



County of Augusta
Internet Initiative (Broadband Committee)
PO Box 590
Verona, VA 24482

Thursday, March 24, 2022 7:00 pm

MINUTES

PRESENT: Mr. Lawhorne, Chairman, Riverheads District
Mr. Henderson, Vice-Chairman, Pastures District
Mr. Powell, Middle River District
Mr. Carter, South River District
Ms. Whetzel, Deputy County Administrator

ABSENT: Ms. Thornton, North River District
Mr. Kirby, Wayne District
Vacant, Beverly Manor District
Ms. Carter, Board of Supervisors Liaison
Ms. Kiracofe, Asst. Superintendent for Instruction & Technology

VIRGINIA: At the regular meeting of the Augusta County Internet Initiative (Broadband Committee) held on Thursday, March 24, 2022 at 7:00 pm in person.

Call to Order

Meeting started at 7:00pm. A quorum was present.

Adoption of the Minutes

Minutes of the February 24, 2022 meeting were approved.

Comments by the Public

Mr. Gordon read prepared remarks, expressing concerns over the need for broadband in the County, lack of information on the VATI2022 project and need for updated minutes on the website. Mr. Lawhorne explained the VATI grant process. Mr. Henderson noted that rural electrification would be an example of what is needed for buildout of rural broadband services.

Special Presentations

None

Matters to be Presented by Sub-Committees

The Committee reiterated concerns over the VATI2022 process including review of the agreements and public notifications.

Matters to be Presented by Staff

Ms. Whetzel provided an update on the VATI 2021 grant that is under construction by MGW/Lingo Networks. Fiber construction continued in four smaller areas in McDowell. Overhead installation is underway in Morris Mill and the provider is sending notices to areas to be constructed next. The main copper artery in Deerfield has been upgraded to fiber. Much of downtown Deerfield is already served by broadband via DSL so those passings are not included in the below figure. Permits were submitted to Dominion for 150 poles in the Middlebrook area. The provider has created project pages on their website with the URL noted on door hangers and other direct marketing materials. A more formal press release

will be created. Below is a summary of work to date. Please note that milestones are set on two month increments, so therefore the passings will be updated every other month.

Project Area	Total Passings	Passings to Date 12/31
McDowell	235	106
Morris Mill	288	94
Deerfield	508	143
Middlebrook	142	
Total	1173	343
% Completed		29%

Total Project Budget: \$1,814,876

Spent to Date \$518,739

Grant to Date \$363,117

Locality Funds to Date \$62,249

Provider Funds to Date \$93,373

Ms. Whetzel reviewed the VATI 2022 Project Communications Plan provided by the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission and All Points Broadband. This is a new requirement set forth by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). Ms. Whetzel reviewed the VATI 2022 CNR timeline. The Commission is working on draft contracts for the project as shown in the Regional Broadband Project Management Workflow. The deadline to return the required documents to DHCD is May 5, 2022.

The Committee is interested in building a map that shows providers in the County. Ms. Whetzel provided information to the Committee on the development of a Broadband Availability Map by the State. Roll out is estimated to be this spring. The wired.virginia.gov website allows access to a current map and a cable and fiber map was provided for review. This may be a resource to map Augusta households served by incumbent providers. FCC data is also available and the FCC is working to better structure the reporting for the maps. VATI and CARES projects can also be mapped. Survey data can be used to confirm areas served. Economic Development will have an intern that can work on this project.

Mr. Comes is retiring from Comcast and the new contact will be Matt Shiffermiller, Director of Franchising. Comcast sent a notification that they are increasing internet speeds in the Beltway area (Virginia noted as part) and the Affordable Connectivity Program will have additional ways for customers to connect via Internet Essentials Plus or Xfinity Mobile.

Matters to be Presented by the Committee

None

Old Business

A copy of the 2022 meeting schedule was distributed with room assignments.

New Business

None

Adjournment

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be April 28, 2022 at 7pm in the South Board Room. With no further discussion by the committee, the meeting adjourned.