



112 MacTanly Place
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**Bath-Highland Network Authority Meeting
Monday, April 11, 2022 at 1pm**

**The Highland Center
61 Highland Center Drive, Monterey, VA 24465**

Authority Members in attendance:	Organization
David Blanchard (Chair)	Highland County
George Hogshead	Highland County
Ronald Wimer	Town of Monterey
Sherry Ryder	Bath County
Others in attendance:	Organization
Jeremy Crute	CSPDC
Hunter Moore	CSPDC
Robert Huff	MGW
Jason Carter	SVEC
Tammy Minnigh	The Recorder

Welcome and Introductions

Mr. David Blanchard called the BHNA meeting to order at 1:05 PM and all in attendance introduced themselves.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes

Meeting minutes of the past meeting on February 7, 2021 were provided to the members before the meeting by email. Since only one Authority member who had attended the previous Authority Meeting was present, Mr. Blanchard moved ahead to the next item on the agenda until Mr. Wimer arrived. Once Mr. Wimer arrived, he made a motion to approve the meeting minutes which was seconded by Mr. Blanchard. The motion passed unanimously.



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Update on BHNA VATI Project

Ms. Moore provided an update on the 2022 BHNA VATI project. Pre-contract activities are due May 2nd, 2022 and CSPDC staff are working with MGW to complete these activities. The prior authorization letter and approval are complete. Ms. Moore will be working with Ms. Janet Bryan with Bath County and Ms. Roberta Lambert with Highland County to execute agreements between the localities and the CSPDC. Ms. Bryan and Ms. Lambert will also be the locality representatives for the project management team. Once all pre-contract activities are submitted, the CSPDC hopes to be under contract with DHCD soon after in May or June.

Mr. Blanchard asked if other 2022 VATI projects are in the process and timelines with their DHCD contracts. Mr. Huff confirmed that most other localities are looking to finalize by May, June, or July, which is roughly when the BHNA VATI contract will be finalized as well.

Cell Service

Since the VATI investments are going a long way to achieving universal broadband coverage, Mr. Blanchard said that the Authority could shift its focus to improving cell service/coverage across for Bath and Highland counties.

Following up on the Authority's request at the February Meeting, Ms. Moore shared the FCC's cell phone coverage and cell tower maps for Bath and Highland Counties.

Ms. Moore suggested compiling a list of cell service contacts and inviting them to attend the Authority Meetings. Ms. Moore shared that she had reached out to VDEM and had received contacts about potential grant opportunities. In particular, competitive homeland security grants open in late spring. Ms. Moore confirmed that she will look into the match requirements for these grant opportunities and will share her findings with the BHNA members prior to the July Meeting.

Provider Updates

Mr. Blanchard started the provider updates by asking the service providers to speak to the power outages that had occurred across most of Highland County during the weekend of the Highland Maple Festival. At midnight on Saturday night, the power had gone out for as long as eight hours across large portions of Highland County. The back-up generators did not turn on like they are designed to do, but even if they had, they are only designed to run for 2-hours which would not have fully addressed the 8-hour outage. This was especially problematic because, now that the landlines are connected to MGW's fiber network, power outages of that scale mean that residents without cell service would not be able to call emergency services if there was an emergency.

Since power outages of more than two hours take out all forms of communication for much of Bath and Highland Counties, Mr. Hogshead asked if there was an opportunity apply for an emergency services grant to address this issue.

Mr. Carter with SVEC also spoke to the power outage saying that the outage started on the generation side from Dominion. However, why the back-up generators did not turn on is still under investigation. Mr. Carter assured the Authority that he would follow-up with more information once the investigation is completed.



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Mr. Carter continued by giving an update on SVEC's ongoing projects in the region. SVEC is in process of obtaining easement for their fiber project. The project will likely start in the fall and will be a 3- or 4-year project. Due to rising costs, it looks like the project costs will rise from \$50 to 60 million. SVEC is also getting ready to start a 4-year meter replacement project. This will likely involve replacing 100,000 meters. The new meters can measure and provide real-time data on peak demand to help prevent peak load from spiking.

Mr. Huff gave an update on the 2021 VATI project in Highland County. Most project areas have construction completed but they are still working in areas such as Doe Hill and Davis Run. They are still working on getting homes connected in all project areas. The completion of this project will put MGW in great position for the 2022 BHNA VATI project.

Member Terms and Replacements

The two-year terms for Mr. Blanchard, Mr. Wimer, and Mr. Fry ended in 2021. Mr. Wimer was reappointed in January, but Mr. Blanchard will need to be re-appointed. Ms. Moore will follow-up with Ms. Roberta Lambert to have Mr. Blanchard re-appointed.

Authority members discussed replacements and re-appointments for members. After the meeting, it was confirmed that Mr. Lee Fry was re-appointed to the Authority in February 2022. No replacements are needed at this time.

Mr. Ashton Harrison was elected Authority Chair at the February meeting. Now that he is no longer with Bath County, Mr. Blanchard will assume the role of Chair. Mr. Wimer will become the interim Vice Chair.

Other Business

Ms. Moore will poll Authority Members a month prior to the next meeting to determine the location of the next meeting.

Adjournment

With no further discussion, Mr. Hogshead moved, seconded by Mr. Blanchard, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously. The BHNA meeting concluded at 2:00 PM. The next meeting will be held on Monday, July 11th, 2022.

2022 Meeting Dates:

Monday, July 11th at 1pm

Monday, October 17th at 1pm