

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
Dr. Scott Midkiff, Virginia Tech
Keith Perry, Carilion

FINAL MINUTES

The January 2021 Board Meeting of the Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority was held virtually on January 15, 2021 at 8:30 a.m. A video recording of the meeting is available.

1. CALL TO ORDER, WELCOME AND ROLL CALL

Chairman McEvoy called the meeting to order at 8:31 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: *Present:* Gary Larrowe, Botetourt County; Mike McEvoy, Citizen; Dan O'Donnell, Roanoke County, Jay Taliaferro, City of Salem; Dr. Scott Midkiff, Virginia Tech; and Keith Perry, Carilion.

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Broadband Authority Staff: Olivia Dooley, Frank Smith, Barry Stacy

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

Others: Watts Burks, Glenn Feldmann Darby & Goodlatte; Jill Loope, Roanoke County Economic Development; Corbin Stone, Robinson, Farmer, Cox Associates; and Jennifer Eddy, EddyAlexander

2. Approval of Minutes

The November 20, 2020 and December 14, 2020 minutes were presented. Dan O'Donnell moved that the minutes be approved. The motion was seconded by Gary Larrowe. The motion was adopted by a unanimous voice vote of 5-0.

3. Treasurer's Report

Frank Smith gave an overview of the financial statements for November and December. Mr Smith indicated that services revenue was up at already at 94% of the budget for the fiscal year. He also mentioned that legal fees were higher than expected, but in line with what work was being required. Dan O'Donnell reminded everyone that localities are currently developing budgets and inquired about operating expenses for next fiscal year. Mr. Smith

stated that more detailed budget considerations would be presented at the March meeting. Gary Larrowe moved that the two financial statements be accepted as presented. The motion was seconded by Dan O'Donnell. The motion was adopted by a unanimous voice vote of 6-0 (Keith Perry was now present)

4. Presentation of FY 2020 Audit

Corbin Stone presented the FY 2020 by reviewing a four-year overview of the RVBA finances. Mr. Stone stated that Olivia Dooley has done an excellent job with the organization of records and that the audit gives an unqualified opinion on the RVBA. Mr. Stone presented a four-year summary of the RVBA finances which showed that unrestricted assets have been growing the last four years. Current liabilities for the RVBA are about \$6.3 and the Net position of the authority is about \$4.2 million. Growth rates in the revenues are higher than the rates for expenses. There were no issues with the audit. Mr. O'Donnell asked if the Western Virginia Water Authority (WVWA) was the fiscal agent for the RVBA. Mr. McEvoy stated that the WVWA is not the fiscal agent; but, has a contract with the RVBA to provide employee related functions which are reimbursed by the RVBA. Mr. Stone concluded by stating that lease reporting will change in the future and that operating leases will have to be included in future audits because of a change in regulations. Gary Larrowe moved to accept the audit report which was seconded by Jay Taliaferro. The motion was approved by a 6-0 voice vote.

5. Election of Officers

The staff report stated that the election of officers should take place in June of even numbered years according to RVBA bylaws. In 2020, the June meeting was cancelled, and officers have not been elected. It was proposed that the current slate of officers be elected until the next term expires in June 2022. Elected officers are the Chair, Mike McEvoy, and the Vice-Chair, Dan O'Donnell. Gary Larrowe made the motion to re-elect the current officers and the motion was seconded by Jay Taliaferro. The motion passed, 6-0, by a roll call vote.

Member & Vote

Mr. Larrowe – Yes
Mr. McEvoy – Yes
Mr. O'Donnell – Yes
Mr. Taliaferro – Yes
Mr. Keith Perry-Yes
Dr. Scott Midkiff-Yes

6. Project Updates

Frank Smith presented slides that gave an overview of RVBA activities. Key updates include upgrades to the core backbone with diverse physical routing; fixed wireless projects that are progressing in Botetourt County; an additional 10 miles of network that has been completed in Botetourt County; and a RVBA competitive response to Roanoke County Public Schools for internet and dark fiber services. RVBA staff is working with Virginia Tech and Carilion on various wireless projects and grants, as well as public Wi-Fi services. The RVBA is working with localities to look at fiber to the home (FTTH) projects with LIT Networks. Finally, the RVBA is following broadband related bills in the General Assembly. Dan O'Donnell asked if there was

an update on broadband authorities being able to apply for VATI Grants. Mr. Smith said that Ms. Eddy would cover this and other legislation under other business.

7. Other Business

Jennifer Eddy gave an overview state legislation related to broadband in the General Assembly. She stated that there are at least nine different bills being considered in this session. Two bills are in support of the RVBA and other broadband authorities. Senate bill 1334, introduced by Senator Edwards, would allow broadband authorities to compete for VATI funds. House bill 1923, introduced by Delegate Ayala, expands an existing pilot program for electric utilities to allow municipal internet providers to partner to provide service to unserved areas. There are several other bills related to broadband that staff is reviewing to be sure that municipal broadband opportunities are not restricted. Ms. Eddy asked for local governments and partners to consider supporting the legislation that would help remove any restrictions on municipal broadband which would benefit the RVBA and other authorities. Mr. Strickland asked if local governments had already provided support these legislative priorities and mentioned the Regional Commission has passed a resolution in support of most of these measures. Ms. Eddy agreed to provide a summary of the bills (especially the one relating to school boards) to the local government members and stakeholders in response to a question from Mr. O'Donnell. Mr. O'Donnell also suggested that a future VATI grant might have a greater chance of success if it was regional and strategic in nature.

Mr. McEvoy mentioned that the RVBA should also look at a staffing plan and this will be discussed at the March meeting along with the budget.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:29 a.m.

Submitted by:



Wayne G. Strickland
Secretary to the Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority