



Albemarle County

Legislation Text

File #: 19-112, **Version:** 1

AGENDA DATE: 1/9/2019

TITLE:

Albemarle Broadband Authority Quarterly Report

SUBJECT/PROPOSAL/REQUEST: Albemarle Broadband Authority Quarterly Report

ITEM TYPE: Consent Information Item

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

PRESENTER (S): Mike Culp, Bucky Walsh

LEGAL REVIEW: Not Required

REVIEWED BY: Jeffrey B. Richardson

BACKGROUND: The Albemarle Broadband Authority (ABBA) was incorporated on August 21, 2017. The ABBA Board of Directors re-elected William "Bucky" Walsh as Chair during its annual organizational meeting on August 22, 2018. This report is being provided as information on ABBA's work to date.

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. Educational Opportunities: Provide lifelong learning opportunities for all our citizens. Quality Government Operations: Ensure County government's ability to provide high quality service that achieves community priorities.

DISCUSSION: ABBA held eleven public meetings in 2018. The agendas and meeting minutes are posted for public review on the County's website. ABBA also updated the Broadband Initiative website to provide citizen tools.

During October 2018, ABBA collected broadband input from citizens throughout County. The broadband input documented the areas of the County where broadband service is lacking.

The broadband input became documentation for the submittal of three applications for Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) Grants. The three grant applications represent a total request of \$507,548 from DHCD while contributing \$140,100 if all three applications are offered funding. The expected announcement date is in late January 2019.

ABBA is finalizing the close-out of a prior VATI funded project with Comcast. The project in Greenwood, VA was completed ahead of schedule and under budget.

In addition to the VATI grant processes ABBA also completed negotiations with CVEC in support of CVEC's goals to bring fiber broadband to its Albemarle members. The negotiations included working alongside the County Finance Department, County Attorney Department, County Economic Development Office and the Economic Development Authority. A tax grant agreement was completed on Dec. 14, 2019.

In 2019 ABBA will continue its work partnering with the County, Internet Service Providers and others to add broadband service in the County rural areas. If VATI funds are offered and accepted, ABBA will be responsible for managing the ensuing broadband projects and relationships with the ISPs. As of this writing, the County FY 20 budget will include \$800,000 in ABBA funds for the purpose of matching grants and other cost sharing opportunities for broadband.

BUDGET IMPACT: There is no other further budget impact.

RECOMMENDATION: N/A

ATTACHMENTS: