



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

Thursday, April 25, 2024 7:00 pm

MINUTES

PRESENT: Mr. Powell, Middle River District
Ms. Thornton, North River District
Ms. Whetzel, Deputy County Administrator
Ms. Melton, Asst. Superintendent for Instruction & Technology

ABSENT: Mr. Kirby, Wayne District
Mr. Miller, Beverly Manor District
Mr. Barley, South River District
Vacant, Riverheads District
Vacant, Pastures District

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

Call to Order

Meeting started at 7:00pm.

Adoption of the Minutes

Minutes of the October 26, 2023 and January 25, 2024 meetings were not approved due to a lack of quorum.

Comments by the Public

Ken Mitchell, candidate for Congress District 6, expressed interest in the how to get federal funding (Infrastructure Act monies) to rural areas. The Committee gave an overview of County projects.

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) – UG fiber construction (main & taps) occurred along Rt. 678, Rt. 654, and other portions this project area. A couple pole attachment permits will be submitted to complete some laterals and service taps. The Highland Maple Festival is the first 2 weeks of March and will be submitted the following week. 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) – Completed final road bores and taps – broadband access is now available to 100% of the Deerfield Project area; 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.
- Middlebrook (LN) – Project Area is at 100% completion; FTTH installs continue in areas where fiber is available.
- Morris Mill (LN) – A few pole attachment permits are needed in order to complete the service laterals and taps to the remaining 25 locations in this project area; FTTH installs continue in areas where service is available.

Ninety-five percent (95%) 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	202 MGW Project
Deerfield	508	508 MGW Project
Morris Mill	288	263 Lingo Project
Middlebrook	142	142 Lingo Project
Total	1173	1115
% Completed		95%
Subscribers to date		347 (31%)

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. The preconstruction milestone has been achieved and will be reported for remittances over the course of March & April reports. Materials procurement is underway. APB has collected field data on approximately 36,000 poles and submitted 15,5000 pole attachment requests. While approximately 3000 Notice to Proceeds (NTPs) have been received on Dominion poles, APB needs significantly more NTPs to reach a large queue of constructible fiber miles. APB is also having to modify network designs throughout our planned footprint to reflect substantially reduced reliance on REC as a middle mile provider. APB expects this redesign will add at least a calendar quarter to the project timeline in REC territory and significant cost to the overall project. APB is increasing the frequency of county and commission updates. With approval of the first remittance request for Augusta, APB intends to coordinate reviews and submittals of remaining remittance requests in other counties and will submit Rockingham this month. Low Level Design milestone was met and first local and state funds were released to provider. All Points submitted challenge data to DHCD for BEAD funding. Pole attachment bill in General Assembly under consideration. All inquiries and address checks should be directed to APBfiber.com.

The state sent the next phase report for Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program to NTIA for review. Process for BEAD funding opens up upon approval of the report by NTIA. Verizon has expressed interest in applying for BEAD funding for projects in Augusta County.

Educating the public about the benefits and uses of the service is an area of focus for the Committee. The following ideas were broached for outreach for the community: coordinate Committee and provider education for transitions to high speed internet services; present to realtors' groups; notifications on free or reduced installation fees by providers; overcome the concept vs. reality of high-speed internet through outreach; and send mailer to those that did not sign up for service under the VATI 2021 project.

Matters to be Presented by the Committee

None

Adjournment

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