



Albemarle County

Legislation Text

File #: 22-100, **Version:** 1

AGENDA DATE: 1/12/2022

TITLE: CenturyLink Lumen Update and Discussion

SUBJECT/PROPOSAL/REQUEST: Board of Supervisors Request Work Session with CenturyLink Lumen to discuss recent service issues and the pending transfer of telecommunications assets in the County to a new company

ITEM TYPE: Regular Information Item

STAFF CONTACT(S): Richardson, Henry, Kamptner, DeLoria, Culp

PRESENTER (S): Mike Culp, Jason Inofuentes, Steven Brewer (Director of Government Affairs CenturyLink Lumen), Trish Stipanovich (Virginia Region Operations Supervisor) CenturyLink Lumen)

LEGAL REVIEW: Yes

REVIEWED BY: Jeffrey B. Richardson

BACKGROUND: CenturyLink/Lumen provides phone and internet service in Albemarle County. During the past eight months, 107 community members reported unique service issues to the County's Broadband Accessibility and Affordability Office (BAAO) and to Albemarle Broadband Authority's (ABBA) Chief Administrative Officer. These service issues include outages, reliability issues, and new service activations. CenturyLink/Lumen recently announced a plan to transfer all residential telephone and internet assets in Virginia to Apollo Global Management, a private asset management business. Connect Holdings, an Apollo subsidiary doing business as BrightSpeed, will assume ownership over Lumen's incumbent local exchange carrier (ILEC) assets and operations in Virginia and 19 other states. ILEC assets are comprised of legacy copper-line telephony and broadband equipment and services. In addition to all copper-based assets, all of Lumen's residential fiber broadband customers and infrastructure in Virginia are included in this sale. The Board requested a work session to discuss and plan future tasks.

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: Staff will present a brief history and data supporting community members and the Boards' concerns about CenturyLink/Lumen service issues. Staff is providing a background document as Attachment A. CenturyLink/Lumen staff will present actions taken to alleviate past issues and steps underway to prevent further service issues. CenturyLink/Lumen staff will provide background on the planned phone and internet assets transfer to a new company, followed by a discussion.

BUDGET IMPACT: There is no expected budget impact.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Board assign additional tasks to BAAO and counsel, as required to affect an improvement in service delivery, resilience, and reliability for all CenturyLink/Lumen broadband and telephony customers in the County, prior to closing on the sale of Lumen ILEC assets and to advise Connect Holdings of continuing service issues prior to and following closing. Staff also recommends the Board assign staff an additional task to update the Albemarle Broadband Authority, at least monthly, regarding the planned transfer of phone and internet assets in Virginia to a new company.

ATTACHMENTS:

A - Work Session Background