

ROANOKE VALLEY BROADBAND AUTHORITY

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BOARD MEMBERS:
Bob Cowell, City of Roanoke
Gary Larrowe, Botetourt County
Mike McEvoy, Citizen
Daniel R. O'Donnell, Roanoke County
James Taliaferro, II, City of Salem

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MINUTES

The May Board Meeting of the Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority was held on Friday, May 15, 2020 at 8:30 a.m. via electronic means remotely through UberConference, following the guidelines approved by the General Assembly on 4/22/2020.

1. CALL TO ORDER, WELCOME AND ROLL CALL

Chairman McEvoy called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. and welcomed those in attendance. Wayne Strickland, Secretary to the Broadband Authority, called the roll and reported that a quorum was present.

Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority Board Members in Attendance: Bob Cowell (participated remotely from the City of Roanoke); Gary Larrowe (participated remotely from Botetourt County); Mike McEvoy (participated remotely from the City of Roanoke); Dan O'Donnell (participated remotely from Roanoke County) and Jay Taliaferro (participated remotely from the City of Salem).

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Broadband Authority Staff: Olivia Dooley, Treasurer & Chief Fiscal Officer and Frank Smith, President and CEO, Jim Bandy, Vice President of Operations and Solutions Engineering, and Barry Stacy, Project Manager.

Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission Staff: Matt Miller, Jackie Pace and Wayne Strickland.

Others: Jeff Crowder, Executive Director for Strategic Initiatives, Virginia Tech; Scott Midkiff, Vice President for Information Technology and CIO, Virginia Tech; Sam Darby, Glenn Feldmann Darby & Goodlatte; Jennifer Eddy, Chief Strategy Officer, Eddy Alexander; Sam English, Entrepreneur; Brian Hamilton, Economic Development Director, Montgomery County; Jill Loope, Director of Economic Development, Roanoke County; Craig Meadows, County Administrator, Montgomery County; and Nancy Turner, Office of the County Attorney, Montgomery County

2. APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 17, 2020 MINUTES

The January 17, 2020 Minutes of the Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority Board Meeting were distributed earlier.

Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority Action:

Gary Larrowe moved approval of the January 17, 2020 Minutes of the Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority meeting, as presented. The motion was seconded by Jay Taliaferro and carried.

3. FINANCIALS FOR JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH, AND APRIL 2020

The Financial Reports for January, February, March, and April 2020 were distributed earlier in the agenda packet. Frank Smith reported that financials are on track.

4. PROPOSED UPDATED BUDGET FOR 2019-2020

Budget numbers were adjusted to reflect new projects such as the announcement for the fiber to the home study and survey and partnering with new and existing providers. This was reflected under Contract (Community Engagement) with LIT Networks working with Mr. Taliaferro and the City of Salem. Also reflected was the Waste Disposal line item for \$500 for disposal of leftover materials from construction, all environmental guidelines were followed. The updated budget for 2019-2020 reflects an 8 percent increase in revenues and an 8 percent increase in expenditures to balance.

Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority Action:

Motion by Dan O'Donnell to adopt the revised FY2019-2020 budget, as presented. Motion was seconded by Jay Taliaferro.

Roll Call Vote: 5 – Yes; 0 – No; 0 – Abstentions.

Bob Cowell	Yes
Gary Larrowe	Yes
Mike McEvoy	Yes
Dan O'Donnell	Yes
Jay Taliaferro	Yes

5. PROPOSED FISCAL BUDGET FOR 2020-2021

The proposed draft budget for 2020-2021 was presented. The draft budget shows a 7 percent decrease over the current in both revenues and expenditures. This reflects a decrease in locality contributions to support their management of COVID-19 related to financial constraints in their respective jurisdictions and good fiscal management by the RVBA. The RVBA has been able to adjust its budget to support the financial challenges being faced by the localities. The good news is that the RVBA continues to grow revenues based on increasing business on its network despite the challenges of a severe economic downturn in the region and the country.

Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority Action:

Motion by Dan O'Donnell to adopt the FY2021 budget, as presented. Motion was seconded by Bob Cowell.

Roll Call Vote: 5 – Yes; 0 – No; 0 – Abstentions.

Bob Cowell	Yes
Gary Larrowe	Yes
Mike McEvoy	Yes

Dan O'Donnell	Yes
Jay Taliaferro	Yes

6. **PROJECT UPDATES**

The RVBA is working in partnership with VATI grant awardees to provide core backbone network services by the utilization of its open access middle mile infrastructure to support connectivity efforts in neighboring localities. Blue Ridge PBS in Roanoke City is a co-location center for this effort.

The RVBA is in the process of developing three COOP-DR (Continuity of Operations and Disaster Recovery) centers. They are working with Botetourt County staff at the Greenfield Co-Location center, the Blue Ridge PBS center, and the Water Authority team on the Spring Hollow center.

The first major national carrier has been signed to locate at the Greenfield center.

Work was completed to extend the RVBA's network into the new 811/911 center in the Blue Hills industrial park located in the City of Roanoke.

An extension to the Regional Jail and Spring Hollow facility was completed this year.

Several thousand respondents from across the Roanoke Valley have responded to the Fiber to the Home survey being conducted by the RVBA

The RVBA reported they have had over 1,100 straight days of uninterrupted service to the network.

7. **RESOLUTION APPROVING THE AMENDMENT AND RESTATEMENT OF THE ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION OF THE ROANOKE VALLEY BROADBAND AUTHORITY**

Frank Smith stated that going forward strategically the emphasis is to look at what is best to help expand what the authority is doing for the communities it serves. It is being considered to expand the board to include two additional citizen slots. The process entailed first going to the General Assembly to have the Wireless Services Authority Act amended to allow authorities to add two slots. This legislation was proposed by Senator Edwards and Delegate Austin to allow the Broadband Authority to go from five members to seven members and signed into law by Governor Northam in March of 2020. It is being proposed that the two citizen slots be a representative from Virginia Tech (Dr. Scott Midkiff) and Carilion Clinic (tbd) to add additional guidance to the board. A resolution was distributed earlier in the agenda packet asking members to approve the amendment and restatement of the Articles of Incorporation. Mr. Smith stated he would be available to meet with each locality to explain the purpose, intent, and value of this issue. It is anticipated that this will be finalized by the July board meeting of the Broadband Authority.

Chairman McEvoy opened the floor for further discussion. Craig Meadows, Montgomery County Administrator, stated that in reading the resolution he was curious about the wording (page 11 of the agenda, page 1 of resolution, wording in next to last whereas paragraph referencing Montgomery County... "Whereas, the Authority is considering the addition of Members representing Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and Carilion Clinic

and expanding its service area to include Montgomery County including the Town of Blacksburg; and,”. Mr. Meadows stated he was curious to the thoughts behind including Montgomery County and the Town of Blacksburg and asked if there was any conversation to sharing that information prior to discussion at this meeting. Sam Darby, Broadband Counsel, stated he authored the draft Articles of Incorporation and said the reasoning for the wording was for symmetry and connectivity (Va. Tech to Carilion Biomed would have to run through Montgomery County/Blacksburg).

Bob Cowell stated that Montgomery County has initiated conversations regarding its own broadband service in the County and asked if the RVBA’s primary intention is to accommodate the connectivity between the campus and the Innovation Corridor in our area would it warrant some tweaking of the language to make it clearer that is the intent of the RVBA in terms of service expansion. Mr. Cowell stated it was not the intent of the RVBA to open up Montgomery County and Blacksburg as a whole new service area but noted that it does appear to read that way as it is wording now.

Mr. Meadows noted that the County is currently researching establishing an authority in Montgomery County. When reading the resolution could there be an opportunity for Montgomery County be one of the additional members. Want to be a good regional partner and work together. Finding out so late and the way the resolution was worded raised questions from County staff and legal counsel. Noted if the resolution is adopted in its current form, the wording would be very troubling for Montgomery County.

Mr. Cowell asked in order to keep on the timeline with Va. Tech Board of Visitors Meeting, could an alternative, in the preamble for that Whereas statement, be to drop the language on expanding service area. Likewise, on the purpose section also remove reference to Montgomery County and the Town of Blacksburg. Chairman McEvoy concurred to modify the wording in resolution today so the RVBA could stay on track with Virginia Tech’s Board of Visitor’s Meeting later this month then set up meetings with RVBA localities in July.

Members asked Mr. Meadows if this action would be acceptable to Montgomery County officials. Mr. Meadows stated that it would be acceptable. Meadows said he looks forward to having conversations and hopes to find ways to partner more and work together. Stated that the way the resolution is now worded concerned him, and that it may cause political issues.

Action by the Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority:

Motion by Bob Cowell to approve the resolution relative to the Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority to be amended as follows: in the preamble the whereas referencing additional members, strike the language “and expanding the service area to include Montgomery County and the Town of Blacksburg”. Similarly, under Article IV, Purpose – strike the language where it would no longer include “Montgomery County (including the Town of Blacksburg)”. Also add caveat requesting Frank Smith, Broadband CEO, contact Montgomery County to have further discussions about what might be the options on going forward Motion was seconded by Gary Larrowe.

Roll Call Vote: 5 – Yes; 0 – No; 0 – Abstentions.

Bob Cowell	Yes
Gary Larrowe	Yes
Mike McEvoy	Yes
Dan O’Donnell	Yes

Jay Taliaferro Yes

8. **OTHER BUSINESS**

Next board meeting date is July 17, 2020.

Chairman McEvoy thanked board members for their feedback concerning Mr. Smith's annual evaluation. Chairman McEvoy stated if it is acceptable with the board, he would put together a summary and have a telephone conversation with Mr. Smith about his performance this past fiscal year based on the feedback. All members were in agreement.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 a.m.

Submitted by:

Wayne Strickland
Secretary to the Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority