



112 MacTanly Place
Staunton, VA 24401

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**Bath-Highland Network Authority Meeting
Monday, July 12, 2021 at 1pm**

**Bolar Ruritan Club
38 Bolar Ln Monterey, VA 24465**

Authority Members in attendance:	Organization
David Blanchard	Highland County
George Hogshead	Highland County
Ronald Wimer	Town of Monterey
Ashton Harrison	Bath County
Others in attendance:	Organization
Robert Huff	MGW
Mike Bollinger	The Recorder
Hunter Moore	CSPDC

Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Ronald Wimer called the BHNA meeting to order at 1:05 PM. Those in attendance introduced themselves.

Elections

Mr. Wimer announced the first agenda item, Elections. Since there was not a member from Bath County present at the April meeting, a Vice Chair was not elected. Members discussed the Vice Chair position and nominated Mr. Ashton Harrison for Vice Chair. Mr. Blanchard moved to elect Mr. Harrison as Vice Chair for the Authority, and Mr. George Hogshead seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the past meeting on April 12, 2021 were provided to the members. Mr. Blanchard moved, seconded by Mr. Hogshead, to approve the April meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.



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Broadband Funding

Ms. Hunter Moore discussed Local and State Fiscal Recovery Funding from the American Rescue Plan (ARP). Local funds can be used for broadband infrastructure and these funds must be obligated by 2024 and expended by 2026. Ms. Moore asked members if their localities had registered or received their local ARP funds yet. The Town of Monterey is awaiting their funds and Bath and Highland Counties are still in the process of requesting their funds.

The State received \$4.3 billion in ARP funds and it is expected that a portion of this money will be added to the 2022 VATI grant funds. Currently there is about \$50 million available for the 2022 VATI grant round. DHCD is hopeful that this amount will significantly increase with ARP funds and will be appropriated by the General Assembly this summer. DHCD is encouraging localities to go big with their applications and strive for universal broadband coverage for their localities or regions. The Notice of Application is due on July 27th and applications are due on September 14th. There is no penalization for submitting a Notice of Application.

Members discussed the Notice of Application requirements. Mr. Harrison said he would share the template he received from DHCD with Ms. Moore so that she could distribute it to the group.

Members discussed unserved areas, rural special costs, regional project advantages, and use of their local fiscal recovery funds.

Ms. Moore also shared that there is a new, one-year pilot program in the 2022 VATI guidelines that allows authorities to apply for funding without an internet service provider co-applicant. Authority applicants in this program will still compete with other VATI applicants and will not be scored separately.

Cell Service

Members discussed the current cell coverage in Bolar, VA which has improved since the last time the Authority met at the Bolar Ruritan Club. Ms. Moore asked if there were any updates to Highland County's cell tower issues. Mr. Hogshead said that Highland is still looking for cell service providers but there have been no takers.

Mr. Harrison will share the contact of a T-Mobile representative with Ms. Moore.

Provider Updates

Mr. Robert Huff reported that the 2021 VATI contract was executed for the Augusta and Highland project. He also reported on MGW activities. He discussed Highland's 235 locations on the eastern side and VATI's updated speed requirement of 25/3 mbps. Customers in this area have DSL/ copper wire and no longer meet VATI's new speed requirements. Members discussed what it would take to get Highland County complete with fiber.

Other Business

Ms. Moore asked members if they were interested in adopting an electronic participation policy for future BHNA meetings. The group decided that it would be good to have a policy like this in place. Ms. Moore will share policy examples with the group, and they will plan to adopt a policy at the next meeting.



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Adjournment

Mr. Blanchard moved that the meeting be adjourned, seconded by Mr. Harrison. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting concluded at 1:45 PM. Mr. Wimer announced that the next BHNA meeting will on Monday, October 18th, 2021 at 1:00 PM.