

CAMPBELL COUNTY BROADBAND AUTHORITY

January 7, 2020

A meeting of the Campbell County Broadband Authority was held on the 7<sup>th</sup> day of January 2020 in the Multi-Use Room of the Walter J. Haberer Building, Rustburg, Virginia. The members present were:

Charlie A. Watts II, Chairman, Presiding	Brookneal Election District
Kenneth R. Brown	Spring Hill Election District
Matt W. Cline	Concord Election District
Jon R. Hardie	Rustburg Election District
Susan R. Hogg	Timberlake Election District
A. Dale Moore	Altavista Election District
Steve W. Shockley	Sunburst Election District

Also present were:

Frank J. Rogers, County Administrator  
Clifton M. Tweedy, Deputy County Administrator  
Catherine H. Moore, Clerk

Chairman Watts called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone to a meeting of the Campbell County Broadband Authority (CCBA).

// Election of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer

Chairman Watts indicated his willingness to continue serving as Chairman of the Broadband Authority and suggested Supervisor Hardie be named as Vice-Chairman.

On motion of Supervisor Hardie, it was resolved the Campbell County Broadband Authority elects Charlie A. Watts, II, to serve as Chairman and Jon R. Hardie to serve as Vice-Chairman for 2020.

The vote was: Aye: Cline, Hardie, Hogg, Moore, Shockley, Watts  
Nay: None  
Absent: Brown

// Confirmation of Meeting Schedule

Administrator Rogers requested that a motion be made to confirm the Secretary/Treasurer and the meeting schedule acknowledging the Authority could schedule additional meetings as deemed appropriate. It was also suggested the inclement weather policy used by the Board of Supervisors be adopted to automatically move the meetings to the Thursday of the same week and at the same time in the event a meeting needs to be rescheduled.

On motion of Supervisor Hogg, it was resolved the Campbell County Broadband Authority approves Frank J. Rogers, County Administrator, to continue serving as the Secretary/Treasurer and adopts a meeting schedule to meet at 5 p.m. before the regular Board of Supervisors meetings in January, April, July and October acknowledging that additional meetings may be added as necessary, and if the Chairman acts, finds and declares that weather or other conditions are such that it is hazardous for members to attend the regular meeting, the meeting shall be continued to the following Thursday of that week at 5:00 p.m. and all hearings and other matters previously advertised shall be conducted at the continued meeting and no further advertisement is required. (Per authority of Section 15.2-1416 of the Code of Virginia)

The vote was: Aye: Cline, Hardie, Hogg, Moore, Shockley, Watts  
Nay: None  
Absent: Brown

#### Approval of Minutes

On motion of Supervisor Hogg, it was resolved the Campbell County Broadband Authority approves the minutes of the September 3, 2019 meeting.

The vote was: Aye: Cline, Hardie, Hogg, Moore, Shockley, Watts  
Nay: None  
Absent: Brown

#### // Recap of County's Broadband Efforts/ Request for Information/Funding

Administrator Rogers opened the conversation with an update on the Authority's efforts to improve broadband in the County. In November 2018 the Board of Supervisors held a public hearing to consider forming a Broadband Authority. The Broadband Authority was officially incorporated by the State Corporation Commission on December 26, 2018. There were benefits to having an Authority such as the ability to incur debt and having access to State assets such as State Police towers.

Over the past year, the Authority met with several experts in the broadband field and successfully received a Tobacco Commission grant for \$150,000 to work with SCS Broadband to expand wireless broadband in the Naruna area. That project had not been completed, but was moving along. In addition, an internal staff committee was formed to assist the Broadband Authority as needed.

One of the limitations of the Broadband Authority was resources and how the Board wanted to direct funds toward the development of broadband. At the same time the Board was developing the Broadband Authority, the Town of Altavista was negotiating to purchase the Dearing Ford Business and Development Center. The Board recognized the potential for the Town to direct resources to promote the industrial park, and the property was sold for \$1 million dollars and the termination of a revenue sharing agreement to receive a portion of the meals tax from the Wal-Mart shopping center. The \$1 million dollars equated to about 15 to 20 years of

the meals tax payment and the Board has directed those funds to economic development and the expansion of broadband. The funds were received in December 2019.

Now that there were funds available, Administrator Rogers recommended the Authority move forward with a Request for Information (RFI) (similar to a Request for Proposal) to solicit proposals from the private sector for a conceptual design to expand broadband access and capacity County-wide. The RFI was included on the Board of Supervisors agenda for later that evening for formal approval. Administrator Rogers indicated there appeared to be interest from the private sector to partner with the County, and part of the RFI would be to expand on how the County could partner with the respondent as far as matching dollars and grants. There was a consensus by the CCBA to move forward with the RFI.

Administrator Rogers also advised the County has entered into a contract with The Ferguson Group who would be meeting with departments the following week and then would proceed to identify grant opportunities. In answer to a question by Chairman Watts on grant funds through the Virginia Telecommunications Initiative (VATI), Administrator Rogers believed those funds would likely be offered again. Last year when the County learned of the grant opportunity, the information was distributed to private providers. The only one that responded was Shentel, but they responded too late to satisfy the public notice requirement. Delegate Kathy Byron has indicated the Governor may recommend additional monies be budgeted for broadband in the next State budget.

Supervisor Hogg asked if staff had talked with our neighboring counties about partnership opportunities. Administrator Rogers indicated he had talked informally with Amherst and Bedford, but more meaningful conversations would have to wait until they had more design details. Supervisor Hogg also suggested language be included in the RFI to include tiered strategies to serve both unserved and underserved areas. The County may need to obtain some technical expertise to review and consider the proposals.

Supervisor Shockley asked about a suggestion by Supervisor Hardie to allocate communication taxes to broadband. Supervisor Hardie indicated he would like to see revenues tied to expenditures to allow the budget to be more understandable. In this case, the revenue from communication taxes was already being allocated to expenditures, and the best time to consider how to reallocate revenues would be during the upcoming budget process.

In answer to a question by Supervisor Cline as to when the County would actually start breaking ground on broadband projects, Administrator Rogers recognized the process has taken a lot longer than everyone wanted. He assured the Board that staff understood it was one of the higher priorities of the Board. Once the RFI was issued, 60 days would be given to private providers to return responses.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

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CHARLIE A. WATTS II, CHAIRMAN

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_