



County of Augusta
Internet Initiative (Broadband Committee)
PO Box 590
Verona, VA 24482

Thursday, January 25, 2024 7:00 pm

MINUTES

PRESENT: Mr. Kirby, Wayne District
Mr. Miller, Beverly Manor District
Ms. Thornton, North River District
Ms. Whetzel, Deputy County Administrator
Ms. Melton, Asst. Superintendent for Instruction & Technology

ABSENT: Mr. Powell, Middle River District
Vacant, Riverheads District
Vacant, Pastures District
Vacant, South River District

VIRGINIA: At the regular meeting of the Augusta County Internet Initiative (Broadband Committee) held on Thursday, January 25, 2024 at 7:00 pm.

Call to Order

Meeting started at 7:00pm.

Adoption of the Minutes

Minutes of the October 26, 2023 meeting were not approved due to a lack of quorum.

Comments by the Public

Mr. Skovia of the Newport area in southern Augusta County expressed concern about the BARC internet project not being completed. Citizens received notice three years ago that a project was underway and construction began. The project was delayed with little or sporadic activity at times. For example, a cabinet has been installed near the road near his home. A contractor has visited his home, so he thinks he will get connected, but there may be sections with no idea when construction will be started, if at all.

Special Presentations

None

Matters to be Presented by Staff

Ms. Whetzel provided an update on the VATI 2021 grant that is under construction by MGW/Lingo Networks. Work continues in all four project areas:

- McDowell (MGW) – a couple service taps need to be installed to get to remaining 38 passings (one OH road crossing needed where new poles/transfers recently done); Installation of FTTH continued in areas where fiber is available, which in this area is primarily upgrading existing subscribers from DSL or phone-only service to fiber.
- Deerfield (MGW) – UG fiber construction completed – a couple service taps need to be installed to get to remaining 8 passings (extremely rural locations); Installation of FTTH continued in areas where fiber is available.
- Middlebrook (LN) – remaining UG fiber construction completed for the 5 passings remaining in project area – project area is at 100% completion; FTTH installs continue in areas where fiber is available.

- Morris Mill (LN) – Construction of overhead fiber completed in most of the remaining area – just a few service taps need to be installed to get to remaining 25 passings; FTTH installs continue in areas where service is available.

Ninety-four percent (94%) of the milestones have been completed to date.

Below is a summary of work to date. Please note that milestones are set on two month increments, so therefore the passings will be updated every other month.

Project Area	Total Passings	Passings to Date 12/31/2023
McDowell	235	697 MGW Projects
Deerfield	508	
Morris Mill	288	405 Lingo Projects
Middlebrook	142	
Total	1173	1102
% Completed		94%
Subscribers to date		306 (28%)

Total Project Budget: \$1,814,876

Spent to Date \$1,742,904

Grant to Date \$1,220,033

Locality Funds to Date \$209,149

Provider Funds to Date \$313,723

Ms. Whetzel updated the Committee on the status of the VATI2022 project. All Points Broadband presented to the Board of Supervisors on January 25, 2024. Pole attachment requests continue to be submitted to electric partners, who review and determine if pole modification is needed. Notice to Proceeds have been issued for 2623 poles, but a significant number will be needed to reach a large queue of constructible fiber miles. First draw of funds from State or Local Match is expected this quarter.

Ms. Whetzel noted that the County did not proceed with a VATI 2024 Grant application. The Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program will roll out in 2024. The Commonwealth received \$1.48 billion to finalize access to those who are unserved and underserved. BEAD utilizes the new FCC National Broadband Mapping and sets a new threshold for speed. Providers apply for this funding based on Zip Code Areas. The County will provide a letter of support to providers.

Matters to be Presented by the Committee

The Committee discussed the future mission of the Committee. There is a gap in the perception of the need for high speed internet and the sign-up rate once internet is at the home. Educating the public about the benefits and uses of the service may be an area of focus.

Adjournment

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be April 25, 2024. With no further discussion by the committee, the meeting adjourned.