



MINITUES OF THE MEETING OF THE
ROWAN COUNTY RURAL BRTOADBAND TASK FORCE
APRIL 18, 2018 – 10:00 AM
ROWAN AGRICULTURAL CENTER, ROOM A

Rowan County IT CIO Randy Cress, Coop Ext Director Amy-Lynn Albertson, Citizen Bevin Fink, Commissioner Judy Klusman, NC Broadband's Glenn Knox, IT Administrative Secretary Jane Moore, Rowan Salisbury School IT Candace Salmon-Hosey and Clark Poole, Citizen Lee Simmons and EMS Chief Chris Soliz were present.

Randy Cress convened the meeting at 10:00 AM with Welcome and Task Force Member Introductions.

The Task Force will use Roberts Rules of Order for voting on actions that need a vote.

Discussion to nominate a Chairman. Clark Poole nominated Randy Cress for Chairman. Commissioner Klusman seconded and the vote passed unanimously. Glenn Knox advised that he is not a voting member of the Committee.

Broadband Task Force Charges

The Board of Commissioners wanted a task force with the Primary Focus as follows:

- A. Focus on underserved and unserved citizens in Rowan County.
- B. Foster public and private innovation
- C. Enhance existing capabilities by finding out and make public aware of anything coming down the pipeline, etc.
- D. Support good governance.

Commissioner Klusman wants all corners of the County to have access.

Candace Salmon-Hosey states that the schools have been using Erate to fund for access points and internet connectivity and would like to add access points for outside. Mr. Poole states that they want to add outside and are checking to use Point-to-Point Solution (airFiber) to add to outside to expand to wider areas. People can pull in the parking lot and sign on but we are using conservative filtering. We are always trying to investigate ways to improve connectivity.

Mr. Poole also stated that they had wanted to issue MiFi's to students but this was not doable due to cost and they wanted hot spots for buses which was also not cost effective. Many schools are wide open but RSS wants more filtering for Stake Holders.

Randy Cress states that we need for providers to sign up to advise who the provider is and who their contact would be for us and have them propose what they can do for what cost. What do they want to expand to improve service?

A portal needs to be created on the Rowan County Website for the Carriers to register. If you are not on the Carrier list you need to register to be included.

Chris Soliz has worked with AT&T First Net. Mr. Soliz feels that goals should be Research & Understand, Establish rules of engagement (you are working for us.) and develop implementation.

Mr. Knox suggested that we create a portal that includes the registration for Carriers, current and new. Also we must get the larger Carriers to work with us and give service that is adequate at a reasonable cost. There will not be one solution but there are ways to move forward and make this work.

Mr. Knox will provide the Task Force a list of small Carriers that are willing to move into this area and will bring a person for Grants in the future.

Commissioner Klusman suggested that we look @ small Carriers. There are lots of smaller Carriers willing to provide broadband for Rowan County.

Lee Simmons states that the large Carriers protect areas they can and that the last mile or two is a big part of the problem. If lines do not exist then they will only provide service for a large fee. They will do everything they can to stop progress unless there is a big check for them. Someone has to get the large Carriers attention and until someone does there can't be any change. Century Link or no one else can cross AT&T boundaries.

We must be creative for collecting the surveys and information. (It's hard to use Internet only when the people do not have Internet service). The cost is going to be a big factor in moving forward.

State Broadband does have a survey which Mr. Cress can send out to the Task Force. Mr. Knox states this is the kind of data that the Carriers want to see but be sure to make the survey short, not too long or personal.

Mr. Poole questioned what type of service do you want. Are we talking 2, 4, or 20Mb/s? Can you stream Netflix's etc.? What do you want to be able to do with your service?

Bevin Fink states that she has AT&T in Cleveland and it is extremely limited. Ms. Fink checks out Hotspots from the Library in Mooresville. I can't have Time Warner because AT&T has that territory. AT&T is charging me overcharges. People aren't moving to West Rowan areas because of Internet. Would more cell towers bring in more broadband?

Mr. Knox states that towers can have additional service added to the tower if the owner allows.

Mr. Cress states that we need to find out if Mobile Broadband is truly unlimited. Are Verizon, AT&T and other carriers truly unlimited? We have to work with them to get the answers needed for the citizens.

Commissioner Klusman states we want new business and broadband is one of the selling points.

Mr. Knox states WISPs are unlimited. They do not use the same tower. That is why there is assets & needs, what does the county have.

Mr. Poole states that Town of Landis is allowing some use of their water tower for connectivity. Mr. Cress stated that Detective Hosey in Landis stated the same thing when this was set up.

Mr. Soliz states we are trying to take control of good service for all of us. How do they come up with the boundaries and determine who has control. Mr. Knox replied that it is the copper that is in the ground, they are regulated. Two companies can't use the same copper but they can build or lease if the owner will allow. The owner seldom allows that because they do not want the competition to come in.

Ms. Salmon-Hosey suggests that we put this in context where it stands. Fibrant wanted \$50,000 per mile to come back to the data center. Schools ran into a problem with the railroads and Mr. Poole states that you must build the infrastructure thru the railroads and they tell you they own from the skies to the earth.

Mr. Cress states that Hotwire has shown interest. We need to look at the small Carriers and let them advise what they will and can offer.

Commissioner Klusman asked Randy if the County has the ability to vote to extend an area. There was a vote for expansion to the Business Park in Salisbury but provisions are that Fibrant can only operate in the City. We have to look at this from the Carriers prospective, if we get out there it's X amount of \$s for that mile and if we get to one school, will we be able to serve homes in that area and what is the cost. We will have to let the providers advise us regarding these type situations.

Mr. Cress states that to Chris's point we will have to have the surveys sent to the citizens but before that we may want to have public information sessions to confirm what the public wants and needs.

Mr. Cress states we need to do the following:

Send out a Survey. Who are all of the Carriers? Who is in play, who do we need to keep involved and what ways do we need to get the word out. We should use schools, 4H, libraries and mailings etc.

Ms. Salmon-Hosey states that we need to have a digital survey for the children on a 1 to 1. The parents use the children's devices. There is an option to download the survey on the child's device and you would not have to have Internet connectivity and use public libraries also. With the mailing provide postage paid envelope or the survey will not be received back. We will have to be creative. They could be put where utility bills are paid.

Suggestion was made to have the flyer mailed with tax bills. Ask where the physical address where internet is needed and how much are you willing to pay in a range for the Internet.

We can give out surveys at the informational meetings. There will need to be a listing of where the meetings will be and also where is survey available.

Mr. Poole has asked if a list for Carriers in NC is available and Mr. Knox advised that it is and he will have a list of the NC WISPs sent out.

There was discussion re the timeline for the Task Force and it is a one year timeline.

If we are sending survey in Tax bills they will have to be ready in June. Commissioner Klusman will contact Kelvin Byrd at the Tax Office re mailings.

Mr. Poole states that the Committee should be able to correspond with each other and be ready to approve a survey at the next meeting. Underserved areas will be our primary target.

Ms. Salmon-Hosey states that as a Task Force we need to map our Vision first so we will know what to do. What is our Vision? This was an introduction meeting. What are the mechanics we need to achieve at next meeting in order to facilitate? The public forums can be worked out once we know what we are doing.

Public forums will be for the underserved citizens and other citizens. Mr. Poole states that we could probably use one of the Schools for the public forums. Ms. Salmon-Hosey states that we need to have electronic surveys accessible at the meetings. Citizens can advise if they watch TV, Netflix's etc. even if they do not know service they have.

There is a population of 139,000 and we want to see a target 10% return on the survey. There will be a June July time frame for mailings.

No one person will do the forums and Carriers will not be at the Forums.

Google drive will be used for posting of Task Force working documents. Mr. Knox will be sending name of one person to be added to the mailing list for Rowan County Broadband Task Force.

Carriers will have a separate mailing list from the Task Force.

Action Items

- Create & Engage Providers
- Survey Form for Demand Aggregation

Next Meeting will be Wed, May 16th 8AM – 10AM. Amy-Lynn Albertson reserved Room A @ Rowan County Agricultural Center for next meeting.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane H. Moore