

Attendees: Commissioner Greene  
Commissioner McKee  
Todd Broucksou  
Catharine Rice  
Jim Northrup  
Doug Noell  
Patricia Hull  
Paul Cardillo  
Terri Buckner  
Victoria Deaton  
Dr. Kathleen Dawson  
Kathy Zopfi  
Patricia Sullivan

**Action Items:**

- Continue working on RFP and incorporating suggested changes; will add language for OC to own fiber; have a single document to hand to vendors along with any County owned assets (towers, water tanks, buildings, etc) by Tues, Jun 22 – Jim Northrup
- Call meeting of BOCC/Manager to get decision on OC fiber ownership - McKee/Greene

**Welcomes and introductions** – Jim introduced Kathy Zopfi as new addition to BbTF team

**Approve Minutes (June 2, 2021)** – motion to approve minutes; Todd makes motion, Terri seconds, all approved.

Good news – Commissioners Greene and McKee were successful in procuring \$5million (ARPA funds – have to be used to design a system that can provide 100/100 symmetrical or 100/20 scalable) from BOCC of County’s budget; possibility of additional funding after 2<sup>nd</sup> tranche

**Provider Meeting Update and Discussion**

- Schedule – Jim/Catharine: spoke with NCDIT for an hour long discussion (BB liaisons – report to Jeff Sural; Jeff on PTO)
  - o Catharine providing synopsis – useful call; recommendation was that they’ve stopped doing meetings w/providers; recommended that NCDIT review RFP and they can provide feedback that vendors would’ve provided; talked about Buncombe County RFP, were able to ultimately get an award to AT&T FTTH (\$4500/household); discussed how granular (Keith Conover) RFP should be – icing is the \$\$; incumbents aren’t looking to build in rural areas so unless you put “bait on the hook” they won’t respond; said contract is where you really do the negotiating; once AT&T was in the room with RFP, that’s when they hammered out the contract with Buncombe County – performance clauses, etc.; Terri – need to have a meeting to get what costs would be – what can you provide, at what cost and what service level?; if OC wants to own the fiber, need to specify that in the RFP; Comm McKee – decide if all want the county to own the fiber; discussion about pros and cons of owning fiber; Comm Greene asks why short and long

term approaches need to be in same RFP; Jim responds that they don't; Keith (NCDIT) said people aren't using 100/100 today but the ARPA funds are focused on future proof speeds/technologies; NCDIT said they would help by reviewing RFP but wouldn't help set up meeting (this is contrary to what Jeff said in a previous meeting); can still work on provider meeting if we need a face-to-face or virtual meeting; Todd – vendor meeting still makes sense; Todd knows vendor who wants to attend and talk about FTTH; says State has STOPGAP \$\$ available; Terri disagrees that the short and long term can be blended into one RFP; goal to cover everyone in county 100/10 in 18 months; Jim - ECC/CTC, design of network could be \$1million; Todd – design/engineering has to be done so needs to be included in overall cost of project; SG - can talk about short and long term solutions in provider meeting; CR – if we want someone to act quickly (18 months), specify that; Jim – how many people and how fast can you get it done?; OpenBB struggling to get 25/3 because of tree cover, LTE technology and terrain; Comm McKee - might be confusing if don't keep two solutions separate, fixed wireless not eligible for ARPA funds, possibly could use State funds for fixed wireless???. CR – if technology isn't 100/100 (100/20) then can use ARPA otherwise must use different funding (fixed wireless); fiber is only thing that can perform to technology standards required; STOPGAP hasn't been voted on yet; Todd – for vendor meeting, have time allotments so vendors not all in room at same time, agrees that have separate meetings for short term/long term vendors; need to ask Legal about requirements for “open” meetings; TB - if reqs are 100/20 is there even a short term solution considering that vertical assets are required?; Comm McKee – there may be a way to make funding available for building towers (move \$\$ from one capital project to another); Comm McKee – proceed with short term solution/vendor meeting, get answers from vendors then can search for additional funding if options warrant; Jim – provider meeting, which one needs to be first; new terminology, short term=100/20 and how many households over 18 months, long term=FTTH and how many households by 12/31/2024; Greenlight (Wilson) doing 50/50 for \$40/month; Comm McKee – move forward with provider meeting for 100/100 (100/20) and put other options aside for the moment; Terri – recommends moving forward with provider meeting for fixed wireless for info gathering purposes – what speeds \*can\* they get, how long would it take and what would it take to get it?; Terri also asks if we want to own the fiber; Comm McKee is strongly in favor of owning the fiber; Jim – let providers know that our intention is going to be for OC to own the fiber network; talk with providers about potential ownership models; major players are going to want to build their own fiber networks – AT&T, Verizon, Google, etc;

- Agreements

- have a provider meeting for 100/100 solution
- get RFP out – ACTION: Jim to continue working on RFP and incorporating suggested changes; will add language for OC to own fiber; have a single document to hand to vendors along with any County owned assets (towers, water tanks, buildings, etc) by Tues, Jun 22<sup>nd</sup>
  - work with State for early July provider meeting
  - Shoot for RFP to be ready by provider meeting
  - ACTION: McKee/Greene call meeting of BOCC/Manager to get decision on OC fiber ownership
  - Jim to work with Travis on communicating BOCC decision back to the group

- Jim to ask the State
  - talk further about what “rapid solution” might be
  - preference for OC to own fiber network
  - Comms Greene and McKeen to schedule meeting with BOCC to discuss ownership of fiber network – tell vendors that OC intends to own fiber network
  - Next meeting (June 30<sup>th</sup>) – tentatively aiming for week of 7/6/2021 for provider meeting; prefer non-Sales presenters (more technical); this meeting gives us opportunity for course correction prior to vendor meeting
- Status of criteria for distribution to Vendors pre-meeting (partially distilled from RFP)

**Long Term / Short term project definition(s)**

**Old Business/New Business/Housekeeping – none**

Adjourn 7:11