor's \$700 Million for Broadband** - The BAB voted unanimously to request approval from the Board of Supervisors to pursue the \$700,000,000 broadband funding.

**MINUTES:** Judy noted the July 6, 2021 Meeting Minutes were emailed to members for review. Judy asked for a motion to accept the Minutes as presented. Joe Syslo made a motion to accept the Minutes as presented, and Greg Lewis seconded the motion. The motion carried.

#### **OLD BUSINESS: Updates**

VATI Grant with ABB - Judy reported this all in process (the walkout and design is completed, the equipment for the technology expansion hub has been ordered, outside plant and construction materials are being ordered). Everything has been submitted to the state and we are awaiting the contract finalization.

VATI Grant with OBB - They are finalizing the details in preparation for the July 14th deadline.

Radio System - Willie reported all the paperwork in submitted, Harris Radio is ordering the equipment to be shipped, and we are on schedule.

Signs and Website - Dee Russell had to leave the meeting.

MiFis To Go - Greg Lewis reported everything is going well. The library's MiFis are usually all checked out, and the schools' MiFis are typically half checked out. Greg reported the Library will be using the ARP funding (Emergency Connectivity fund) to extend service for six months through June 2022. They are also looking to expand the number of MiFi units (20-25 additional). Greg anticipates they will be purchasing laptops and tablets for circulation.

Smart Poles - Judy reported her neighbor needs to consult with his surgeon in Florida and Judy is going out to show him the Smart Pole. These stories continue to come up every day;

**NEW BUSINESS:**

GoVA: Judy noted that Ken Noonan, Assistant Principal THMS was able to present his plans for introducing students to workplace development and problem-based learning in a webinar meeting with the presidents of RCC and Germanna Community College.

Meeting Schedule for remainder of 2021:

**AUGUST BAB Meetings Proposal:**

**Tuesday, 3 August 2021 9:00 AM on Zoom**

**Tuesday, 17 August 2021 at MM Library - Hybrid Meeting**

**10:00 AM**

**ADJOURN** There being no further business, Joe Syslo moved the meeting be adjourned.

**CALENDAR:**

**PLEASE NOTE CHANGE -**

**BOS Meeting: WEDNESDAY, 28 JULY 2021 6:00 PM**  
at MHS Auditorium in person