

BROADBAND ADVISORY COUNCIL
August 14, 2020
3:00 PM
UNAPPROVED MINUTES
Digital Meeting via Google Meets

Members Present

Senator Jennifer Boysko, Chair
James Carr
Mike Culp
Senator Ghazala Hashmi
Kristie Helmick Proctor
Delegate Chris Hurst
Mike Keyser
Delegate Paul E. Krizek
Ray LaMura
Richard Schollman
The Honorable Bettina K. Ring
Delegate Roslyn C. Tyler, Vice Chair
Rosemary Wilson
The Honorable Brian Ball (Proxy by Evan Feinman)

Members Absent

Delegate James A. Leftwich, Jr.
Senator Lynwood W. Lewis, Jr.

Call to Order

Senator Jennifer Boysko, Chair of the Broadband Advisory Council, called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Dr. Holmes announced that due to the Governor's Declared State of Emergency due to COVID-19, it is impracticable and unsafe for the Broadband Advisory Council to assemble in a single location, so the Council meeting will be held electronically, by video conference and telephone options, pursuant to 2020 Amendments to the 2020 Appropriation Act. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss or transact the business statutorily required or necessary to continue operations of the Broadband Advisory Council and the discharge of its lawful purposes, duties, and responsibilities. The public is welcome to use the link and phone number options made available by staff to attend the meeting electronically. The Broadband Advisory Council will make available a recording or transcript of the meeting on its website in accordance with the timeframes established in Sections 2.2-3707 and 2.2-3701.1 of the Code of Virginia.

Roll Call	Dr. Holmes, Director of the Office of Broadband for the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), called the roll and stated that a quorum was present.
Approval of Minutes	A motion was made by Delegate Hurst and properly seconded by Delegate Krizek to approve the minutes of the July 27, 2020 meeting of the Broadband Advisory Council. The motion passed (Yea: Boysko, Carr, Culp, Feinman, Hashmi, Helmick Proctor, Hurst, Keyser, Krizek, LaMura, Lewis, Showman, Ring, Tyler, ; Nay: None; Abstain: Wilson; No-Vote: None)
Virginia Telecommunications Initiative Budget Overview (VATI)	<p>Dr. Holmes provided the Council with a summary of the VATI application process and the results of the FY20 round of funding. She noted that the Office of Broadband had received 58 notices of application for the FY21 round of funding, which is \$19M in total. It was noted that the Governor’s recently released budget proposes \$85M to the VATI program over the FY21 and FY22 application cycles, which will result in an increase in available FY21 funds from \$19M to \$49M.</p> <p>After discussion, a motion was made by Delegate Krizek and properly seconded by Mr. Feinman to produce both a resolution of support from the Council and a letter of support from the Chair of the Council in support of the Governor’s proposed increase in VATI funding. The motion passed (Yea: Boysko, Carr, Culp, Feinman, Hashmi, Helmick Proctor, Hurst, Keyser, Krizek, LaMura, Lewis, Schollman, Ring, Tyler, Wilson; Nay: None; No-Vote: None)</p>
Update on CARES Act Funding	<p>Ms. Caroline Luxhoj, Telecommunication and Broadband Project Manager for the Office of Broadband at DHCD, gave a brief presentation on the CARES Act and how those funds may be utilized to support expansion of broadband in the Commonwealth. She noted that several counties across the state had already committed part of their CARES Act funding to broadband projects.</p> <p>Mr. Culp presented on how the Albemarle Broadband Authority (ABBA) plans to use CARES Act funds on broadband-related projects in the county. The county is pursuing two projects that will support rural area distance learning, telehealth and other vulnerable resident life needs due to the COVID-19 public health emergency.</p>

Virginia Department of Education Presentation

Dr. Myers from the Virginia Department of Education provided an overview of the ongoing challenges facing schools across the state in terms of providing adequate broadband coverage for students, including supply chain challenges when ordering various technologies.

VCTA, Hotspots, and Keep American's Connected Pledge Presentation

Mr. LaMura presented the Keep Americans Connected Pledge, which includes over 800 pledgees. He also relayed information on everything the VCTA is doing to help Virginian's with their broadband needs during the COVID-19 pandemic, including local government sponsorship programs to lower costs of families to access broadband.

VTIA Presentation

Mr. Schollman provided a brief update on VTIA's efforts to make broadband more accessible during the COVID-19 pandemic, including joining the Keep Americans Connected Pledge and providing free hotspots in service areas. VTIA members have also created payment plans to help families adversely affected by the pandemic.

Central Virginia Electric Cooperative and Firefly Presentation

Mr. Reece gave a brief update on what Central Virginia Electric Cooperative's broadband subsidiary, Firefly, is doing to help Virginians during the COVID-19 pandemic, including membership in the Keep Americans Connected Pledge, creating payment plans for families adversely affected by the pandemic, waiving connection fees, and providing free hotspots.

New Business

There was no new business.

Public Comment Period

No comments were made by the public; the public comment period was then closed.

Adjournment

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned.