

AT A MEETING OF THE MIDDLESEX BROADBAND AUTHORITY HELD ON
THURSDAY, JANUARY 21, 2021, AT 5:00 P.M. ELECTRONICALLY THROUGH ZOOM

Present: John Koontz, Chairman
Carrie Dos Santos, Vice Chairman
Greg Grichtmeier
Steve Barnette
Kevin Gentry, Executive Director
Peggy Jordan, Secretary/Treasurer
Elizabeth Young, Consultant
Peter Martin, Consultant
Absent: Chris Henley

CALL TO ORDER

John Koontz, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 5:09 p.m.

STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no statements from the public.

MINUTES

Mr. Koontz asked if there were any additions or corrections to the November 19, 2020 minutes; there were none.

A Motion was made to approve the minutes by Mr. Grichtmeier; seconded by Mr. Barnette and carried unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr. Koontz asked if there were any additions to the Treasurer's Report presented; there was nothing new to report.

A Motion to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented was made by Mr. Barnette, seconded by Mr. Grichtmeier and carried unanimously.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS AND STAFF

There were no reports from staff or officer.

INFORMATION ITEMS

A. CARES Act Broadband project

Mr. Gentry explained under the proposed VATI grant application, their restrictions to fund wireless on the Jamaica tower had to focus that beam in a very narrow way so it did not overlap service from any other carriers. We still don't know if with those restrictions if we will be receiving the grant, as the decision on the VATI grant is not expected until April. This decision was reached using an RDOF (Rural Digital Opportunity Fund) map and requiring us to give them our GIS maps. Mr. Gentry explained RDOF auctioned off to companies, one of them to SpaceX, in our locality to provide service to them. If your locality was covered by RDOF, ours in the Jamaica area moving down the county, you would not be able to use the funds to compete with the RDOF. Other companies were Connect Everyone LLC, under a company called Stary, which does wireless internet.

Mr. Peter Martin, consultant to the MBA, explained the satellite pass is in non-geo stationary orbits. They have three satellites in place now doing elliptical passes and as they add satellites, coverage grow towards the equator. Their coverage get added north to south. This may involve tax breaks for the company if they service certain areas in their pass. Mr. Gentry shared that Wise County will be serviced by SpaceX as a test.

Mr. Gentry then moved on to his desire to use our remaining CARES funding to finance the Jamaica and Saluda towers and put on a 360 degrees antenna so we can reach all that need it. This has been discussed in a BOS meeting, however, we haven't met as an authority to move forward with this.

Mr. Koontz his priorities to the BOS for funding, as did other members of the board. One of his priorities was expanding our broadband with something other than relying on VATI funds solely. Mr. Koontz shared his focus would be on wireless projects. The BOS then gave Mr. Gentry an opportunity to pursue \$175,000 in CARES funding for each of the two tower projects, which would cost about \$350,000, also indicating they may be able to help with financing that CARES did not cover.

ACTION ITEM

Mr. Koontz asked for a motion to proceed with exploration of lighting up the Jamaica and Saluda towers.

A Motion to move forward with the exploration of lighting up the Jamaica and Saluda towers was made by Mr. Barnette, seconded by Mr. Grichtmeier.

Mrs. Lewis mentioned the MBA would not be administering this project on a day to day progress, it would be the Board of Supervisors. After further discussion, the motion was carried unanimously.

Mr. Gentry stated he had been working on an RFP that would need to be developed to move forward with this project and he would present it at the next meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Grichtmeier reported no progress on the pilot on the Hillcrest project.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

ADJOURN

There was no new business.

John Koontz, Chairman