



MATHEWS BROADBAND ADVISORY BOARD

14 May 2024 at 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

In-person at Library and on ZOOM

MINUTES by AI

INTRODUCTIONS: *Judy Rowe, *Greg Lewis, *Willie Love, *Page Herbert, *Marshall Ruffin, Tim Doss, Judi Green, Tim Tillage, Jeff Beekhoo, Tyler Beekhoo and AI *Quorum = 5

May 14, 2024 08:56 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Quick recap

The board and the attendees discussed various projects including the state's discounted program, broadband grants in Gloucester, and the potential of using Verizon towers. They also reviewed the progress of ongoing projects, addressed potential cost-saving strategies, and planned for future improvements such as Smart Pole maintenance and public meeting accessibility. Lastly, they touched on concerns about low-cost programs in Virginia and other states, and the feasibility of bulk fiber for low-cost options.

Next steps

Mathews will follow up with the FCC regarding the low-cost provider proposal and update the board on any developments.

Tyler will update the Digital Opportunity Planning Grant application with feedback received and submit it by the deadline.

Jeff will work on reducing the cost per vehicle for police vehicles and resubmit the numbers to Ramona for budget approval.

Summary

State Discount Program and Broadband Board

Mathews(?) and Marshall discussed some personal matters before moving on to the meeting's agenda. Note start time of AI. Recording and meeting stated at 9:00.

Mathews (Judy) clarified that the state's LECAP program was still available despite having an income cap, in response to a query from Jeff. The Broadband Advisory Board was then briefed on the agenda which included discussing monopole towers, with Jeff being asked to provide updates. The meeting was set to continue with this discussion.

Gloucester Broadband Grant and Project Updates

Jeff, Mathews (Judy), and Tyler discussed the Open Broadband and VATI grant situation in Gloucester. Tyler reported on a meeting with DHCD, where they explored potential solutions for the issues, including leasing a Verizon tower, using an unused Gloucester-funded ARPA Tower, or constructing a new tower. The feasibility of these options is currently being assessed. Mathews(Judy) and Tyler also discussed the progress and challenges of a project involving equipment installations at two sites, Gloucester Tower and James Store (North End). They expressed confidence in Kevin's (from DHCD) ability to handle the project's complexities and emphasized the need for close-out documentation and testing points.

Project Updates and Bead Discussion

Mathews(Judy) and Tyler discussed the progress of various projects. Tyler's efforts regarding Broadband Telecom Services were appreciated, and it was indicated that they might need to sign some documents for the closeout. They planned to continue attending regular meetings for updates. Mathews also brought up the Verizon proposal, and it was mentioned that Jeff would start discussing it. Tyler shared his plan to attend an event in Richmond for updates on the Bead application process and the Federal NTIA/State issue. Mathews (Willie) expressed his inability to attend but asked Tyler to inquire about the challenge process which was supposed to be finalized last year.

Concerns Over Low-Cost Programs and Labor

Mathews (Judy) expressed concerns about the low-cost programs offered in Virginia and other states, highlighting that Virginia was lagging behind due to internal issues. She also raised questions about the potential impact of bulk fiber being used for low-cost options for apartment buildings, but Jeff clarified that it was a matter of pricing and

service, not the taking of families' homes. They discussed the high cost of labor and the potential issues with Breezeline's hybrid network. Mathews (Judy) also mentioned a proposed opt-out with the FCC for low-cost housing but clarified that it probably wouldn't affect their project with Verizon. Jeff confirmed his attendance at the upcoming Broadband Together conference.

Website Resolution and Police Vehicle Updates

Mathews (Greg) reported that the website had been resolved after a brief downtime. He then asked Page for the addresses of the two VATI Grants, which Page promised to provide. Tyler discussed the Digital Opportunity Planning Grant application, stating he would update it with feedback and make it ready for the upcoming deadline. Jeff reported successful testing of police vehicles and was working on reducing the cost per vehicle (from \$3,000 down to about \$1,600). He planned to resubmit the numbers once he was satisfied with the testing.

Strategies for Cost Reduction and Capacity Improvement

Mathews(Judy) and Jeff discussed strategies to reduce costs and improve capacity. Mathews (Judy) took a call from Chris Debosier (Verizon) during the meeting and confirmed that he would call again later. They also discussed a delay in identifying unserved and underserved locations in Virginia due to a meeting with Chandler Vaughn from DHCD. Mathews shared that Verizon has offered to assist in expediting the process and has close contacts with NTIA. Lastly, Mathews(Judy) outlined a plan to contact several churches and clubs, including the West Mathews League to thank them for the use of their property for Smart Poles and to let them know that the Board of Supervisors had voted to continue service to them.

Improving Smart Polls and Public Meetings

Mathews (Judy) discussed the county's plan to maintain and improve Smart Poles, including designing and installing new signage and providing a troubleshooting number for better visibility and protection against vandalism. She also mentioned a plan to extend coverage for Russell Dennis from the Mathews Ruritan Club and Ricky Wiatt of Mathews Little League.. Mathews (Judy) emphasized the importance of

broadcasting public meetings to keep citizens informed and encouraged the team to push for public meetings to be accessible to all. The conversation ended with the announcement of upcoming board meetings and a National Police Week event.

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Produced by AI from Zoom

Edited and Submitted by Judy Rowe, aka Mathews