

Broadband Advisory Committee Minutes **9/12/2019**

Attendees:

Robert Hiss (County Administrator), Allen Boaz (Broadband Advisory Committee), Traci Blido (County Econ Dev. Dir.), John Barret (The Atlantic Group), Anthony Smith (Blue Ridge Towers), Robert Smith (Blue Ridge Towers), Sean Cai (Blue Ridge Towers), Warner Hall (Brisnet), Clare Novak (Blue Ridge Towers), Andy Dooley (BoS), Ed Hoisington (BCPS), Greg Modzelewski (Broadband Advisory Committee), Darrell Campbell (Broadband Advisory Committee), Lee Walker (Broadband Advisory Committee), Edgar Tuck (BoS), William Guzek (Broadband Advisory Committee), Kevin Mele (Broadband Advisory Committee), and Eric Williams (Brisnet)

Allen called the meeting to order, welcomed everyone, and turned the meeting over to Robert for a county update. Robert indicated that there was no challenge on the landfill tower and it has been approved. Shentel requested the county submit a VATI grant at the last minute this past week to address two areas. Traci worked with Shentel to get the VATI grant submitted for Twin Lakes and West Crossing subdivisions in Bedford County. Shentel is providing the grant match. Please see county broadband website for the presentation Traci presented to the Broadband Authority which, in turn, approved the grant request. Traci is also working with Comcast to get paid invoices processed for grant reimbursements. This effort has its challenges as Comcast is redacting parts of the supporting documents that support their receipts.

Anthony introduced Clara Novak, a new Blue Ridge Towers (BRT) employee. He then went over BRT's status report. Please see his posted status report for details. He indicated all tower development is complete, except for one site, Landfill, and is ready to start construction. A new ring will be added to the New London water tower. Boonsboro construction is planned to start on Sept. 24. He plans to complete tower construction in 90 days and will be building four towers at a time. He has completed the contracts with T-Mobile and U.S. Cellular to go on the Big Island towers and is in the final phase to completing a contract with a carrier on the Boonsboro tower.

In order to build one of the towers in Big Island, Georgia Pacific sold to the county a parcel of land at market rate. It should be noted that Georgia Pacific does not normally sell land they own and has been very helpful in working with the county on this project.

An issue still remains with the BRWA as it relates to the contract and the county will need to address this.

Anthony asked what the status on SCS is. Robert indicated that the county is addressing this and he will getting back to him on this.

Lee raised the question as to who will build/pay for the estimated 23 to 30 mini-pops that will be needed. A few meetings back, George indicated the cost would be about \$25,000 each. Anthony believes this could be lowered. It is the hope, that grants will help to offset this cost. This effort will happen in phase II of the project, as the cost of building of the mini-pops was not part of the original contract with BRT and currently there is no funding from the county for this. BRT will prepare all the paperwork for the easements needed. It's recommended that the county hold the easements.

No one has responded to the tower management RFP. Anthony indicated Blue Ridge Towers had it in their proposal to build the towers and asked about next steps.

County Broadband Website can be found at:

<https://www.bedfordcountyva.gov/boards-commissions/broadband-authority>

Next meeting will be held October 10th at 10 a.m., again in the Main Floor Training Room in the Bedford County Administration building.

###