



**MATHEWS BROADBAND ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**  
**10 January 2023 at 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM**  
**In-person at Library or on ZOOM**  
**MINUTES**

Jeff Beekhoo, Tyler Beekhoo, Judy Rowe, Rob Quartel, Judi Green, Greg Lewis, Marshall Ruffin, Donnie Lewis, Deb Falco, Page Herbert, Ramona Wilson, Jedon Thompson, Willie Love, and Phil Dunn.

Minutes were approved as written.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

VATI Grants Update: Willie Love, Judy Rowe

Addresses listed for both grants: [mathewscountyva.gov](http://mathewscountyva.gov)

Breezeline VATI address: phone number 844-574-8435

[www.breezeline.com/VA-expansion](http://www.breezeline.com/VA-expansion)

Open Broadband VATI address: [openbb.net](http://openbb.net)

Overview of Aer Wireless Presentation

LECAP: Judy/Jeff – Breaking News. Last we heard the contracts have been signed with ground breaking in mid-January, Issue notice to proceed on Friday. Construction survey will be done soon and zoning and building permits will be issued once special inspection has been completed. The clock will start on Friday.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Breezeline filed for a 60-day extension on the VATI grant. We are “sitting probably” on 2 jobs that need to be completed. Mathews 13 & 15 both are about 80% completed and are waiting on “splices” Mathews 02, Potato Neck 04 Possum Point, and 09 Wolf Trap were damaged by a

combine tilling a field. They have been spliced and are almost back in service. 60 days is plenty of time for us to finish.

Bernie Weeks, Breezeline project manager, and Crystal Duke, Grants and Funding manager, both thought that 60 days was more than sufficient to finish the job. Grant will be completed by March 31, 2023

We will continue to meet with Breezeline for the next year to follow up on how many of the 462 homes being added sign up for service.

OBB: we have 180 homes off the north end tower. 50 homes have line of sight and are being contacted first. 130 customers are non-line of sight and Nokia still needs to come and program their equipment. Everything is in place.

Last meeting discussion of presentation from AER Wireless. (Jeff) Why allowed them to present because vendors have the right to present to the advisory board. Nothing really earth shaking about the presentation.

Line Extension Customer Assistance Program (LECAP). For people who are not included in the VATI grant program and this provides help with people who have long drives or other difficult installs.

Judy discussed 2023 proposed budget. When approved we will be submitting this to Ramona.

## **BUDGET REQUEST MATHEWS COUNTY BROADBAND ADVISORY FY 2024 (Jul23-Jun24)**

1. Extend use eight (8) smart poles for 6 months\* \$199/mo  
\$9,552

(Jul23-Dec23)

2. Extend consulting contract Broadband Telecom Services \$12,500/  
mo \$150,000

(July23-Jun24)

1. Partial funding for the MiFi program for the 1/2 fiscal year  
(7-23/12-23)      \$12,000    **(Corrected to 12/23 - 7/24)**

July23-Dec 23

3. Marketing Initiatives: Print, Advertising,                      \$150/mo    \$1,800
4. Workforce Development Initiative  
\$5,000

**Total: \$178,352**

At this time Jeff and his team will probably be completing their services.

Therefore we will need a coordinator: (See item 6) We could create an authority here in Mathews or a power company could buy or lease the towers from the county. Companies don't want to build towers but are eager to lease space on towers

5. Proposed Network Project Manager \*\*  
\$60,000    **Total      \$238,352**

\*Budget

Much still remains to be decided in terms of how the towers will be maintained, leased, owned etc. We need to keep in mind that the towers will provide a revenue stream for the county.

Marshall Ruffin moved, Phil Dunn seconded that we approve sending the proposed budget to the BOS. The motion passed unanimously.

RCC/OBB workforce development initiative program to get our training program off the ground. We may want to get on the radio to help get this program off the ground.

2023: The Plan - Jeff Beekhoo/Tyler Beekhoo

Tyler - Thanks for the opportunity to work with Judy, the BAB and Ramona over the last two years. We are very excited about 2023. We are close to

providing universal coverage for Mathews. Now we have a clear idea of what's left. The biggest goal we should look forward to is to secure the rest of the funding we need to finish the job. Next four quarters –  
Q1 Use FCC data to update our universal coverage map. We will complete our 2021 VATI project with Breezeline. We will also finish construction of towers by end of first quarter Preparing an RFP for mobile operators to locate on the towers.

Q2 Breezeline may come up with another VATI Project.. Prepare another RFP for Fixed operators on the towers. This initiative will be similar to what Caroline County did last year. Review responses for mobile operators and seeing what middle mile providers in the region are developing and planning to bring in back haul..

Q3 We will review fixed wireless proposals and ... DHCD will not accept anything less than universal coverage.

Q4 Close out the year working with fixed wireless operator and looking at other ways to get universal coverage.

Rob – this needs to be restated for the BOS in terms of goals met and goals to be met. In 2021 42% had access to high-speed broadband by the end of 2023 w hat% will have access. VATI definition of 100% access is 97% of non-vacant properties our goal is 100%. Must be able to state that any person or business moving into this county will have access to high-speed broadband by 2024. Must make distinctions between technologies to the BOS on types of high-speed broadband access.

Marshall suggested a modification. Businesses don't care about fixed or wireless service as long as they can easily connect at a reasonable price. We should also emphasize the advances we have made in terms of tele-medicine and emergency services. Messaging must also emphasize that offering technology is not enough. We must make sure customers can take advantage of it. We must provide function. Telemedicine involves a lot of complicated technology. Must define function. The hardware will be available but what can you do with it.

Need to show a 2023 timeline that contains this information.

How do we encourage Breezeline and other companies to market these services?

Poster Contest: Melissa Mason/Judy – Do you have a story to share in a public information session to due mid-February (10)

Policy Committee: James Knighton – no report

Parade/Celebration in 2023 – Begin again in late spring with MayFaire. Judy suggests she use her Jeep to drive around Mathews dressed as a tower. Phil offers to be her driver.

Marketing broadband - radio? monthly slot?

VA General Assembly

Senate bill 724. Every school board must submit a report containing the addresses of every student that does not have access to broadband.

Nancy reported to Judy yesterday that she thinks that Mathews will finally be correctly listed on the FCC site for applying to affordable bb. We are getting help from outside partners to get this straightened out.

**MOVED AND SECONDED TO ADJOURN 9:57 AM**

**Calendar:**

BOS Meeting: Tuesday, 23 January 2023 6:00 PM Historic CH

BAB Meeting: Tuesday, 14 February 2023; 9:00 AM Library/Zoom

\* Vote item.