

Broadband Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes  
10/15/2020 – 4:00 pm

Attendance

Ben Schaffle  
Alison  
Ed Cummins  
Joyce Jones  
Mary Ellen Sheffield  
Megan DelGaudio

Ben motioned to begin; Ed seconded

September meeting minutes approved.

**Request for information for Broadband Expansion**

- At the end of Sept Megan was on a call with Governor's office for Rural Broadband. The State is putting out the RFI with the same criteria from last year only they are changing the name to Expansion of Rural Broadband and are providing a match of \$200,000 match. There was no concern about the County putting out an RFI for the State RFI.
- No need for Commissioner approval to put out the RFI for the State RFI. This was sent to Talkie, ABB, and ThinkBig on Friday then on Maryland Marketplace this Tuesday. One reply from a vendor that is not an incumbent ISP in the County asking a few minor questions.

**Broadband Survey**

- Broadband survey went out on Tuesday. Beth Malasky put out a press release.
- Rita Rich from WNAV reached out to Beth for more details. Megan spoke to Rita and was told some of the conversation would be aired.
- We have 35 responses to the survey so far.
- Heather Tinelli (Economic Development) and Jenny Rhodes (Ag Extension Office) will email and mail to their contact lists.
- Leaving the survey open through January. Several grants require that results can't be more than 6 months old. May be looking for applying for grants in 2021.

**Bulle Rock**

- Alison shared that ABB will be hooking them up next week.
- ABB Wes Page has been outstanding, responsive and helpful. Part arrived last Friday that was ordered in May.

**Where to point people when they ask for info**

- Alison Has pointed people to the strategic plan.
- Ben can members push the Broadband Survey link on Facebook?
- Megan to have link to Broadband Survey added to our website

### **CARES Act**

- Hotspots – waiting to hear from ABB for a strategic layout for their change to this plan to a more campus style solution at the Chesapeake Bay Historic Visitor’s Center and one at the 4-H park. Still trying to work it out with them so we spend the CARES money by the end of the year.
- County Administrator indicated there may be some extra money to extend what we started with ThinkBig. Need to know soon so parts can be ordered and to allow time for them to get this accomplished.
- Heard that there may be a possibility that CARES act could be extended and may be able to get more money.

### **Other**

- Rural Development Opportunity Fund Grants – auction start in late October.
- Reached out to Wes regarding the Colby Area to see if ABB may be considering a move to build there. He was instructed to start working on engineering and mapping and is thinking they may be considering this area for the RFI. I have told vendors to break their areas into smaller increments or phases to allow for the maximum funding.
- As discussed in the last meeting the State and County should know how much money they will have for the fiscal year. This may be a time to check with Jack Wilson to see if we should go after a larger grant or just wait and go after the smaller ones for now. Probably the latter and go after something larger in the spring.
- Do Commissioners ever discuss broadband progress in Commissioner meetings? Megan said not to her knowledge; sometimes they have departments come in and give them updates. This may be an opportunity for outreach.

Meeting adjourned at 4:30pm