

## QAC Broadband Advisory Committee Meeting

February 20, 2020

4 – 6 pm

### **Attendees:**

#### **BAC/QAC**

Megan Delgaudio  
Jack Wilson  
Ben Schaffle  
Alison Davis – via phone  
Adam Weinstein  
Jacob Wargotz  
Andrew Costello  
Ed Cummins  
Heather Tinnelli  
Joyce Jones  
Dave MacGlashan

#### **CTC Technology and Energy - Ziggy Rivkin-Fish**

Motion to begin by Ben second by Ed at 4:05 pm.

Jack Wilson gave an update on the House and Senate bills to de-regulate Choptank Electric from the Public Service Commission. Biggest hurdle is that the Public Service Commission may not want to give up their power. If these bills are approved Choptank will be able to serve a large percentage of the current unserved County residents. When testifying 2/25 and 3/5 Jack is going to bring up the Kirwan legislation for education reform as having Choptank provide Broadband will help this initiative by providing internet access to students using newly available technology.

Letters of support were prepared for these bills from the Committee – Ben signed. The Commissioners will also be sending letters in.

Broadband Feasibility Study Update – Ziggy Rivkin-Fish – presentation attached.

Started by looking at the map of the unserved areas of the County and gave information for next steps to take. Once the County approves the map they can go forward with the Cost Analysis.

The map will have some revisions – there are several areas – Prospect Bay and John Brown Rd areas – that are served by Atlantic Broadband. Megan to reach out to ABB to see if they are willing to revise for us.

The red areas represented blocks of areas where the unserved homes are. There are also some unserved homes in the white area. The report will consider this map as showing contiguous unserved areas aka Category 1. Category 2 are addresses on isolated roads - not immediately passed with infrastructure. Category 3 are premises located at the end of long driveways.

CTC and Megan spoke with several providers to gauge their interest in expanding their coverage areas. Wireline and wireless companies were included: Talkie, ABB, KentFOS/ThinkBig, Bloosurf, BridgeMaxx, Choptank and Delmarva Wifi.

Talkie is moving into the northern part of the County currently. They are interested in partnering and pursuing federal grants. They will introduce themselves to Commissioners next Tuesday at 6:45pm.

ABB is interested in partnering. The Commissioners approved their expansion to Bulle Rock. Late summer/early fall they built to the Crane Creek subdivision across from the Kent Island Elks lodge. A new resident whose job functions and needs made broadband essential worked with neighbors and ABB to cover the construction fees.

KentFOS/ThinkBig – Since our last discussion a year and a half ago they have stabilized and are ready for expansion. They are also interested in being a partner.

Bloosurf – strictly wireless – they are interested in being a partner

Bridgemaxx – Interested in smaller State grants. They are interested in being a partner.

Delmarva Wifi – wireless – interested in being a partner.

T-Mobile – Sprint merger completed this week

Choptank – interested in being a partner.

As per Ziggy Choptank should be the County's first choice, however, they are not ready yet.

The average cost to reach each home with Broadband is \$7,000.00

Still faced with the issue of wireless providers overstating their coverage which allowed them to obtain Federal Grant money which in turn prevents other companies from coming into their service area.

Jack Wilson suggested that the County may be willing to do the infrastructure and open up the areas to the ISPs, however, the County does not want to be a utility. Ziggy will run the numbers and see what that would look like.

Jack Wilson suggested setting up a special tax account on the property to help pay for cost of attaching long driveway properties to the nearest service. Low interest loan, 10-15 years.

Megan – update on Bulle Rock - We received Commissioners approval to work with ABB in the Bulle Rock & Grove Creek area with a State Grant which will cost the County \$40,000. Right now we are waiting for a MOU. Delmarva Wifi called the State to challenge this grant because they are in this service this area. Allison has Delmarva Wifi and says that download speeds are okay but upload speeds are lacking. Allison will be checking speeds and reporting her findings to Megan to be shared with the State.

Ben shared cellmapper.net to show location of current towers in the County.