



**Franklin County**  
*A Natural Setting for Opportunity*

**AGENDA**

**FRANKLIN COUNTY BROADBAND AUTHORITY**

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2022**

**ROOM B-75**

- 12:00 Call to Order, Lorie Smith, Broadband Authority Chair
- 12:01 Approval of Authority Minutes – July 19, 2022 and August 16, 2022
- 12:05 VATI 2020 (Phase 1) Project updates
- Seiontec Systems
  - Blue Ridge Towers
- 12:30 Other Updates – Steven Sandy, Assistant County Administrator
- 12:40 Request for Closed Meeting in Accordance with 2.2-3711, (A)(8)  
Consultation with legal counsel regarding specific matters requiring legal advice; (A)(29) Discussion of the terms of a public contract, of the Code of Virginia, as Amended.
- 1:00 Comments of Authority Members
- 1:10 Adjournment

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

THE FRANKLIN COUNTY BROADBAND AUTHORITY HELD A REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING ON TUESDAY, JULY 19, 2022, AT 12:00 P.M., IN ROOM B-75 LOCATED IN THE GOVERNMENT CENTER, 1255 FRANKLIN STREET, ROCKY MOUNT, VIRGINIA.

THERE WERE PRESENT: Mike Carter  
Tommy Cundiff  
Ronnie Mitchell  
Tim Tatum  
Ronnie Thompson

ABSENT: Leland Mitchell  
Lorie Smith

OTHERS PRESENT: Christopher Whitlow, County Administrator  
Michael Burnette, Assistant County Administrator  
Steve Sandy, Assistant County Administrator  
Jim Guynn Jr, Legal Counsel  
Matherleyn Torres, Clerk

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Supervisor Ronnie Thompson called the meeting to order.

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Supervisor Ronnie Thompson informed the authority of the absence of Chairman Leland Mitchell and Vice-Chairman Lorie Smith. The authority acknowledged the need to elect a member to be chairman pro tem.

**RESOLUTION # 01-07-2022)**

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, by the Authority to elect Authority member Thompson as chairman pro tem for today's meeting.

MOTION BY: Tim Tatum  
SECONDED BY: Mike Carter  
VOTING ON THE MOTION WAS AS FOLLOWS:  
AYES: Carter, Cundiff, R. Mitchell, Tatum, Thompson  
ABSENT: L. Mitchell, Smith

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**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**RESOLUTION # 02-07-2022)**

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, by the Authority to approve the January 14, 2022 and March 15, 2022 Meeting Minutes as presented.

MOTION BY: Tommy Cundiff  
SECONDED BY: Tim Tatum  
VOTING ON THE MOTION WAS AS FOLLOWS:  
AYES: Carter, Cundiff, R. Mitchell, Tatum, Thompson  
ABSENT: L. Mitchell, Smith

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**VATI 2020 PROJECT UPDATES**

STEVEN SANDY, ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR  
BLUE RIDGE TOWERS – ANTHONY SMITH & SEAN CAI  
SEIONTEC – DARRELL HAAG (VIA TELEPHONE)

SECONDED BY: Tommy Cundiff  
VOTING ON THE MOTION WAS AS FOLLOWS:  
AYES: Carter, Cundiff, R. Mitchell, Tatum, Thompson  
ABSENT: L. Mitchell, Smith

\*Roll call vote was taken\*

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**APPROVAL OF BROADBAND SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH WEST PIEDMONT PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION AND RIVER STREET NETWORKS**

**RESOLUTION #06-07-2022**

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED by the Authority to approve the agreement entitled, "Agreement Regarding Installation of Fiber Optic Network and Provision of Internet Access Service" between Franklin County, West Piedmont Planning District Commission (WPPDC) and River Street Networks (RSN) and authorize the County Administrator to sign the agreement on behalf of the County upon agreement and approval by the County Attorney.

MOTION BY: Tatum  
SECONDED BY: Ronald Mitchell  
VOTING ON THE MOTION WAS AS FOLLOWS:  
AYES: Carter, Cundiff, R. Mitchell, Tatum, Thompson  
ABSENT: L. Mitchell, Smith

\*Roll call vote was taken\*

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**DISCUSSION OF VATI 2023 APPLICATIONS**

Mr. Sandy spoke to Authority. Stated he will be working with other partners to get service to remaining residents and fine tune application to submit to State. Explained that 100 Mbps is the new standard. Stated there could still be significant projects to submit.

Robert Taylor of River Street Network spoke to Authority. Described their portion of project. Indicated that part of the requirement for federal funding is that they be the last mile provider of service. He gave a brief overview of funding and what may be available.

Amanda Cox of AEP stated they will be hanging the fiber and RiverStreet will be connecting from there.

**Comments Of Authority Members**

Authority members did not have any additional comments.

*Ronnie Thompson adjourned the meeting to the Board of Supervisors meeting at 1:30 p.m.*

THE FRANKLIN COUNTY BROADBAND AUTHORITY HELD A REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING ON TUESDAY, AUGUST 16, 2022, AT 12:00 P.M., IN ROOM B-75 LOCATED IN THE GOVERNMENT CENTER, 1255 FRANKLIN STREET, ROCKY MOUNT, VIRGINIA.

THERE WERE PRESENT: Mike Carter  
Tommy Cundiff  
Ronnie Mitchell  
Lorie Smith – Vice Chairman  
Tim Tatum  
Ronnie Thompson

ABSENT: Leland Mitchell (Deceased)

OTHERS PRESENT: Christopher Whitlow, County Administrator  
Michael Burnette, Assistant County Administrator  
Steve Sandy, Assistant County Administrator  
Jim Guynn Jr, Legal Counsel  
Maderley Torres, Clerk

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Vice Chairman Lorrie Smith called the meeting to order and welcomed visitors.

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Moment of Silence for Authority Chairman Leland Mitchell was observed.

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#### **APPOINTMENT OF NEW CHAIRMAN**

Authority members discussed the appointment of a new chairman.

#### **RESOLUTION #01-08-2022**

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED by the Authority to appoint Lorie Smith as Chair for the Authority.

MOTION BY: Ronnie Thompson  
SECONDED BY: Tim Tatum  
VOTING ON THE MOTION WAS AS FOLLOWS:  
AYES: Carter, Cundiff, R. Mitchell, Smith, Tatum, Thompson  
ABSENT: L. Mitchell

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#### **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

#### **RESOLUTION #02-08-2022**

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED by the Authority to appoint Tim Tatum as Vice Chairman for the Authority.

MOTION BY: Ronnie Thompson  
SECONDED BY: Mike Carter  
VOTING ON THE MOTION WAS AS FOLLOWS:  
AYES: Carter, Cundiff, R. Mitchell, Smith, Tatum, Thompson  
ABSENT: L. Mitchell

\*\*\*\*\*

#### **VATI 2020 (PHASE 1) PROJECT UPDATES**

STEVE SANDY, ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR  
BLUE RIDGE TOWERS – SEAN CIA & ANTHONY SMITH (VIA TELEPHONE)  
SEIONTEC SYSTEMS – DARRELL HAAG

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Riverstreet and the County which has been drafted to outline the requirements for this project. If grant funding is approved, the Authority would have to enter into a grant agreement with VATI/DHCD, Riverstreet and WPPDC and the Board of Supervisors would need to appropriate the necessary local match funding.

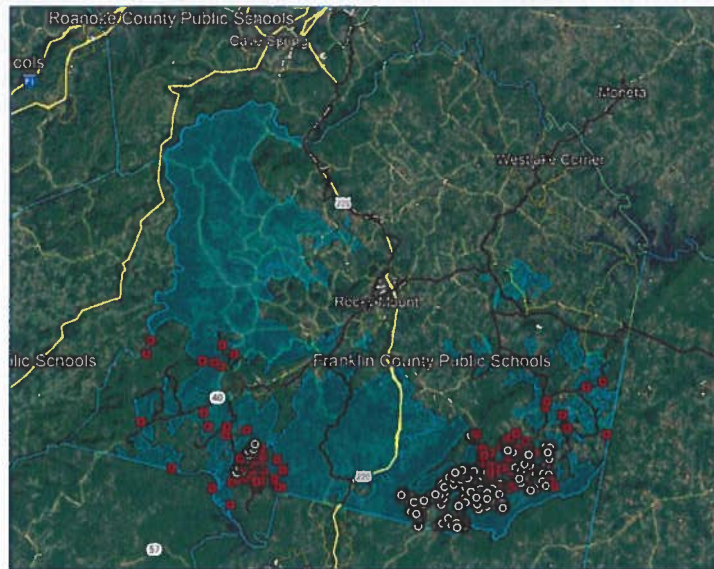
Rob Taylor of RiverStreet Networks made a presentation to the Authority:



**ROB TAYLOR - DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT & GOVERNMENT RELATIONS**  
**FRANKLIN COUNTY PRELIMINARY VATI 2023 OVERVIEW**  
**AUGUST 16, 2022**

## FRANKLIN COUNTY VATI 2023 FTTH PROJECT OVERVIEW

<b>Locations - 700</b>
<b>NEW Route Miles</b> 38
<b>Total Project Cost</b> \$2,220,000
<b>RiverStreet</b> \$555,000
<b>County</b> \$333,000
<b>VATI</b> \$1,332,000
<b>Estimated Cost Per Passing at 40% Take</b> \$3,171
<b>NOTE: AEP COSTS &amp; MATCH NOT INCLUDED</b>



<b>NEW FIBER</b>
<b>NEW FIBER</b>
<b>NEW LOCATION</b> 426
<b>EXISTING LOCATION</b> 274



## QUESTIONS



## THANK YOU!



Chair Smith inquired on the projection listed on application and execution with Federal.

Darrell Haag stated their company is familiar with the bureaucracy requirements including recent additional reporting requirements. He knows they will need to meet federal guidelines.

Ronnie Thompson inquired on the source of funding.

Chris Whitlow reminded the Authority of the 7.7M awarded towards County broadband. A schedule was distributed to the Authority.

Chair Smith inquired as to when VATI 2023 awards could be expected.





 SHENTEL



## Overview

Serving rural areas for more than 120 years focused on delivering broadband, video and voice.



**860 employees | \$241M in revenue | Publically traded on NASDAQ**

**Significant resources, delivering speed and efficiency in operations**

- Broadband delivered to over 67,000 new households in the past 12 months
- Extensive existing network – successful TRRC and VATI grants
- Speed to market
- Cost efficiency
- Local community investment & partnership
- Over 7,900 miles of fiber



 SHENTEL

## Conclusion

- Refine proposal with input from Broadband Authority, County Staff, and DHCD
  - Requesting up to \$1.5 million match from the County
  - County contribution phased through FY 2026
- Finalize VATI application – strengthen County partnership
  - VATI applications due Aug 25<sup>th</sup>
  - Award announcements – December 2022



**(RESOLUTION #04-08-2022)**

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED by the Authority to authorize staff to prepare and submit a 2023 Virginia Telecommunications Initiative (VATI) grant application and finalize a Memorandum of Understanding with Shentel as the private partner to provide broadband services as presented with county matching funds not to exceed \$1.5 million and AUTHORIZE the County Administrator and County Attorney to sign the necessary application documents on behalf of the County.

MOTION BY:                   Tim Tatum  
 SECONDED BY:               Ronald Mitchell  
 VOTING ON THE MOTION WAS AS FOLLOWS:  
 AYES: Carter, Cundiff, R. Mitchell, Smith, Tatum, Thompson  
 ABSENT: L. Mitchell

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Mr. Sandy informed the Authority that the Roanoke Broadband Authority has requested a letter of support for fiber from Merriman Road to Boones Mill. Middle-mile fiber will be available to local providers. The fiber itself will be a trunk line. Staff did not see a negative to having additional resources. There is no request of funds. The Roanoke Broadband Authority has also asked the Town of Boones Mill to issue a letter of support.

Consensus by the Authority to issue the letter of support.

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**COMMENTS OF AUTHORITY MEMBERS**

Lorie Smith stated that broadband is a utility and requirement for citizens This partnership will serve our citizens.





## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** September 20, 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**

All towers, except Westlake site, are complete and on-air. In July, Authority approved an extension of the contract completion deadline until September 20, 2022. As of the date of this memo, no construction has taken place on the Westlake tower. 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.

Representatives of Blue Ridge Towers and Seiontec are expected to be present to provide project updates on the 20th. A recent update from Seiontec dated September 8, 2022 is attached.

### **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. No challenges to this rescoping were received by DHCD. DHCD has now approved the re-scoping. DHCD has requested some final contract documents in order to award contract. Once these items are complete and DHCD issues contract, 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.

**FRANKLIN COUNTY BROADBAND PROJECTS**

as of September 9, 2022

Grant Year	Project Type	Private Partner	Private Funding	Funding Agency	Grant Amount	County Match	Premises	Status
2019	Fiber/Coax	Shentel	\$1,392,841	Tobacco Comm	\$650,000	\$62,500	650	Completed
2020	Fixed Wireless	Brisconet/Seiontec	\$1,657,600	VATI	\$2,098,039	\$388,000	21,500	In Construction
2020	Fiber/Coax	Shentel	\$132,988	VATI	\$285,115	\$0	190	Completed
CARES 2020	Fiber/Coax	Shentel	\$225,751	VATI	\$98,500	\$0	114	Completed
2021	Fiber/Coax	Shentel	\$700,143	VATI	\$939,469	\$200,000	612	Approved
2022	Fiber	Riverstreet	\$14,259,675	VATI	\$5,888,964	\$1,700,000	2,046	Approved
2022	Fiber	Shentel	\$12,518,375	VATI	\$11,832,456	\$6,000,000	3,508	Approved
2023	Fiber	Riverstreet	\$555,000	VATI	\$1,332,000	\$333,000	700	Pending
2023	Fiber	Shentel	\$9,819,733	VATI	\$14,925,994	\$1,440,227	4,895	Pending
<b>TOTALS</b>			<b>\$41,262,106</b>		<b>\$38,050,537</b>	<b>\$10,123,727</b>	<b>34,215</b>	

<b>FC SITE NAME</b>	<b>as of 1/1/22</b>	<b>Today 9/8/22</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Summit View Industrial Park-N70</b>	0	2	
<b>Henry Volunteer Dept-N67</b>	0	11	
<b>Westlake BRT Tower-N64</b>	0	0	Tower Build Not complete
<b>Fork Mtn VFD-N66</b>	0	5	
<b>Callaway Elem School-N71</b>	0	13	
<b>Glade Hill Elem School-N62</b>	0	5	
<b>Grassy Hill Tower-N28</b>	8	153	
<b>Scruggs Tower-N60</b>	7	8	
<b>Tom's Knob Tower-N34</b>	21	142	
<b>Burnt Chimney Water tank-N68</b>	1	5	
<b>Snow Creek Tower-N61</b>	23	43	
<b>Sontag-N65</b>	1	7	
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>394</b>	
Notes:			
Ferrum APEX - Pending Lease - APEX			
Crowell Gap - Lease Signed, pending NTP			



# West Piedmont Planning District Commission

P.O. Box 5268  
Martinsville, VA 24115-5268  
Phone: (276) 638-3987  
Fax: (276) 638-8137  
e-mail: [staff@wppdc.org](mailto:staff@wppdc.org)

Serving Franklin, Henry, Patrick, and Pittsylvania Counties - Cities of Danville and Martinsville - Town of Rocky Mount - Since 1970

August 18, 2022

Steve Sandy  
Assistant County Administrator  
County of Franklin  
1255 Franklin Street  
Rocky Mount, VA 24151

Subject: VATI 2023 WPPDC West Phase 2 Application

Dear Steve,

In partnership with Franklin County and RiverStreet Networks (RSN), West Piedmont Planning District Commission (WPPDC) is submitting a Virginia Telecommunications Initiative (VATI) 2023 application to provide universal broadband coverage in Franklin County. The VATI 2023 project, called WPPDC West Phase 2, is a regional application that includes Franklin, Henry, and Patrick counties and a continued partnership with Appalachian Power (APCo).

The WPPDC West Phase 2 project will construct 38 new route miles of fiber and pass 700 locations. The total construction cost is \$1,520,000 and total connection cost is \$700,000 for a total Franklin County project cost of \$2,220,000. RSN is providing \$555,000 (25%) match and Franklin County is providing \$333,000 (15%). The VATI grant request is \$1,332,000 (60%).

If awarded, RSN anticipates constructing the WPPDC West Phase 2 project in conjunction with the already awarded VATI 2022 WPPDC West Phase 1 project. If the application is not awarded VATI 2023, WPPDC will work with RSN and Franklin County to identify and apply for other broadband grants that may be available through the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development.

If you have any questions or need any additional project information, please let me know.

With appreciation,

Michael R. Armbrister  
Executive Director

# 2023 VIRGINIA TELECOMMUNICATION INITIATIVE

## GUIDELINES AND CRITERIA

The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has released the 2023 Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) Program Guidelines and Criteria.

[CLICK HERE FOR THE FY2023 VATI GUIDELINES AND CRITERIA](#)

## TIMELINE

**April 1** – Draft Guidelines Released for Opening of Public Comment Period

**April 7, 2pm-4pm & April 19, 12pm-2pm** – Public Input Sessions on Draft Guidelines

**May 2** – Public Comment Period on Draft Guidelines Closes

**May 20** – DHCD releases Final Guidelines for the FY2023 VATI Round

**June 2, 12pm - 2pm** – VATI How-to-Apply Webinar

**June 2** – Applications Open

**June 2 – August 25** – VATI Technical Assistance and Project Development Sessions

**July 7** – Notice of Applications Due

**July 14** – DHCD Posts Notices of Application on VATI website

**August 25** – Applications Due

**September 1** – DHCD Posts Applications on VATI Website

**October 6** – Challenges Due

**October 13** – DHCD Notifies Challenged Applicants

**November 3** – Deadline for Challenge Rebuttals

**December 8** – DHCD Notifies All Parties of Challenge Determination

**Late December** – Anticipated Announcement of Award



# Franklin County

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July 28, 2022

Anthony Smith, President  
Blue Ridge Towers  
2820 Electric Road, Suite 104B  
Roanoke, VA 24018  
asmith@blueridgetowers.com

RE: VATI 2020 Project Deadline Extension – Franklin County

Dear Anthony,

This letter is to confirm that the Franklin County Broadband Authority approved your verbal request to extend the contract deadline for the comprehensive agreement between the Franklin County Broadband Authority and Blue Ridge Towers, Inc. and Blue Ridge Internet Service Company, LLC (Brisnet) dated July 21, 2020 for the VATI 2020 fixed wireless project at their July 19, 2022 meeting.

The Authority approved a contract extension until September 20, 2022 to allow for the completion of the proposed Westlake tower construction. The Authority has requested that you provide regular updates as to the progress of the construction including attending both the August 16<sup>th</sup> and September 20<sup>th</sup> meetings of the Authority to provide updates. As discussed at the meeting, compliance with this deadline is critical to ensure that the VATI 2020 grant complies with the County's Contractual agreement with DHCD and grant deadline of October 15, 2022.

It has come to my attention that the Friends of Booker T. Washington group has not yet received the \$15,000 donation that was outlined on page 4 of the executed MOA document. According to the approved document, this donation was to be made within thirty (30) days of the approved MOA. Accordingly, this payment was due by June 1, 2022. Conformance with this MOA document was also part of the approved conditions of your special use permit approval from the Franklin County Board of Supervisors. Please advise if this payment has been made and provide documentation from the Friends group acknowledging receipt of the funds to demonstrate compliance with the MOA and the approved SUP.

Please feel free to contact me if you should have any questions regarding this information or need any additional information.

Sincerely,

Steven M. Sandy, Assistant County Administrator

Cc: Mike Lockaby, County Attorney





# Franklin County

*A Natural Setting for Opportunity*

April 5, 2022

Anthony Smith, President  
Blue Ridge Towers  
2820 Electric Road  
Suite 104B  
Roanoke, VA 24018  
asmith@blueridgetowers.com

RE: VATI 2020 Project Deadline Extension – Franklin County

Dear Anthony,

This letter is to inform you that the Franklin County Broadband Authority reviewed your request dated February 19, 2022 to extend the contract deadline for the comprehensive agreement between the Franklin County Broadband Authority and Blue Ridge Towers, Inc. and Blue Ridge Internet Service Company, LLC (Brisnet) dated July 21, 2020 for the VATI 2020 fixed wireless project at their meeting on March 15, 2022.

The Authority approved a contract extension until August 15, 2022 to allow for the completion of the proposed Westlake tower construction.

Please feel free to contact me if you should have any questions regarding this information or need any additional information.

Sincerely,

Steven M. Sandy, Assistant County Administrator

Cc: Mike Lockaby, County Attorney