

**MATHEWS BROADBAND ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
8 December 2020 9:00 AM - 10AM on ZOOM**



Present: Judy Rowe, Rob Quartel, Dee Russell, Jeff Beekhoo, Joe Syslo, Page Herbert, Willie Love, Thomas Jenkins, Elizabeth Tollis, Greg Lewis, Chuck Huntley, Julie Kaylor, Amy Dubois, Sherry Hamilton, Cynthia Hayes, and Donnie Lewis.

MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER: The December 8, 2020 meeting of the Mathews Broadband Advisory Board was called to order at 9:00 am by Chairman Judy Rowe.

MINUTES: The November 24, 2020 Meeting Minutes were emailed to members. Judy asked for corrections and additions. There being no corrections or additions, Rob Quartel made a motion to approve the Minutes as presented, and Greg Lewis seconded the motion. The motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

Troubleshooting Partnership with ABB: (Sean Brushett, Frank A Berry, Technical Operations Manger, VA) Judy reported the troubleshooting partnership with Atlantic Broadband is going very well. She received a call from Josie Thorpe who expressed that she had not been able to reach anyone at ABB (numerous calls, no responses) for several weeks. Judy reached out to ABB and was successful in her attempts. Josie's service will be installed tomorrow.

Smart Poles status: Jeff Beekhoo reported they drove out to all eight locations and there was one problem with a location (private property) so they had to switch to the admin building by the parking lot. Everything is on schedule: the poles will be delivered next week, the installer is working on the permits, and the holes will be drilled, and the concrete foundations poured next week so that by the time poles are delivered, it will take two days to stand the poles up. Jeff said we will be ready to go. Judy stated she has not heard from any sites that were marked. She is waiting to hear from the Ruritan Club and will reach out to them again.

Mathews Memorial Library grant status: Greg Lewis reported that everything is moving right along. He encountered a little problem with Verizon on how they will quote out the cost and how the county would pay, but that has been worked out. The Hotspots will be ordered this week and anticipate a couple weeks for them to arrive. Once received, he will get the Hotspots setup and ready to go.

By-Laws Review: (Julie Kaylor, Rob Quartel, Cynthia Hayes, Amy Dubois, and Nancy Welch) Judy began discussion of this item by explaining the need for changes to the Broadband Advisory Board By-Laws. She put together some recommendations in terms of virtual meetings and voting members, as the questions have come up numerous times that if I am not a voting member, am really a member. Judy explained that all stakeholders are members of the BAB. The voting members are a result of the six original members appointed by the Board of Supervisors, and then three people were added. From this Judy concluded we will have the four officers, three technology directors, and two stakeholders who would come in as needed. This gives BAB nine voting members with a required quorum of five per meeting. Once the pandemic hit, there were some voting members who were not able to participate and vote virtually. This has caused issues with ensuring we had enough voting members present to meet the required quorum. To avoid this in the future, Judy recommended in the draft that the chair be able to appoint a substitute for voting members who could not attend. Judy stated we will be nominating our voting-member board at our December 29, 2020 meeting and voting in January. The draft was rephrased to state that votes will be taken in remote and face-to-face meetings. This being a draft of the By-Laws, Judy asked that others take a look at it. Judy explained the need for substitutes when an officer is unable to attend a meeting, for example the Secretary and Media Reporter, as we have had four or five Media Reporters this year. Dee Russell and Caroline Oxley have been helping out. The Vice Chair, Nancy Welch, would like to continue, but with her hands full with the Department of Education meetings, she will not be able to continue as Vice Chair. Judy has spoken with current officers and asked if they are willing to continue. Judy is willing to continue as Chair, Cynthia Hayes is willing to continue to serve as Secretary, and Dee Russell has agreed to serve as Media Reporter. Judy asked Joe Syslo to review the By-Laws with Mindy and Amy, and if necessary the county attorney. Joe agreed to head this up. This will be a potential vote at the January 5, 2021 meeting. Joe Syslo recommended appointing a nominating committee to formalize and get the names out to the rest of the board, as having a list of nominations to vote on will make it easier at

the next meeting. Rob expressed his agreement with Joe's suggestion, as this method would give those who would like to self-nominate the opportunity to get their names in to the nominating committee. Judy agreed to appoint a Nominating Committee.

NEW BUSINESS:

The Plan: (Consultants, Jeff Beekhoo and his staff) Jeff informed the group that we will have a draft of the plan by early next week for the Board of Supervisors meeting for review and comment. The Plan will be finalized by the end of the year (December 29, 2020 meeting). Jeff said this will be a working document for the county.

Renewal of Contract with Broadband Telecom Services: Judy stated that once we have the final version of The Mathews universal broadband ,we will have to implement it, which requires the pursuit of state and federal funding, collection of specific data, and writing of grants. She presented the need for an extension of the Broadband Telecom Services contract and suggested taking this recommendation to the BOS December 15, 2020 meeting. Jeff added that we have to tweak what and how we seek funding because of the number of companies who have secured census blocks of unserved. We have to now identify the actual costs for getting broadband services to all of the areas without service and then identify the grants available and the matching amount for the county. Joe suggested that Jeff explain the acronyms he used in his explanation and review the contract today. Judy stated the current contract amount is \$12,500 per month. Judy called for recommendation from BAB. Page Herbert made a motion that the Broadband Advisory Board recommend that the Board of Supervisors approve Mathews County renewing the contract with Broadband Telecom Services, Jeff Beekhoo, for six months (January 2021 to June 2021) to continue as a consultant to the BAB and Mathews County in their pursuit to make affordable, reliable, accessible, universal, high speed broadband available to every resident of Mathews. Rob Quartel seconded the motion. The motion carried with an affirmative vote from Rob Quartel, Greg Lewis, Chuck Huntley, Judy Rowe, and Cynthia Hayes.

Management Team: (David Blanks, Chair; Nancy Welch, Willie Love, Joe Syslo, Rob Quartel)

Rob reported the Management Team met online and agreed they need to spend more time as a group to move forward. David Blanks was selected to lead the Team. Joe reported that David is supposed to be finding out what pipelines are coming into the county.

Digital Literacy: (Greg Lewis, Chuck Huntley, Jeff Beekhoo, Judy Rowe) Judy referred to Jeff concerning a conversation he had with Chuck about working to prepare people for accessing the smart poles and library equipment. Judy expressed the importance of using other platforms when giving out information to the public for people without Internet access. She would like to see residents have access to YouTube videos or text materials when they log on). We need to address other platforms, like print materials. Judy stated she has talked to Greg Lewis about this and expressed the importance of helping him rollout digital literacy plans in the library. Jeff will be sharing ideas with Judy.

2021: (Election of Officers, 5 January 2021) Judy will formulate a Nominating Committee who will be tasked with putting together a list of nominees for presentation at the January 5, 2021 meeting.

ADJOURN: With no further business, Rob Quartel made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 AM.

CALENDAR:

BOS Meeting: 15 DECEMBER 2020 1:00 PM Zoom

BAB Meeting: 29 DECEMBER 2020 9:00 AM Zoom