

A regular meeting of the Albemarle County Broadband Authority was held on May 16, 2018, at 5:01 p.m., in Room 241 of the County Office Building, McIntire Road, Charlottesville, Virginia.

PRESENT: Mr. Bucky Walsh, Mr. Mike Culp, Ms. Liz Palmer, Mr. Rick Randolph,  
Mr. Landon McDowell

ABSENT: Mr. Bill Fritz

Also Present: Mr. Richard DeLoria (Senior Assistant County Attorney), Mr. Jim Atkinson (representing the Albemarle Economic Development Authority, and Mr. David Blount (representing the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission)

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

Ms. Palmer **moved** to accept the agenda.

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

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Agenda Item No. 3 Approval of April 18, 2018 Minutes

Mr. Randolph **moved** to approve the April 18, 2018 Minutes.

The April 18, 2018 Minutes were **approved** by a unanimous vote.

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Agenda Item No. 4 Public Comment

Mr. Walsh opened the Public Comment period. Mr. Culp asked Mr. Blount if he might provide an update from the state legislature regarding broadband.

Mr. Blount stated the new wireless bill restricted county oversight of small cell disbursement; becoming an add on to treat the small cell like larger deployments.

Mr. Blount stated that another bill set a purpose to form a group of stakeholders for areas for need for broadband service; and the group will work to that end. The new bill is also indicating the need for better reporting of coverage areas and plans from wireless providers.

Mr. Blount stated that Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) funding is increasing but by how much is up in the air. May continue as 2 million dollars per year – may be 4 million dollars.

Mr. Blount stated that the House Bill establishes the Broadband Chief Advisor. Ms. Palmer asked for more information. Mr. Blount reported that the job definition is still under consideration. Ms. Palmer asked if there was an additional budget for the position. Mr. Blount stated that he thought that existing budget supports the role, as such he believes no budget additions are necessary.

Ms. Palmer asked questions about how the new position would focus on the underserved. Mr. Randolph indicated that he felt the position should be primarily focused on the underserved.

Ms. Palmer asked about the timeline for the work to start. Mr. Blount stated that the details he has are only what can be read in the bill and he will e-mail it to ABBA.

Mr. Randolph asked about how the ISPs and the new group will report back on known barriers and how the state plans to address them. Mr. Blount conjectured that the state should increase funding for broadband to address the many barriers to 100% coverage. There was a brief discussion amongst the group about how the proliferation of broadband could be compared to electricity as a utility.

Being no further comment Mr. Walsh closed the Public Comment period.

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#### Agenda Item No. 5 Old Business

Mr. Culp stated that the County is in the final stages of accepting VATI funds for the Greenwood Comcast Project.

Mr. Butler and Mr. Culp discussed the Comcast start; after Mr. Butler indicated that he had seen fiber trucks near the project area. Mr. Culp stated that he would check with Comcast.

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#### Agenda Item No. 6 New Business

Mr. Culp stated that the \$200,000 ABBA Funding Request Approved and Appropriated.

Ms. Palmer stated that ABBA should bring forward good projects over and above the \$200,000.

Mr. Walsh introduced Glenn Butler from CenturyLink. Mr. Butler began the CenturyLink discussion thanking the County for sending support calls through him.

Mr. Butler proceeded to discuss the technical nature of the current network and the challenges to achieving higher speeds. Ms. Palmer asked about plans for several areas including Tilman Road, the Quarries subdivision, and others. Mr. Butler explained he was limited in discussing direct plans since funds for future projects are not yet released. Mr. Randolph asked how CenturyLink prioritized the projects. Mr. Butler suggested that ABBA contact Richard Schollmann in CenturyLink government affairs with questions around prioritization.

Mr. Butler continued his slide presentation and the CenturyLink discussion. Ms. Palmer asked for clarification on the slides which indicated the total project costs to address the needs in the three project areas in the southern part of the County. Mr. Butler showed figures which indicated total costs of \$465K over three projects which would serve 267 customers.

Mr. Butler conjectured that future grant applications where the County offered some level of matching funds in addition to state monies might be better received. As an example he suggested that instead of CenturyLink asking for 80% of the costs, with themselves providing the other 20%, that ABBA might consider putting in 15% of the costs so that CenturyLink only had to ask for 65%.

Ms. Palmer stated that as the County does with road projects, we might prepare a list of projects for which we are seeking funding. The ability to leverage outside sources with ABBA funds is very appealing.

Mr. Butler stated that there is a list of Connect America Funds (CAF) projects which are awaiting an update he referred to as Revision 5, which would indicate the projects slated for this next fiscal year. He was expecting to see that list within two weeks.

Mr. Randolph asked if CenturyLink had any 5G plans, and Mr. Butler stated that he did not see any at this time. Mr. Walsh remarked that the chip sets for 5G had yet to be standardized, and that while it might be available somewhere within the next 12 months, just as 4G was slow to reach smaller communities he believed 5G would be slow coming to Albemarle. Mr. Walsh also suggested that 5G would require more towers than currently exist to reach unserved areas, which still leaves the problem of getting fiber to far flung places even if it does remove some of the local wiring issues.

Mr. Atkinson from the EDA stated that we should review the Comprehensive Plan to consider projects that were in designated growth areas in the plan. This could also indicate areas where the business interests of the EDA and the broadband interests of ABBA would clearly overlap and offer cooperation opportunities.

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Agenda Item No. 7. Other Matters

None

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Agenda Item No. 8. Adjourn

With no other business before the Authority, Mr. Walsh adjourned the meeting at 6:39 PM.