



Albemarle County

Legislation Text

File #: 21-375, **Version:** 1

AGENDA DATE: 8/04/2021

TITLE: Albemarle Broadband Authority Quarterly Report

SUBJECT/PROPOSAL/REQUEST: Receive the Albemarle Broadband Authority Quarterly Report

ITEM TYPE: Consent Information Item

STAFF CONTACT(S): Richardson, Henry, Culp, Fritz

PRESENTER (S): Mike Culp; Bucky Walsh, Albemarle Broadband Authority Chair

LEGAL REVIEW: Not Required

REVIEWED BY: Jeffrey B. Richardson

BACKGROUND: The Albemarle Broadband Authority (ABBA) was incorporated on August 21, 2017. This quarterly report is being provided as information on ABBA's work from April through June 2021.

STRATEGIC PLAN: Infrastructure Investment - Prioritize, plan and invest in critical infrastructure that responds to past and future changes and improves the capacity to serve community needs.

DISCUSSION: ABBA has held six public meetings and one closed session meeting in 2021. The ABBA agendas and meeting minutes are posted for public review on the County's website.

During this quarter, ABBA continued its work to activate a \$2,276,110.00 award in state provided grant funds through the Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI). The 18-month fiber program will install over 80 miles of fiber to provide the opportunity for 1,675 locations to connect to fiber internet.

ABBA is managing a VATI 2020 project with CenturyLink that is offering fiber broadband service options to 837 locations in the County. CenturyLink and ABBA continue to answer questions about the 8 projects involved. During this quarter, VATI approved an extension to the project schedule and all 8 projects started offering service. Since Albemarle County started focusing on and investing in broadband, ABBA and its partner Internet Service Providers (ISPs) have been able to facilitate 3,744 connections and are hopeful that at least another 3,731 connections will be facilitated during 2021.

ABBA supported the establishment of the Broadband Accessibility and Affordability Office (BAAO) and is working with the BAAO on Accessibility and Affordability Projects. ABBA will work with BAAO in efforts to submit one or more VATI 2022 applications, including one in partnership with Firefly Fiber Broadband, Dominion Energy and Rappahannock Electric Coop.

ABBA requested and received approval from the Board of Supervisors to designate \$3 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. These funds were appropriated to ABBA in July 2021. ABBA will report back to the Board of Supervisors on intended use of these funds.

During the next reporting period (July through September 2021), ABBA will continue its work partnering with the County, ISPs, and others to add broadband service in the County rural areas.

BUDGET IMPACT: There is no expected budget impact.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Board receive this report for information.

ATTACHMENTS:

A - Status Report