

Broadband committee notes 12/6/16

1. Introductions –
 - a. committee & public attendees
 - b. Co. Administrator - DK
2. Q&A
 - a. Choose “Scribe” - BD volunteered, need a back-up in his absence
 - b. Public document? -- Per DK, yes, and subject to FOIA
 - c. As a public committee, we may be under scrutiny or challenge by the public
 - i. Tasked by Board of Supervisors—so even as volunteers, subject to scrutiny by the public
 - ii. Per JL, at the November BS meeting those applying were subject to review and selection
 - iii. Best to err on the side of caution—be transparent and accountability for what is said and discussed
3. Review of missions and goals – this was a first crack by JL and DK
 - a. Task here is to come up w a deliverable to BS – could be similar to the previous 2007 committee or not, but ultimately to provide BS with a set of recommendations.
 - b. CE - Suggest “well-informed, strategic recommendations” is about all the committee can do—the rest is up to the BS.
 - c. TS – We do need to be practical about the strategic options. The politics aspect is up to the BS – we need to focus on technical, practical ideas and options
 - d. TG – Should we also consider the “crumbling, landline” infrastructure in the county?
 - e. MM – Our recommendations should perhaps include what can be expected if nothing more is done
 - f. JL – As we get into things more, we may look at this again, but this gets us focused on what we need to start with
 - g. TS – What focus is on the emergency infrastructure? JL – We should include this; it is a huge part of what it’s about.
4. Committee goals
 - a. CE – Should include research best practices and look at areas that have similar circumstance to RC
 - b. AZ, BD – let’s look at other localities, including those with similar topography to RC
 - c. DK – want to look at Orange and Fauquier Counties at what they might offer us
 - d. Public comment – Rich Shumaker – you do need to look at localities with similar topography, but that is farther south of RC than nearby counties. Solutions based on line-of-site will not work in large parts of the county.
 - e. TS – Some of the other counties have hired external consultants to advise them; are there external resources to help us do that in this county?
 - f. RS – If you have a good plan you are more likely to get county support than with no plan. JL – external funders also may be willing to provide funding.

- g. AZ – Foothills Forum survey makes it clear that the vast majority wants better broadband; if we survey needs and wants again, we may be reinventing the wheel
- h. DK – Not sure about that; some of the older generation does not necessarily want or see the need for BB; you need to do your own homework to show what is the bottom line. You may still need to make the case that more is needed for that population.
- i. CE – Did FF survey really tease out the specific %age of population currently having/using BB? Not sure we have the full data needed. Could goals include finding out what we still need to find out
- j. JL - Do we have an inventory of BB providers? AZ – I have started to gather this for my own use; but we should be able to provide that
- k. R Shumaker – suggest committee develop a map of what is needed vs. what is offered or is missing.
- l. CE – Also include where providers are going and what they will (or won't) be offering in the future.
- m. RS – Outside larger company wanting to buy his local business seems to want to invest in his approach (put antennas in trees), which suggests that this approach is desirable for rural areas like ours and will continue and even expand
- n. JL – will review comments and redraft goals in time for next meeting
- o. CE – we need to get to people already working on this across the state (e.g. Jane Ditmeyer). JL – we need to reach out to other regional/state commissions that are working on BB initiatives.
- p. TS – Please don't lose the inclusion of first responders as you re-draft the goals. R. Burke – external resources for 911 support assume local infrastructure they can build on; they won't provide them.
- q. MM – There will be a lot of opposition from some in the county; our goals need to include everything that can make a compelling argument to those who “don't see the need to do anything more.”
- r. CE - Break up into some sub-groups looking at these various points?
- s. Are we focusing on Internet or cell service? Pros & cons of prioritizing which were discussed. Ultimately, we have to look at both. DK – county's priorities are education, emergency services and tourism; for two of those cell phones are what are needed. For visiting tourists, cell service generates income. AZ & TS – we can build on others' reports that do some work defining this and build on it for our own understanding and definition. JL – let's have a “baseline” discussion next meeting to assess “what we currently have”. AZ – will bring in his own research and other committee members could add their own info. TS – Need to focus on what's coming vs. what's here and possibly disappearing. JL – R. Shumaker willing to show the committee what's available now around the county (Wireless Internet Service Providers - WISPs).
- t. CE – Should we consider the concerns of those who have health concerns about cellular signals? DK - Yes—as a public body those considerations have to be

addressed and concerned people will make us accountable. However, Rapp. county attorney has advised that you cannot deny access on that basis.

5. Timeline

- a. What is a realistic timeline?
- b. AZ - Shouldn't be too long to provide what we can do
- c. BD – Timing should emphasize that this effort is a snapshot for now and the near future; the technology is so dynamic that these recommendations need to be reviewed much more frequently than every 10 years.
- d. CE – ID four “buckets” and get some info for each by Spring 2017 so that we can give the BS an interim preview of findings prior to developing and presenting final recommendations
- e. JL – Recommendations should hit in time for budget-planning season and include current or potential income through leasing tower access to providers and if the county should consider being the business of building and owning towers.

6. Next meeting

- a. JL would like to see if we could meet one more time before year's end to look at “what we have” – Tuesday, December 20? Some could attend; some could not
- b. BD – would be helpful if we set a frequency and regular set of dates for long-term planning
- c. CE – Could we establish now three “buckets” for a couple of members each to look at over the next month and then meet in January?
 - i. Current situation – MM & AZ
 - ii. Citizens' wants and needs – current and future – BD & TG & AZ
 - iii. Best practices & initiatives – CE & JL
 - iv. Emerging alternatives – technology & business models TG & AZ
 - v. Funding and resources available – TS & JL