

CAMPBELL COUNTY BROADBAND AUTHORITY

April 18, 2023

A meeting of the Campbell County Broadband Authority was held on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of April 2023 in the Board of Supervisors Meeting 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
Justin A. Carwile	Timberlake Election District
Matt W. Cline	Concord Election District
Jon R. Hardie	Rustburg 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  
Paul Harvey, Director of Community Development

Chairman Watts called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone to a meeting of the Campbell County Broadband Authority (CCBA). Updates from the three broadband providers would be presented at this meeting.

// APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On motion of Supervisor Shockley, it was resolved the Campbell County Broadband Authority approves the minutes of the January 3, 2023 meeting.

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

// SHENTEL

Jessica Wilmer of Shentel indicated their broadband services in Virginia were known as Shentel Fiber. For this project, Shentel would be extending their current cable plant service and bringing in new fiber. In other areas, their fiber service was known as Glo Fiber. The project would be a hybrid solution with a mix of fiber and coax to extend service to 3,500 homes and businesses. The project would cost approximately \$19 million, and a portion of that would be funded through the State's VATI grant.

The agreements for this project were signed in September of 2022 and should be completed in 24 months. Once the design phase has been completed, Shentel would begin on the engineering phase. The permitting phase, which has already begun, usually takes about 10 months. Part of the permitting phase is drafting contracts with the electricity providers and VDOT. Ms. Wilmer indicated that at last check there were more than 20,000 pole permits just with AEP who was pretty busy as all the broadband companies were gearing up at the same time. The permitting phase usually takes about one year.

Once the construction phase starts, their crews would begin to lay plant in the ground. Once completed, it was turned over to their operations team to certify and then it was turned over to marketing. The marketing area would begin sending out flyers to customers to sign up for service. Precision Valley, Edge Solutions and Shentel's internal engineering team would be providing engineering work. Of the 314 miles they would cover, they had 240 miles of those in design routing. Shentel anticipates 20% of their build to be buried, 70% to be aerial and 10% would be overlap. They were required to build up to every property line regardless of whether the homeowner signs up for service. If the property owner wanted service in the future, they would be ready.

Ms. Wilmer indicated the Concord area should be released to construction in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of this year with the Rustburg area being released in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. The Gladys and Altavista areas should be released in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2024. The test areas that were built last fall along Arrington Drive and Two Bid Road were released to customers in March. They had already had a good response with several customers reaching out to them for service. Shentel's communication plan could be found on their website for all their VATI projects where customers could see tentative in-service dates for the various areas. Also included on their website was information and their packages with the ability to preregister. Shentel would be sending mailers and provide a door hanger to the property owners to alert them that Shentel would be in their area and a second mailer midway through construction.

In answer to a question by Supervisor Shockley, Shentel was required to notify Miss Utility before any digging and was responsible for repairing any damages. However, things like invisible fences would not be a utility. In response to Supervisor Cline's question regarding the lack of detail on the map, Ms. Wilmer advised Shentel hoped to have a more interactive map that could be searched by address by mid-summer. They needed to be further along in the engineering phase to be able to provide exact information. Supervisor Hardie asked if it was possible to receive a spreadsheet of the addresses that would be served. Ms. Wilmer indicated they already had a list of addresses that was used for the VATI application, but they had not all been vetted. As soon as final engineering was completed which should be in the first quarter of 2024, the addresses could be vetted for distribution. As to how far off the road Shentel could build, their intent was to build up to the property line or the first drop area, but generally it was 2,000 feet. Lastly, there was a question from Supervisor Hardie regarding current vacant properties and future service. Ms. Wilmer advised if a property was developed in the future, they would be treated as a new customer, but they would not fall under the VATI guidelines. She added less than 1% of the overall project was complete at this time.

// FIREFLY

Gary Wood and Melissa Gay with Firefly were present to provide updates on their project in the northern portion of the County. Mr. Wood indicated there was a link for projects on their website home page. You could choose the County and add an address to see if the property was in the service area. Firefly had already started sending out mailers to property owners in the service area to let citizens know about the engineering and make ready work. They also planned to send out a second mailer inviting property owners to a virtual meeting to learn more about the project construction.

AEP was about half finished with the make ready work, and it was anticipated they would finish their work by June or July. The fiber crews would start shortly after AEP was finished. The first fiber connections should be ready to connect by fall of this year or late summer if all went well. Their project was mostly aerial with underground to those homes that had underground electric power. Firefly does go 2,500 feet for extensions, but for low to moderate income customers, they would go as far as they needed to go. They would continue to keep the residents informed as the project moved along.

In conclusion, Mr. Wood commented Firefly was formed in January of 2019, and they had just celebrated 20,000 connections. They had received excellent customer service responses on a recent survey. In answer to a question by Supervisor Cline, the buildout would come from the Stonewall area. They were in the final engineering phase, and the project should be built in two months once construction starts.

// BRIGHTSPEED

In answer to a question by Administrator Rogers regarding the status of the area awarded to Brightspeed (formerly CenturyLink), Mr. Wood had not heard any updates since February when they entered into a contract, but he was skeptical they could build 60,000 connections across Virginia by December 2024. If they were not able to build the connections, the County would pivot to Firefly for that work and would need to commit the funds the County received from the American Rescue Plan before December 2024. The Authority indicated it would be good to have Brightspeed attend a future meeting to receive an update from them.

// RIVERSTREET

Zach Church was present to provide an update on Riverstreet's project which would be serving the southern portion of the County covering approximately 290 miles with 3,804 locations. This was a 17-County project for them. They were currently working on the final design and finalizing permits. Since they did not have existing facilities in Campbell County, they would be building from the Gretna network to the Hurt office. Mr. Church indicated Riverstreet normally buried 95% of its projects. A contractor was currently working in the Renan area and would move toward Campbell County. The contract was for 120 days to lay the fiber. They also had a contractor in Phenix who would also be working toward Campbell County.

There was currently no construction in Campbell County, but other project information could be found on Riverstreet's website. They had an employee now that was working on the coverage maps. As more detailed information became available, those coverage maps would be included on their website and the County's website.

// ADJOURNMENT

On motion of Supervisor Cline, the meeting was adjourned at 7:19 p.m.

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

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CHARLIE A. WATTS II, CHAIRMAN

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