



# Albemarle County

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 21-161, **Version:** 1

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**AGENDA DATE:** 1/20/2021

**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, 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 October through December 2020.

**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 10 public meetings and one closed session meeting in 2020. The ABBA agendas and meeting minutes are posted for public review on the County's website.

Over the summer, ABBA decided to partner with CenturyLink and submitted an application requesting \$3.2 million in Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) Grant funds to support a fiber to the home project that, if approved, will offer fiber internet service to 2,076 living units. A decision on this application is expected by VATI in early 2021.

ABBA participated in selecting Shentel for another project, now active, and offering fixed wireless internet service to at least 550 locations in rural, unserved locations and as an affordable option in the development areas for additional locations. ABBA also worked to extend the successful Firefly Fiber Broadband Project for an additional 64 locations.

ABBA is managing a VATI 2020 project with CenturyLink that will offer fiber broadband service options to 837 locations in the county. CenturyLink and ABBA continue to answer questions about the 8 projects involved and to be completed no later than March 5, 2021. Since Albemarle County started focusing on and investing in broadband, ABBA and its partner ISPs have been able to facilitate 3,744 connections and are hopeful that at least another 3,731 connections will be facilitated during 2021.

During the next reporting period (January through March 2021), ABBA will continue its work partnering with the County, ISPs and others to add broadband service in the County rural areas. This will include continued work to use CARES Act funding to assist unserved areas.

**BUDGET IMPACT:** There is no expected budget impact.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Board receive this report.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

A - Status Report