

QAC Broadband Advisory Committee Meeting

November 21, 2019

4 – 6 pm

Attendees:

BAC/QAC

Joyce Jones
Alison Davis
Adam Weinstein
Jacob Wargotz
Andrew Costello
Todd Mohn
Jean Fabi
Heather Tinelli
Dave MacGlashan
Megan Delgaudio
Commissioner Steve Wilson

Baon Enterprises – Scott Gornall

CTC Technology and Energy – Ziggy Rivkin-Fish

Meeting minutes from 9/19 were approved. These minutes along with notes from the 10/21 Kickoff meeting, the presentation and the Benton study will be posted on the website.

Scott Gornall from Baon Enterprises spoke about a new wireless technology that his company is hoping to mass produce if testing goes well. He approached Jean Fabi is working with him on space to use to put hardware together. He will be presenting to the Commissioners next Tuesday 11/26.

Mr. Gornall works for an engineer who created a wireless technology for the Pentagon to be used in the artic where physical wiring isn't practical. It needed to be something that required no specialized skillset to setup – not overly technical - and not too large. Stick a pole in the ground and turn it on. The signal was tested to go 20 miles with a full GB of bandwidth. In the artic it is easy to attain line of site. The equipment had to work in harsh weather conditions – blizzards.

The technology can potentially be used in conjunction with an ISP for a point to point connection to just one entity with GB service up to 20 miles away or that GB service could be shared to serve residents in a ½ mile service area (1GB – 10 MB/home = 100 homes). Mr. Gornall stated the antenna can also be daisy chained with repeaters if necessary when no fiber backhaul is available. There are some concerns with how the technology will respond to the amount of rain/water/fog in our area.

If the technology works, this could reduce cost of running fiber to a centrally located tower to provide service to an area. Mr. Gornall stated that outside plant fiber cost on average between \$6 – 9/ foot. Inside plant - \$3/foot. The cost of the technology was approximately \$200K for a pair of antennas when initially created but is projected to cost somewhere near 10% of that.

Mr. Gornall wanted to be sure not to oversell his product since it is still in the testing stages. His purpose of visiting multiple County agencies was to be sure to follow any necessary permitting procedures. He also worked with County personnel to see if there were any particular areas where there was a need for this type of technology or if there might be some locations it made sense to test the technology.

Mr. Gornall has contacts has touched base with two ISP in the area who may be able to use this technology as part of their business model. He will be testing from one building to another in Chestertown in the next week or so – I believe with Talkie. He mentioned there may be a test area in Talbot County as well as West Virginia. He is trying to pull the West Virginia company towards the Eastern Shore. He would not provide the name of this company.

If all goes well this technology would need to attach to a pole ~150' (similar to a water tower). The antenna and power box on the tower is on the smaller side. It is preferable to use existing towers and existing structures with height. Baon is not interested in erecting towers.

Baon expects to be finishing up testing in the first quarter of next year.

At approximately 5:20pm Ziggy Rivkin-Fish CTC Technology and Energy gave a quick overview of where we are with the Broadband Feasibility Study. He mentioned that he had completed interviews with the Schools, Transportation/Aging, DES, and Economic Development and Tourism. Engineers are looking at the data to do sample modeling. Everything is going according to schedule. Ziggy will work with Megan to setup meetings with ISPs/providers.

Baon Enterprises offers free technical training - <https://www.baonenterprises.com/usda-grant.html>

This information as well as other information regarding training and employment can be found on the County's Economic Development facebook page - <https://www.facebook.com/qacecondev/>