

A regular meeting of the Albemarle County Broadband Authority was held on April 24, 2019, at 5:00 p.m., in Room 235 of the County Office Building, McIntire Road, Charlottesville, Virginia.

PRESENT: Mr. Bucky Walsh, Mr. Mike Culp, Ms. Liz Palmer, Mr. Rick Randolph, Mr. Waldo Jaquith, Mr. Bill Fritz

ABSENT:

Also Present: Mr. Richard DeLoria (Senior Assistant County Attorney)

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Agenda Item No. 1. Establish Quorum and Call to Order.

Mr. Walsh established a quorum and called the meeting to order.

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Agenda Item No. 2 Approval of Agenda

Mr. Randolph **moved** to accept the agenda.

The agenda was **approved** by a unanimous vote.

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Agenda Item No. 3 Approval of February 27, March 5 and March 27, 2019 Minutes

Mr. Culp **moved** to approve the minutes with changes to Item 6b of the February 27 minutes to note that the Thomas Jefferson Planning District is involved in the broadband topic.

The minutes were **approved** unanimously.

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Agenda Item No. 4 Public Comment

Michael Geister thanked Mr. Culp for his response to his email.

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Agenda Item No. 5 Presentation and Discussion: CVEC/Firefly Broadband Updates

Agenda Item No. 5a. Guest Speaker: Galen Creekmore

Mr. Culp introduced Mr. Creekmore. Mr. Creekmore stated he has provided updates to the Board of Supervisors in Louisa and Fluvanna County.

Mr. Creekmore noted that Firefly has 12 employees currently. Mr. Creekmore stated that contractors will install the fiber up to the outside of the home and Firefly employees will bring it into the home and make the necessary connections.

Mr. Creekmore stated that CVEC serves over 3,600 homes and a little bit over 134 square miles or about 20% of the County. These boundaries were established in the 1940s and have not changed. The total for CVEC is 36,822 homes and businesses. Total investment is \$110 million for 4,682 miles of fiber.

Mr. Creekmore showed figures for Albemarle County indicating 3,624 accounts and \$11 million in investment.

Mr. Creekmore stated that the Midway substation buildout is underway to the users and is expected to be completed in February 2020.

Mr. Creekmore stated that the Zions substation connections will start in August and September. Letters have gone out to the customers. Complete buildout will be in October/November of 2019.

Mr. Creekmore stated that the Cash Corner substation buildout will be completed a month after Zions substation.

Mr. Creekmore restated that the total number of CVEC accounts in Albemarle is 3,624. The Midway, Zions and Cash Corner substations have 1,886 accounts.

Mr. Creekmore stated that the planned take rate is 35% in year 2. In Appomattox the take rate is 50% based on preregistration.

Mr. Creekmore stated that with VATI and Albemarle support Firefly will consider going beyond the CVEC system. Some off-system construction is already being planned. Cost is a factor in going off-system.

Mr. Creekmore discussed the deployment of broadband by Dominion Power and APCO. Mr. Creekmore stated that these companies are electric power companies focused on electricity. The new legislation gives them no risk because they can recover the cost of deployment.

Ms. Palmer stated that she and Mr. Randolph spoke with Appalachian Power about upgrades to the system in southern Albemarle. Appalachian Power indicated it may be possible to work with CVEC.

Mr. Creekmore did not know if this was for power or fiber. Appalachian Power and CVEC share a substation in Esmont.

Mr. Creekmore noted that the County has six CVEC substations and three of them will be served within a year and all will be served within five years.

Mr. Creekmore thanked the County for its support.

Ms. Palmer noted that the areas being served by CVEC initially are amongst the most difficult parts of the County to serve.

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Agenda Item No. 6. Old Business

Agenda Item No. 6a. Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) Update

Mr. Culp stated that money is still not allocated and he does not know why. ABBA is waiting get the money before making a public announcement. Mr. Culp stated that the State has announced the awards.

Mr. Randolph stated that it is best to wait until the money has been received before ABBA makes a public announcement.

Agenda Item No. 6b. USDA ReConnect

Mr. Culp stated that Century Link and CVEC are not interested. Mr. Culp is still working with Comcast, Shentel, Lumos and Ting. Mr. Culp noted that Century Link is not interested because they can only use the loan option which is not what they want.

Agenda Item No. 6c AEP/Dominion Update

Mr. Culp stated that AEP and Dominion have not developed their plans yet. Mr. Culp noted some options of cooperation between CVEC and AEP are possible and ABBA may be able to provide some support.

Agenda Item No. 6d 2019/2020 Budget

Mr. Culp stated that an \$800,000 appropriation from the Board of Supervisors will happen at the end of the fiscal year.

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Agenda Item No. 7 New Business

Agenda Item No. 7a. Broadband Coverage Map Update

Mr. Jaquith presented the Board with maps he prepared. Mr. Jaquith stated he prepared the maps by field testing who did and did not have broadband based on WIFI base station availability. Mr. Jaquith stated he made the assumption of no WIFI meant no broadband availability. Mr. Jaquith stated that he would continue to collect data to identify where WIFI is available to improve mapping and determine and refine areas of service.

Agenda Item No. 7b Quarterly Report Review

Mr. Culp stated that he had made updates based on the feedback he received.

Mr. Randolph stated that he or Ms. Palmer can update the Board of Supervisors of the CVEC schedule.

Agenda Item No. 7c Residential Survey Discussion

Mr. Culp stated that the County is doing a survey of the residents and asked if ABBA wanted to include a question in the survey and if so what should the question be.

Mr. Randolph stated that the County is doing a better survey this time so it might be useful to ask questions such as do people even know that ABBA exists.

Mr. Culp asked if the question should be as simple as "Do you know about ABBA? Yes or No."

Mr. Walsh suggested "Would you work from home if you had better or adequate Broadband?"

Mr. Culp stated he would pass the comments to the County Executive's Office.

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Agenda Item No. 8. Other Matters

Mr. Culp stated that a VATI workshop is happening in Richmond on May 17<sup>th</sup> and May 28<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Walsh noted that he was going to attend the May 28<sup>th</sup> session.

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Agenda Item No. 8. Adjourn

With no other business before the Authority, Mr. Walsh adjourned the meeting at 6:35 PM.