



AGENDA
FRANKLIN COUNTY BROADBAND AUTHORITY
TUESDAY, AUGUST 16, 2022
ROOM B-75

- 12:00 Call to Order, Lorie Smith, Broadband Authority Vice-Chairman
- 12:01 Moment of Silence for Authority Chairman Leland Mitchell
- 12:02 Approval of Authority Minutes – July 19, 2022
- 12:05 VATI 2020 (Phase 1) Project updates
- Seiontec Systems
 - Blue Ridge Towers
- 12:30 Steven Sandy, Assistant County Administrator
- Presentations of 2023 VATI Proposals by Providers
 - Discussion and Approval of VATI 2023 Grant Application(s)
- 1:00 Comments of Authority Members
- 1:10 Adjournment

Board of Supervisors Regular Board Meeting to Follow at 1:30 p.m.



MEMORANDUM

Date: August 10, 2022
TO: Broadband Authority members
From: Steven M. Sandy, Assistant County Administrator
Cc: Christopher Whitlow, County Administrator
Subject: Broadband Project Updates

Staff continues to work on multiple broadband projects in the County. Below is a status update of each of the current projects.

2020 VATI (Phase 1) Grant - Blue Ridge Towers/Seiontec

Representatives of Blue Ridge Towers and Seiontec are expected to be present to provide project updates. All towers, except Westlake site, are complete and on-air. Westlake tower to be constructed and on-air by September 20, 2022. The Virginia Department of Housing & Community Development Office through the VA Telecommunications Initiative (VATI) Program provided \$2.38 million in grant funding for this project.

2021 VATI (Phase 2) Grant - Shentel

VATI Project funding initially awarded to Briscnet and Blue Ridge Towers. Project re-scoped with Shentel to provide wireline project rather than a fixed wireless project. DHCD has approved re-scope pending 30-day challenge period. The challenge period is currently open until August 18, 2022 and allows any providers who object to the project to demonstrate that they already provide service in the project area. Upon completion of challenge period, contracts can be signed, and Shentel can be released to begin construction to provide wireline service to 612 additional premises in the County. VATI is providing \$939,500 in grant funding for this project.

2022 VATI (Phase 3) Grant - Shentel

Project intended to serve an additional 3508 additional homes in Franklin County. VATI initially awarded \$9.8 million in project funding for fiber and fixed wireless project. VATI recently awarded an additional \$2 million to this project to enhance the project to a total wireline project. County has committed \$6.1 million in ARPA funding as a match with \$12.5 million in

private (Shentel) funds. Project will be constructed in multiple phases with total project completion anticipated to take up to 24 months from grant award with DHCD. DHCD contract approval still pending.

2022 VATI (Phase 3) Grant – WPPDC/RiverStreet

Project is intended to serve at least 2050 homes in Franklin County. This is a regional broadband project to install fiber to the home in Franklin, Henry, and Patrick Counties. West Piedmont PDC is administering this grant on behalf of the localities. VATI awarded \$33.5 million for the entire project. Franklin County portion of VATI funding is \$5.9 to be leveraged by \$14.2 million of private investment. Franklin County has committed \$1.7 million of ARPA funds to this project. Contracts have been signed. Project completion anticipated to take up to 36 months. DHCD contract approval still pending.

VATI 2023 project applications are due to be submitted to DHCD on August 25, 2022. Awards are anticipated in late December 2022. Staff has spoken with several providers about potential projects to extend wire line broadband services to more premises in the County. This application round has a new definition of broadband which is 100 Mbps/20 Mbps. This new definition allows the County to seek funding for previously funded areas that don't meet that service threshold.

2023 VATI (Phase 4) Grant - Shentel

Project intended to serve an additional 5000 premises in Franklin County. Application will seek funding from VATI for approximately 60% of project costs with Shentel and County providing remaining match. Shentel representatives will be present at the Authority meeting to present the proposed project and discuss the anticipated County match requirement.

2023 VATI (Phase 4) Grant – WPPDC/RiverStreet

Project is intended to serve at least 700 additional homes in Franklin County. This is a continuation of the 2022 broadband project with River Street Networks to install fiber to the home in Henry and Snow Creek areas of the County. West Piedmont PDC is completing the application and administering this grant on behalf of the County. Application will seek funding from VATI for approximately 60% of project costs with RSN and County providing remaining match. RSN representatives will be present at the Authority meeting to present the proposed project and discuss the anticipated County match requirement.

2023 VATI Grant – Letter of Support for Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority

The Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority intends to apply for funding to build a fiber optic transport line from Merriman Road in Roanoke County to the Town of Boones Mill in Franklin County. If funded, this service will be available to last mile providers. RVBA is not requesting funding from the County but is requesting a letter of support (see attached).

Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns regarding the broadband activities ongoing in the County.



DRAFT

August 16, 2022

Tamarah Holmes, Ph.D
Director
Office of Braodband
Department of Housing and Community Development
600 East Main Street, Ste. 300
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Dr. Holmes,

I am providing this VATI application letter of support for the Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority in support of their project application.

Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority in cooperation with the Counties of Franklin and Roanoke, and the Town of Boones Mill is submitting an application for a fiber optic transport and last mile connectivity project starting at the intersection of Merriman Road and Starkey Road in the County of Roanoke continuing along Merriman Road and US Route 220 south into Franklin County and the Town of Boones Mill for the purposes of supporting the local community with mission critical telecommunications backbone infrastructure and last-mile connectivity opportunities.

The project will provide an essential optical transport backbone for last-mile connectivity opportunities for citizens in support of universal service. This is a truly multi-jurisdictional project that will service the community for many years to come.

Respectfully,

Christopher L. Whitlow
County Administrator

Cc: Steven Sandy, Assistant County Administrator

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
1255 FRANKLIN STREET, SUITE 112
ROCKY MOUNT, VIRGINIA 24151
(540) 483-3030
administration@franklincountyva.gov
www.franklincountyva.gov