

Clarke County

BROADBAND IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, JUNE 13, 2017



A meeting of the Broadband Implementation Committee was held at the Berryville/Clarke County Government Center, Berryville, Virginia, on Tuesday, June 13, 2017.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Robina Bouffault, Scott Kreider, Bev McKay

Absent: Mary Daniel

Staff Present: Brandon Stidham, Planning Director

CALLED TO ORDER

Mr. Stidham called the meeting to order at 2:12PM.

AGENDA

The Committee approved the agenda as presented by Staff.

Yes: Bouffault, Kreider (seconded), McKay (moved)

No: none

Absent: Daniel

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Committee approved the May 23, 2017 meeting minutes as presented by Staff.

Yes: Bouffault (moved), Kreider (seconded), McKay

No: none

Absent: Daniel

OLD BUSINESS

Update, Request for Information (RFI) – Draft Scope of Services and Process Timeline

Mr. Stidham reviewed the changes to the draft Scope of Services that the members requested at the previous meeting. Ms. Bouffault asked about the timeline for releasing the RFI. Mr. Stidham replied that Mike Legge has a number of procurements that he is currently working on and will assemble the RFI as soon as he can. He said that when Mike gives him a concrete timeline he will notify the members via email. Ms. Bouffault asked whether the RFI would be released by the end of June and Mr. Stidham replied that he hoped so. Members had no additional questions or changes to the Scope of Services.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion, Broadband Webpage

Mr. Stidham said that he has included a draft template for the broadband webpage in the meeting packet that outlines the subjects and information that would be developed. He also said that he has asked Gordon Russell to reserve the domain name, "clarkeconnect.org," for the webpage and that Mr. Russell said he would also reserve the corresponding ".com" and ".net" addresses. He added that depending on the amount of content for the webpage, Mr. Russell said that a draft can be developed within a month of being provided with the necessary information. He also said that the webpage would have to be developed separate from the County website since it would contain references to businesses and that IT staff would likely use an online service to develop the webpage such as Wix or Wordpress. He said that the goal is to have a webpage that requires the least amount of staff time to maintain. Ms. Bouffault noted that the online services have a selection of templates that can be easily used to develop a webpage.

Mr. McKay said that a link to speedtest.net should be added to the webpage so that people can check their connection speeds. Mr. Stidham said he would add this to the template.

Mr. Stidham provided an overview of the draft template and the information that can be provided on the webpage. Ms. Bouffault said that she would be leery about including recommendations on the types of providers on the webpage. Mr. Stidham clarified that they would provide information on the speeds and capacities that are necessary to address users' individual needs but would not make recommendations on the best broadband technology or specific providers to use. Visitors to the webpage could then use this general information in doing their own research on specific providers and technologies. Ms. Bouffault said that she is fine with this so long as all of the information is kept general.

Regarding the section that includes links to provider websites, Ms. Bouffault asked if definitions for the different technologies, such as WISPs, would be provided and Mr. Stidham replied yes. Mr. Stidham added that he thought this section should only include links to provider websites and not attempt to show coverage maps or other specific information on the webpage. The members agreed with this.

Mr. Stidham said that if the members are comfortable with the template, he can assemble the information and provide it to IT staff to begin developing a draft webpage that the members could review before the webpage goes live. Mr. Stidham asked the members what they thought about the template. Ms. Bouffault said that she thinks it is good and that you have to keep it as simple as possible. Mr. Stidham agreed but noted that the section for infrastructure providers will have to be more detailed in order to provide necessary technical and procedural information to that audience. Mr. Stidham asked whether the members were comfortable with him assembling the content for the webpage and Ms. Bouffault volunteered to help with the content development. Mr. McKay said that once the draft webpage is finished, it can be sent out to all of the members to review. Mr. Stidham said that he will schedule another Committee meeting to review and approve the layout and content before sending to the IT staff to assemble. Mr. Stidham asked the members if they wanted to be involved on the design of the webpage and they agreed to leave the design up to Staff.

Discussion, General Mailing on Broadband – Content and Form

Mr. Stidham said that the members indicated at the previous meeting an interest in sending a general mailing out to County residents on broadband, and he suggested that the mailing could be used to promote the broadband website. Mr. Kreider said that the mailing could promote both broadband and the website. Ms. Bouffault said the letter should be a short one containing bulleted items listing the County's broadband projects. Mr. Stidham asked whether a postcard would be effective and Ms. Bouffault said that a letter addressed to the residents should be sent and it should be separate from the tax bill mailing. Mr. McKay noted that he thought more people would read a postcard than a letter and Ms. Bouffault disagreed. Ms. Bouffault said that adding "Information on County Broadband" could be listed on the outside of the envelope. Ms. Bouffault noted that the letter should also inform people that wired broadband is available for businesses in certain parts of the County and Mr. Stidham noted that this should also be included on the County's economic development website. Mr. McKay noted that the economic development website could include a link to the broadband website. The members also agreed to send out the mailing after the website is complete and active.

Discussion, VACo Article on Draft Wireless Regulatory Authority Legislation

Mr. Stidham reviewed an article and draft legislation provided by the Virginia Association of Counties (VACo) that would severely curtail local government regulation of communication towers, adding that it does not appear to be all that different from legislation that was being considered in the last General Assembly session. He said that this Committee is in an excellent position to review and provide recommendations to the Board of Supervisors on broadband legislation. Ms. Bouffault said that it helps our position to be able to say to our legislators that we are getting out in front of this issue and working proactively on solutions. Mr. Stidham asked if the members wanted to pass a formal motion to recommend the Board oppose this legislation and the members agreed to do so.

The Committee moved to recommend that the Board of Supervisors formally oppose the draft wireless regulatory authority legislation and communicate this opposition to our State delegation.

Yes: Bouffault (seconded), Kreider (moved)

No: none

Absent: Daniel

Abstained: Mckay

The members agreed to schedule the next meeting for Tuesday, July 11 at 2:00PM.

On a motion by Ms. Bouffault, seconded by Mr. Kreider, the meeting was adjourned at 2:50PM.



Brandon Stidham, Planning Director