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**BRIGHTER  
BOLDER  
BUSINESS**

**MINUTES  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF HALIFAX COUNTY, VIRGINIA  
APRIL 28, 2023**

**RE: MEETING:** The Board of Directors of the Industrial Development Authority of Halifax County, Virginia (IDA) held an Annual IDA Board meeting on Friday, April 28, 2023, at 8:30 A.M. in the IDA Conference Room.

**RE: MEMBERS PRESENT:** Those in attendance at the time the meeting was called to order include Mr. Rick Harrell, Mr. Jeremy Satterfield, Mrs. Nancy Pool, Mr. Robert Bates, Mr. Ryland Clark, Dr. Nettie Simon-Owens and Mr. Jeremy Catron.

**RE: MEMBERS ABSENT:**  
None

**RE: OTHERS PRESENT:** Mrs. Kristy Johnson – IDA Executive Director, Ms. Blair Jeffress – IDA Operations Manager, Mr. Scott Simpson – County Administrator, Mr. David Lipscomb – VP Member and Energy Service Mecklenburg Electric, and Ms. Victoria Thompson – News and Record.

**RE: MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:** Mr. Rick Harrell called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m. It was determined that a quorum was present with all members in attendance.

**RE: APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** Mrs. Nancy Pool made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Jeremy Satterfield, and duly carried by the Board.

**RE: PRESENTATION BY DAVID LIPSCOMB**

Mr. Lipscomb began the presentation by mentioning that at the beginning of 2020, Empower Broadband worked on a Virginia Telecommunication Initiative project. He stated that this project is through the Department of Virginia Housing and Community Development. Mr. Lipscomb mentioned that during this process those involved were able to identify the roads and communities that needed service. He reviewed several areas in the community that would be affected by the 2020 VATI grant.

Mr. Lipscomb stated that the partnerships built during this process were critical to the success of the VATI project. He mentioned that the partnership with MBC helped this process run smoothly.

Mr. Lipscomb stated that out of the 679 eligible passings there are currently about 228 activated accounts. He mentioned that the total investment of this project was \$3.4 million and \$710,514 was committed through VATI by DHCD. He expressed that this initiative was a joint effort by Empower Broadband and Halifax County.

Mr. Lipscomb highlighted that through the 2021 VATI project extension, they were able to add an additional 175 accounts. He mentioned that 53 accounts have already been connected.

Mrs. Pool inquired about programs available in Mecklenburg County.





Mr. Lipscomb stated that there are similar programs available in Mecklenburg. He mentioned that there is another provider named River Street that helps with other areas that have received federal funding. He stated that the Southside Planning District Commission that includes Halifax County, Mecklenburg County, Brunswick, and the southern part of Charlotte County has received an award for \$154 million to assist with the broadband project.

Mr. Lipscomb stated that there is a website available to community members to check broadband availability in their area. He stated that individuals will be prompted to input their addresses and the map will reveal if their area is eligible for broadband. He mentioned that the take rate for broadband services has increased over the last few months.

Mr. Lipscomb stated that Halifax County received funding for 4900 eligible addresses from the 2022 VATI project. He mentioned that there is a pending application for an additional 200 addresses through the 2023 VATI project.

Mr. Lipscomb presented a map that displayed fiber deployment hubs across Halifax County. He mentioned that this map is used to show the construction work in progress for the 2022 VATI project. He expressed that the partnership with VDOT during this process has been beneficial. He stated that VDOT has been working hard to approve the permits needed before construction can begin.

Mr. Lipscomb stated that the goal is to construct 20 miles a week. He mentioned that 75 miles of fiber construction has been approved and 41.6 miles of fiber construction has been completed. He shared that there are 83 applications in the queue waiting for connection across the County.

Mr. Lipscomb mentioned that Empower Broadband has a partnership with Dominion Energy for this project. He stated that Dominion has agreed to build main line fiber along their lines throughout their systems. He explained that once Dominion installs the main line for the fiber, Empower Broadband will work from this line and build drops to other houses.

Mrs. Pool inquired about connectivity regarding connecting to fiber belonging to Mid-Atlantic Broadband Communities Corporation. Mr. Lipscomb stated that they are using MBC's system to connect to the internet world during these projects.

Mr. Lipscomb agreed and stated that COVID has changed the way some doctors meet with their clients and if an individual is not connected to high-speed internet, it will decrease the effectiveness of the virtual doctor's visit. He mentioned that the fiber internet will increase productivity for zoom calls and doctor's visits.

Mr. Lipscomb stated that Empower Broadband is working on a marketing strategy to help promote the fiber internet being installed across the County. He stated that Empower Broadband will begin to market through radio station ads to reach a broader audience.

Mr. Simpson explained how the phases were chosen for this project. He stated that individuals who were already a customer of Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative were more than likely chosen to be included in the first phase.

Mr. Catron shared that he is a Mecklenburg Electric customer, and he is now successfully using Empower Broadband services. He stated that he appreciates all the hard work put into this project.



Mrs. Pool stated that she has heard individuals speak highly of the work Mr. Simpson had done in the County.

Mr. Lipscomb ended the presentation by stating that there has been a lot of work put into this project over the past few years. He also stated that community partnerships have contributed to the success of this project.

**RE: READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Mr. Jeremy Satterfield made a motion to approve the March 17, 2023 and April 3, 2023 meeting minutes, seconded by Dr. Nettie Simon-Owens and duly carried by the Board.

**RE: REQUEST TO ENTER INTO CLOSED SESSION:** Motion was made by Mrs. Nancy Pool seconded by Dr. Nettie Simon-Owens, and duly carried by the Board that the Board go into closed session pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711. That the purposes which are to be the subject of said executive or closed meeting shall be as follows:

- To discuss a prospective business or industry, or the expansion of an existing business or industry where no previous announcement has been made of the businesses or industry's interest in locating or expanding facilities in the community, pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711.A.5.
- To discuss real estate matters, Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711.A.3.
- To discuss the award of a public contract involving the expenditure of public funds, including interviews of bidder or offerors, and discussion of the terms or scope of such contract, where discussion in open session would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the Board pursuant to Section 2.2-3711 A. 29. of the Code of Virginia (1950), as amended.

**RE: REQUEST TO RETURN TO REGULAR SESSION**

Upon motion by Mrs. Nancy Pool, seconded by Mr. Jeremy Satterfield then duly carried by the Board, that the body return to regular session.

**CERTIFICATION**

Upon motion by Mr. Jeremy Satterfield and seconded by Mr. Robert Bates the Board voted to take a roll call certifying that to the best of the member's knowledge (i) only public business matters lawfully exempt from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard discussed or considered in the meeting by the public.

Mr. Harrell, Yes  
Mrs. Pool, Yes  
Mr. Satterfield, Yes  
Mr. Clark, Yes  
Mr. Catron, Yes  
Mr. Bates, Yes  
Dr. Nettie Simon-Owens, Yes

**RE: Action Taken on Items in Closed Meeting**

Mr. Robert Bates made a motion to authorize the executive director to execute the Tobacco Region Opportunity Fund grant and the Commonwealth Opportunity Fund grant performance agreement for Skip Barber, seconded by Mr. Jeremy Satterfield and duly carried by the Board.



Mr. Jeremy Catron made a motion to authorize the executive director to execute the Tobacco Region Opportunity Fund grant and the Commonwealth Opportunity Fund grant performance agreement for IperionX, seconded by Mrs. Nancy Pool and duly carried by the Board.

Mr. Jeremy Satterfield made a motion to authorize its executive director to negotiate and execute a contract with Anderson Lawn Care for landscaping and snow removal services, seconded by Mrs. Nancy Pool and duly carried by the Board.

Dr. Nettie Simon-Owens made a motion to authorize its executive director to execute a contract with TRC Engineers, Inc. to provide Brownfields Site Assessments and Related Services pending legal review, seconded by Mr. Jeremy Satterfield and duly carried by the Board.

Mr. Jeremy Satterfield made a motion to approve the construction of a right of way at 1120 Greens Folly Road, seconded by Mr. Jeremy Catron and duly carried by the Board.

### **RE: Reports of Standing Committees and Officers**

#### **A. Finance Committee**

##### **Current Financials**

Mrs. Nancy Pool reviewed the March 2023 financials with the Board and stated that all accounts appear to be in line with the overall budgeted amounts.

Mrs. Nancy Pool made a motion to approve the March 2023 financials, seconded by Mr. Robert Bates and duly carried by the Board.

#### **B. Prospects & Properties Committee**

Mr. Satterfield stated that the committee is looking to schedule a meeting soon.

#### **C. Executive Committee**

None

#### **D. Executive Director Report**

Mrs. Johnson mentioned the SVRA press release that discussed Virginia's inventory of shovel-ready sites. She stated that Halifax County, along with other localities, participated in site work with the Southern Virginia Regional Alliance. Mrs. Johnson explained that the SVRA received grant funds from GO Virginia Region 3 and the Virginia Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission (TRRC) to assist with the preparation of sites. She mentioned that there are several tier five sites within the Southern Virginia Technology Park. She stated that Halifax County will continue to work on grants in partnership with the SVRA for future projects.

Mrs. Johnson stated that several business leaders from Halifax County attended the Investing in Rural America Conference in Roanoke hosted by the Federal Reserve Bank a few weeks ago. She stated that during the conference she noticed that there has been a shifted focus on recruiting and retaining talent.

Mr. Satterfield stated that he believes the event was a success and there was a lot of information shared during the event. He said that southside Virginia was represented very well.

Mrs. Johnson stated that she participated in several community events such as the HR Roundtable and leadership meetings over the past few weeks.

Mrs. Johnson stated that the IDA staff has successfully moved the IDA office and is in the process of organizing the office space.

Mrs. Johnson stated that the IDA is working with the Chamber, SOVA R.I.S.E, and the Longwood Small Business Development Center to complete the Community Business Launch grant application. She stated that this effort will be a part of the Live Here Work Here Campaign. She mentioned that the first draft of the Live Here Work Here Campaign video has been completed and once this video is finished it will be marketed across the County.

Mrs. Johnson stated that the site identification efforts are ongoing. She mentioned that she is in regular contact with the team at Dewberry and will provide updates as they are available.

Mrs. Johnson mentioned the meetings and events that are on the calendar for the next few weeks. She stated that the IDA staff plans to attend the GO VA Region 3 All Hands Meeting on May 4 and the Henrietta Lacks Commission is scheduled to meet on May 5. She stated that she will be participating in the call trip with VEDP. She stated that this call trip was scheduled to be in person but was rescheduled to a virtual event. Mrs. Johnson mentioned that she will be participating in the VEDP/ VEDA Virginia Consultants Forum in Virginia Beach. She stated that this event is only open to 150 economic developers across the region and the SVRA region will be represented. She stated that she looks forward to interacting with site selection consultants across from different locations across the United States.

**RE: Old Business:**

Mr. Ryland Clark made a motion to authorize the approval of payment of \$710,514 to Empower Broadband for the Halifax County Economic Development grant, seconded by Dr. Nettie Simon-Owens and duly carried by the Board.

**RE: New Business:**

**A. Open Comment Period**

- Mr. Robert Bates: None
- Mr. Jeremy Catron: He shared his appreciation to the IDA staff for a well-organized meeting. He thanked Mr. Simpson for all the hard work dedicated to the broadband initiative. He thanked Dr. Simon-Owens for attending a meeting on behalf of the P&P committee.
- Mr. Jeremy Satterfield: None
- Mrs. Nancy Pool: She reminded the Board that the GO VA Region 3 All Hands meeting is scheduled for next Thursday on May 4 from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. She mentioned that there will be dinner and a social hour. Mrs. Pool stated that the event is free, and registration is required. She mentioned that there are several individuals who will be traveling from out of town to attend the event. She stated that there will be a panel of entrepreneurs and a dynamic keynote speaker.
- Mr. Clark: None
- Dr. Nettie Simon-Owens: None



- Mr. Scott Simpson: He thanked Mr. Catron for hosting a business retention meeting at Huber.
- Mr. Harrell: He thanked the IDA Board and staff for their continued efforts and hard work.

**RE: PUBLIC COMMENT:**

None

**RE: NEXT MEETING DATE:**

The IDA will hold a special called meeting on May 26, 2023, at 8:30 A.M. in the Halifax IDA conference room.

**RE: ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Rick Harrell seconded by Mr. Jeremy Satterfield and then duly carried by the Board.

Respectfully Submitted:

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Mrs. Kristy Johnson, IDA Executive Director

Acknowledged:

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Mr. Rick Harrell, Chair