

THE FRANKLIN COUNTY BROADBAND AUTHORITY HELD THEIR REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2021, AT 3:00 P.M., IN THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ROOM LOCATED IN THE GOVERNMENT CENTER, 1255 FRANKLIN STREET, SUITE 104, ROCKY MOUNT, VIRGINIA.

THERE WERE PRESENT: Mike Carter  
Tommy Cundiff  
Leland Mitchell  
Ronald Mitchell  
Lorie Smith  
Tim Tatum  
Ronnie Thompson

OTHERS PRESENT: Christopher Whitlow, County Administrator  
Michael Burnette, Assistant County Administrator  
Steve Sandy, Assistant County Administrator- via teleconference  
Jim Guynn, Legal Counsel- via teleconference  
Madeline L. Sefcik, CMC, Clerk

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Leland Mitchell, Chairman, called the meeting to order.

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Leland Mitchell, Chairman, opened the floor for nominations for Chairperson – 2021.

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### **CHAIRPERSON NOMINATIONS**

Leland Mitchell Nominated by Ronnie Thompson

### **CLOSE NOMINATIONS FOR CHAIRMAN**

#### **(RESOLUTION #01-02-2021)**

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, by the Board of Supervisors to appoint Mr. the nominations for Franklin County Broadband Authority for 2021 Chairman.

MOTION BY: Ronnie Thompson

SECONDED BY:

VOTING ON THE MOTION WAS AS FOLLOWS:

AYES: Carter, Cundiff, L. Mitchell, R. Mitchell, Smith, Tatum, Thompson

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Chairman Mitchell opened floor for nominations for 2021 Vice-Chairman, Franklin County Broadband Authority.

### **VICE-CHAIRPERSON NOMINATIONS**

Lorie Smith Nominated by: Mike Carter

#### **(RESOLUTION #02-02-2021)**

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, by the Board of Supervisors to open nominations for 2021 Vice-Chairman to the Franklin County Broadband Authority.

MOTION BY: Mike Carter

SECONDED BY:

VOTING ON THE MOTION WAS AS FOLLOWS:

AYES: Carter, Cundiff, L. Mitchell, R. Mitchell, Smith, Tatum, Thompson

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### **APPROVAL OF BROADBAND AUTHORITY MINUTES**

#### **(RESOLUTION #03-02-2021)**

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED by the Board to approve the minutes of the Broadband Authority as presented.

MOTION BY: Lorie Smith

SECONDED BY: Tommy Cundiff

VOTING ON THE MOTION WAS AS FOLLOWS:

AYES: Carter, Cundiff, L. Mitchell, R. Mitchell, Smith, Tatum, Thompson

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### **CURRENT PROJECT UPDATES - STEVEN SANDY, ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

- Fiber (Shentel)
  - Windy Gap
    - Aerial construction continues.
    - Forecasting construction completion date of 2/28.

- Burnt Chimney
  - Construction will be starting on 2/1, weather pending.
  - Forecasting construction completion date of 4/1
- Other projects are completed
- Fixed Wireless (Blue Ridge Towers/Brisnet)
  - Construction of Snow Creek tower site is underway.
  - Sontag site is approved and ready awaiting VDOT entrance permit.
  - Antennae for Grassy Hill, Scruggs, Summit View and Tom's Knob towers due to arrive next week. Activation of Grassy Hill and Scruggs sites expected by end of Feb.
  - Special use permit requested for Glade Hill tower at February Board meeting
- 2021 VATI application required to be rescope due to FCC auction results.
  - Had to remove Sago and Endicott towers from proposal and modify Cahas Mtn and Kay Fork sites
  - Reduced grant request by approx. \$500k
  - State has approx. \$20 million in funding to award this round
- Facebook fiber - transmission fiber line running across the state
  - In Franklin County line runs along route 122 and through Callaway areas of County into Floyd Co.
  - many citizens have asked how to benefit/connect from Facebook fiber line through county
  - staff suggests a letter be sent to Governor's Office on behalf of the Authority to see if Facebook will lease fiber to local providers for benefit of citizens
- VA Tobacco Commission Application under consideration
  - Pre-application meeting on Feb 9th
  - Application due March 9<sup>th</sup>
  - Staff is researching possible applications for submittal

Chairman Mitchell noted he has received positive comments regarding the latest Authority action taken in December about the material purchased by Blue Ridge.

Authority Member Thompson asked why some things need to be "emergencies" while others can be passed at the regular rate? Mr. Sandy explained the fast track process that happened in the Glade Hill property last year was intended to shorten the Special Use Permit process review by one month.

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**DISCUSSION OF VATI 2021 APPLICATION MODIFICATIONS- STEVEN SANDY, ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

Mr. Sandy spoke about the VATI restrictions due to projects being funded by the FCC. He explained it is a very unfortunate situation as this may prolong certain areas (Endicott, Sago) from receiving service. Authority Member Smith asked for some clarification about the facilitation of this money? Is there a way to prevent the state from accepting the federal money? Mr. Sandy let the Authority know that the money is given directly to the private companies, under the FCC program so it is not funneled through the Commonwealth.

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**DISCUSSION OF FACEBOOK FIBER AND CURRENT GENERAL ASSEMBLY LEGISLATION INVOLVING BROADBAND- STEVEN SANDY, ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

Mr. Sandy has contacted the Governor's Office to encourage a partnership or at least the companies within the County the capability to use this fiber. At this point Facebook has not indicated they are willing to work with the companies in the County. \*A consensus was reached for staff to write a letter to the Governor's Office to encourage the Office to work with Facebook and work to make the fiber accessible to local broadband companies in rural areas\*

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**COMMENTS BY AUTHORITY MEMBERS**

The Authority directed the staff to also individualize the letter to Governor to each legislator and share with the local delegation.

*Chairman recessed the authority until 3:30 for their regularly Board of Supervisors Budget Work Session*

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LELAND MITCHELL  
CHAIRMAN

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MADELINE L. SEFCIK  
BROADBAND AUTHORITY CLERK