

QAC BAC Meeting

July 26, 2018 4pm - 6 pm | Wide Open Networks (WON)

Attendees

BAC

- Andrew Costello
- Alison Davis
- John Seeman
- Dale Walls
- Adam Weinstein
- Jack Wilson

WON

- Andrew Cohill
- Sam Zappas

With its first broadband RFP, QAC sought whole-county fiber coverage but has revised/constrained the new effort to be less comprehensive and to focus - first, at least - on unserved residents (the “last mile”).

BAC shared a map of currently unserved residents to WON

QAC has no money set aside for broadband, but it welcomes a negotiation for consideration - BAC recognizes that partial-coverage approach is a Band-Aid solution

WON

- Submitted detailed response to original survey questions sent in May 2018 by BAC (BAC reviewed)
- Coincident with the intent of the original RFP, WON wants to provide blanket coverage to QAC, including county buildings (QAC does not need/want county buildings included in new work) -whole project likely would cost ~\$8M
- Business model: local-transport provider - then welcome multiple ISPs, not a fan of mini-monopoly (e.g. ABB)
- Biggest issue for any provider: construction costs - same for everyone, but lower in QAC compared to other places (WON sees this as attractive)
- Do not have a per-mile take rate - instead do “market-demand” testing - do surveys and collect service contracts at neighborhood level (usually 50-60%)
- Part of OneMaryland coop
- Have various service models
 - Has experience with mixed fiber and wireless - for example two counties and a small city in WV (fiber w/towers)

- Notes that rural areas almost always have a lot of trees around houses - Pine trees worse than deciduous - wavelength closer to broadband signal
- Has countywide wireless in southwest Virginia
- Have several hybrid systems - wireless “backfill” after fiber to home, then build out to roads etc
- Cost to consumer: \$70/month 100Mb speed
- Claims that WON is better than cable:
 - Can cancel satellite TV etc save \$1500-\$2000/year
 - Business-class service
 - Better pricing
 - No bandwidth caps
 - More predictable service
 - Form a local company with local staff
 - Increase property value
- Interactions with other/existing providers
 - WON has past experience with this type of “competition” - always invites incumbents to partner but they usually decline (claim that incumbents are “terrified” of competition)
 - Best success with smaller local ISPs
 - Smaller providers are underfunded so usually happy to sign on

QAC - BAC

- Broadband should be addressed in 10-year comp plan
- Wants a PPP scenario - but need to have long-term fiber backbone so in 10 years can have county built out; plan to connect underserved first
- Wants to turn it over to company for future maintenance etc - acquire infrastructure first, then “let capitalism take over”
- Consider a demonstration/pilot project to grow latent interest? (companies may be uninterested with little incentive)
- Need to consider messaging - will people that already have cable be willing/interested in upgrading?
- Considering special-assessment tax for county - unclear if this may be pre-empted by state

Next steps:

- Meeting with BridgeMaxx and Cambio (separately)
- Need to acquire cost estimates from all potential vendors, specifying wants and needs for the project
- Long-term piecemeal solution, what is your best offer? Phased effort combining unserved and served areas
 1. Cover unserved
 2. Cover everything over 10 years