

Broadband Meeting Minutes

6/16/2022

Attendance:

Megan DelGaudio
Mary Ellen Sheffield
Heather Tinelli
Ed Cummins
Dion Reed
Jack Wilson
Ben Schaffle
Joyce Jones
Todd Mohn
Alison Davis
Padraig Barry
Andrew Costello
Joe Brown
Ed Clower

Ben Schaffle motioned to start the meeting at 4:04 pm.

Ben Schaffle motioned to approve minutes from 5/15/22 meeting.

Letter of support for Rural Maryland Economic Development Fund Grant – Department of Tourism and Economic Development and KRM – this was completed Sunday and the Commissioners signed Tuesday 6/14.

The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp (tentative) – camp for medically fragile children to open at Aspen Institute. May have a need for Broadband. They spoke to both Bay County Communications who are about a mile away at the Wye Institute to see if they could accommodate. Bay County gave \$39,000 estimate for the one-mile build. Megan also reached out to Talkie to ask when they might be able to get there. They said they would be going to Sportsman's Neck in the next month but not sure when they would be down to Aspen. They would make this area a priority since we let them know. Bay County found out that there may be a connection from one of the Wye Research facilities that goes back to Aspen. Still waiting for confirmation.

Padraig representative of the camp, spoke about their cause and the need for internet at that location due to the campers' medical issues. Currently connectivity is bad now – lines upon lines – not connected to any internet. They have no idea. Bay County was extremely helpful – as well as Delmarva Wifi. They tried to follow some lines – two significant houses on the property. Would committee support getting broadband to this area sooner? Connectivity right now is a hotspot when he gets decent cell service at that end of the building. Not connected to any internet according to the companies he's

spoken with. Bay Country and Delmarva Wifi were very helpful in looking over the property. U of Md owns the administrative building on Carmichael Rd. There is fiber at the road. Half a mile to Houghton House. No one is sure how the service gets down to the building. Need for medical records; need a pure and consistent solution as they are getting information from hospitals. There are two adjacent neighbors that live down close to the property - they want to work with us - individual neighbors - down the drive - Spector's and Cordero's they would also welcome the connection - cell service issues as well.

Timeframe - camp is scheduled to be up and running by summer of 2023. Operating as a business - non-profit

Megan: Would like opinion from members for possibly working with Bay Country to support this endeavor. Alison: Price – full mile \$39,000.00 but will be less because they found a connection to the Administration Building. We would pay for the fiber to come in and the Camp can pay for the level of bandwidth they would want.

Padraig: Bay Country is still looking into the numbers as to what they can provide.

Dion and Ben suggested StarLink in the interim for the camp. Contact them for a business account – potentially quicker until the cable is run over or T-Mobile home internet. Good responses from StarLink – 200 – 300 downloads.

Megan can reach out to Starlink contact and check. Has some contacts from Verizon.

Megan do we want to make a motion to support this cause?

Ed Clower motioned to go to the Commissioners and try to get funding for either Starlink or Bay Country to get the internet to the Camp. Andrew Costello 2nd.

As discussed last meeting the State was considering the challenge made by Talkie regarding all areas that we had ISP's submit grants for with the exception of one area – Tilghman Neck, which was awarded to Breezeline. The challenge was based on the Federal Grant approval for Talkie to build to much of the areas inside of the State Grant Areas. Talkie will be required to build to all areas in 2 years. If they do not complete this, they will receive no future funding and any current funding will be lost.

Jack Wilson reached out to Megan to discuss the impact of this. He suggested a meeting with Rick Gordon to discuss how this will be managed. Who will be making the determination of how long they have to complete X portion of the project? If we get to 18 months and there is still a lot of outstanding work to be done – what is the recourse?

Megan is going to arrange a meeting with herself, Jack Wilson and Rick Gordon. What happens if Talkie can't proceed? Jack would like us to have a backup shovel ready plan ready to go in order to continue to take advantage of any grant money available if Talkie defaults.

We would like to ask Talkie for a timeline. That's the question that we get from citizens. They want to know when broadband will be in their area. Any ideas of what we could be doing? Anything the committee would like Megan to ask Rick Gordon?

Megan: In the interest of competition could we try to build some of the areas that were proposed by other ISPs.

Alison: Do you think that the State couldn't not accept the Challenges?

Megan: In Cecil County all Grants were issued. Talkie did not challenge those.

Todd: We have some ARPA money that could be used to work with other Broadband ISPs in order to create competition for the County.

Megan: She could ask Talkie to join in on the next meeting. Just to ask their plan – How can we help accelerate? Megan asked would the County be willing to pay money to help accelerate Talkie's expansion if they asked. Todd: They can ask; doesn't mean they'll get it.

Next meeting July 21,2022.

Jack: NTIA grant coming out from the Fed coming out in a month.

Jack: Thanks to the committee for all the time and energy put into this.

Megan: Still working on the phone line for citizens to call in to report if they have no access to Broadband.

Ed Clower motioned to adjourn at 4:55pm. Ben Schaffle seconded.