

**LOUISA COUNTY BROADBAND AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
LOUISA COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
1 WOOLFOLK AVENUE
LOUISA, VIRGINIA
January 4, 2017 7:00 P.M.**

Present: Melvin Burruss, Steve Duren, Bernie Hill, Mark Luttner, Garth Wermter, Brian Sullivan (arrived at 7:02 p.m.), Mary Johnson (arrived at 7:30 p.m.)

Others Present: Christy Monolo, Assistant County Attorney; Fitzgerald Barnes, Patrick Henry District Supervisor (arrived at 7:10 p.m.); Stephanie Koren, Mineral District Supervisor (arrived at 7:15 p.m.); and Bob Hardy, Louisa County Information Technology Director

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Wermter called the January 4, 2017 regular meeting of the Broadband Authority (BBA) Board of Directors to order at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Wermter led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

On the motion of Mr. Hill, seconded by Mr. Luttner, which carried by a vote of 5-0, the Board voted to adopt the January 4, 2017, agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

December 7, 2016- Regular Meeting

It was stated that Mr. Luttner was present at the December 7th regular meeting.

December 19, 2016- Worksession

It was stated that Mr. Burruss was not present, but that Mr. Duren was present during the December 19th work session.

It was stated that there was a grammatical error in the last sentence of the first page.

On the motion of Mr. Hill, seconded by Mr. Luttner, which carried by a vote of 6-0, the Board voted to approve the December 7th and December 19th minutes with the aforementioned changes.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Discussion Item- Construction of Wireless Towers

Dr. Cohill, with Wide Open Networks, discussed the updated book and projects' status. He mentioned the additional aerial photos that had been added. There was further discussion regarding the photos. Dr. Cohill mentioned the addition of a propagation analysis and a draft site plan that displayed an approximate location for fencing. In addition, he discussed the addition of a conditional site permit.

Dr. Cohill stated that since the previous meeting, two potential LTE vendors had been identified as interested in offering the new generation LTE which would strictly be broadband. He stated that the intention was to get enough technical information on propagation studies in order to identify the need for placement of towers and how the placement would affect the overall budget. Dr. Cohill stated that he was more optimistic about bandwidth rather than distance. He discussed the frequencies that vendors had stated, but he stated that they remained skeptical about the distance and the ability to burn through foliage.

Dr. Cohill discussed the projected timeline and referred to the handout distributed at the meeting. He discussed in detail, the items on the timeline and stated that he still believed that all projects could be completed by the end of the year.

It was asked whether the permitting process could overlap with the procurement process. Dr. Cohill stated that he could not think of an instance where this could not be possible. He stated that if locations could not be identified precisely, then bidding would most likely be higher. Dr. Cohill stated that he was not ready to make a recommendation to the Authority as to what the best method was.

Dr. Cohill stated that the information had been sent to Mr. Outten for his review and that he would follow up with him the following week. He stated that the next milestone was to obtain Louisa County School Board approval. After their approval, Dr. Cohill stated that the conditional use permit could be submitted.

It was stated that Mr. Burruss had posed questions at the most recent school board meeting, one of them being whether the guide wires around the schools would be a liability. Mr. Burruss stated that school board members had inquired as to whether they would receive a rental fee for the towers. Mr. Burruss expressed concern about the safety of having guide wires so close to school children.

There was further discussion on the safety and placement of guide wires. Dr. Cohill stated that he would do a cost comparison between self-supporting towers versus guide towers. He stated that price differentials might be helpful to know. Dr. Cohill referenced Louisa County ordinance RES2015-132, when he stated that chain link fencing could not be used. He went on to say that the fencing would have to be wood or masonry fencing. Mr. Wermter asked what section of the code Dr. Cohill was referencing. Dr. Cohill stated that the ordinance was amended May 4, 2015.

Mr. Wermter said that he remembered recommending that the language in the code be amended.

Mr. Sullivan asked if the estimated time for school board approval was included in the timeline for the conditional use permit process. Dr. Cohill stated that he thought that there were about five weeks from the current date, January 4, 2017, to get school board approval. He said that the process would start thereafter for the 90 days' conditional use permit process.

Mr. Hardy verified that the ordinance required either landscaping *and* a chain ledge fence or an opaque fence. Mr. Wermter stated that discretion had been intentionally left to the Zoning Administrator as indicated in subsection three (3) of the code. There was further discussion on the best fence type.

There was discussion on the possible tower location approval by the school board. Ms. Koren advised members to talk to their school board members and educate them on the project.

There was further discussion on the logistics of school board approval and the conditional use permit process.

Mr. Hardy stated that Mr. Goodwin specified that the towers and all equipment would be owned by the County of Louisa rather than the Broadband Authority. Authority members concurred.

It was advised that talking points should be put together in order for each of the Authority members to contact one of the six school board members and educate them on the project.

Mr. Hardy asked the Authority if anyone had communicated with the Holly Grove Fire and Rescue Station. Mr. Sullivan said he would be going back and hopefully speaking with someone there.

It was asked whether the Ruritan site was still needed as a tower location or just the Holly Grove site. It was stated that consensus from the previous meeting was that the Holly Grove site was the priority.

Dr. Cohill stated that by July 2017, contractors would be doing site clearing and putting the tower up by July or August of 2017.

Mr. Wermter asked Dr. Cohill whether there were any concerns with the weight of the radios and antennas of the new LTE equipment versus the standard equipment. Dr. Cohill said he could not answer that at the time, but that he would find out.

Dr. Cohill stated that a milestone was coming up and recommended that a service provider would need to be signed up prior to creating a construction report. He stated that by the next meeting, Wide Open Networks would propose a list of lease fees to the Authority in order to communicate the prices with potential providers. He recommended that the Authority get a provider to sign a lease agreement before making an award for construction.

There was further discussion regarding the project timeline. Mr. Wermter asked Dr. Cohill if

Wide Open Networks was still comfortable with the three chosen school location sites. Dr. Cohill stated that he would be following up with Mr. Outten before the next school board meeting.

There was further discussion on the proposed sites and fast-track sites.

Mr. Wermter stated that Mr. Burruss had agreed to communicate with the schools and asked whether the Authority wanted another individual to assist in the matter. It was mentioned that Mr. Duren was already involved.

Dr. Cohill stated that Wide Open Networks had a draft construction RFP and had included the removal of the old wooden pole at the Louisa County Middle School location.

Dr. Cohill stated that four out of the six upcoming items on the timeline were related to getting school responsibilities in place.

Mr. Hardy asked Dr. Cohill if a separate RFP would be issued for the electric installation service from the site prep or if the site prep company would be doing both. Dr. Cohill stated that electric work was usually sub-contracted out.

There was discussion on the electric providers in Louisa County and it was determined that there were five. It was asked whether there had been any communication regarding the tower at Chopping Road. Dr. Cohill stated that information would be communicated before the next meeting on February 1, 2017. There was further discussion on the positive and negative aspects of acquiring the tower on Chopping Road. Mr. Hardy stated that the location was not ideal for the high school and that the location was too close for the next step in the project process. Many of the Authority members agreed that acquiring the tower was not a wise purchase.

There was no further discussion.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were none.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

CHAIRMAN/GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Wermter stated that he wanted to encourage the Authority about the overall project. He reminded them that they were still making good progress, and everyone was contributing in great ways.

Mr. Wermter stated that even with setbacks, the Authority would still move forward with the project.

Mr. Hardy suggested that the bylaws be updated and approved and that the Authority hold the annual organizational meeting in the near future. There was further discussion on the need for an update to the bylaws. Mr. Hardy stated that the bylaws were currently under revision. Ms. Monolo stated that as required by the bylaws, a 30 days' notice be publicly given before a meeting took place to update the bylaws. It was suggested that the update occur at the regular meeting scheduled for March 1, 2017. Mr. Wermter suggested publicly posting a notice about the bylaws update that would occur at the March meeting.

Mr. Wermter thanked the Authority again and stated that he was pleased to be a part of the project.

CONSENT AGENDA

There was none.

APPROVAL OF THE BILLS

There were none.

CLOSED SESSION

There was none.

WEBSITE UPDATES

Mr. Hardy stated that he would post the most recent sets of December minutes.

FINAL COMMENTS

There was further discussion on broadband in rural Virginia and the necessity for it as well as the difficulties associated with bringing it to rural areas. Dr. Cohill stated that it was a crisis and that local governments needed to make an investment in broadband in order to attract the private sector.

NEXT MEETING

The next Broadband Authority meeting will take place on Wednesday, February 1, 2017, at 7:00 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

On the motion of Mr. Sullivan, seconded by Mr. Hill, which carried by a vote of 7-0, the Board voted to adjourn the January 4, 2017, regular meeting at approximately 8:13 p.m.

BY ORDER OF:

GARTH WERMTER, CHAIRMAN
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
LOUISA COUNTY BROADBAND AUTHORITY