



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
ROWAN COUNTY BROADBAND TASK FORCE
AUGUST 15, 2018 8:00AM
ROWAN AGRICULTURAL CENTER, ROOM A

Rowan County IT CIO Randy Cress, Commissioner Judy Klusman, It Administrative Secretary Jane Moore, Citizens Mr. Kluttz and Lee Simmons, and Emergency Services Chief Chris Soliz were present. Angela Bailey and Jim Corrin from the State Broadband Office are on conference.

Randy Cress stated Jane Moore sent the minutes from the last meeting and you have a printed copy. Commissioner Judy Klusman made a motion to approve the minutes and Chris Soliz seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Any additions or deletions? There were no additions or deletions.

Randy Cress stated that he wants to give a review of the Broadband survey results as it stands right now. We have received over 500 handwritten survey responses and they are not all entered yet. My daughter needs some time for volunteer work and is entering the surveys. We have received over 600 online responses for a total of over 1,100. Lee Simmons brought up a good point on the press releases and I have sent the press release back to the County Manager to send back out. Mr. Simmons states that radio stations and TV stations are hungry for public service announcements. Over the past years they have gotten lazy and if they have to write it they will not proceed. Randy Cress stated that he has a written press release. Mr. Simmons requested a copy of the press release which Mr. Cress will send to the list. Mr. Cress also advised Chris Soliz that if he has any lists, he might want to send the press release to them also. Commissioner Klusman asked how much time we have left and was advised till September 7th. The responses are mapped showing we have had good responses. They are mapped all over the board and show from all areas of the County. We have over 1,100 responses. I did meet with Angela and Jim last week and they have seen the data as well and agree it's a good response. If anyone wants to republish on your own, April has been posting on Facebook and Twitter so you could post from that.

Commissioner Klusman asked where the link is to repost and Randy advised that Rowan Salisbury Schools to see if they would like to do that as well as I am sure their pages are being closely watched now.

Mr. Simmons states that carriers have filed a petition with FCC to try to back off allowing people to get in the Broadband business. Randy asked Jim and Angela if they have anything on this. Lee stated that you can look it up on the FCC website. Angela replied "I'm not sure what you are referring to and Jim asked for Mr. Simmons to send them information on it. Mr. Simmons will try to find the link and send it out.

At this point we are looking at the results; we have good coverage mapped with over 1,100 results in. What we have here is prelim because we have to take in consideration once we have a public map I will work with GIS to produce that but this is just dumping the data in point blank but at least we have some results. Everything in yellow is listed as unsatisfactory so really you can see all the stretches. Having good results with the urban areas in Salisbury and the eastern side and north and western side so we have more data like what speeds are being requested so the good news is we have satisfactory results. This gives us some areas and this is from the official results so here I have cable modem users here and it is broken out if it is in brown. Our cable users are closer along the I-85 corridor and the DSL users are the yellow so we have some down at the bottom and clearly have all the empties are brown and gauge what surface if any the far regions have. This is very prelim but I wanted everyone to see what we have so far. Jim asked Randy if he is looking at tabulated data now. It is the first 600 results we have so this is about half of the results. This is what we had looked at last week. Mr. Simmons suggests that carriers overlay on our map. Randy states that Jim and Angela have results and I can share that with the list. This is a full overlay of all using the data from 2016 which shows the same corners as uncovered as before and its good data for everyone to see instead of the one map we have on the Broadband page. This lets everyone know that the carriers are involved. Mr. Simmons states it seems like that one area in the Western area is completely bare. Mr. Kluttz added that from Sherills Ford Road all the way into Mooresville is completely bare. I live right beside the high school and we can't get a hard line, all we have is AT&T DSL. Now with the school having laptop filtering I will have to go to the school to submit anything. Randy asked and you are in the 801 area and Mr. Kluttz replies that he is right beside the school. Mr.

Simmons states that in the Southern area he has DSL. Mr. Cress states Jim, I appreciate the data because I didn't realize that Yadkin Valley phone was in that area and I did call them and they said they couldn't provide service to anyone that has a Rowan service address. We may exclude that one when we post it. There will be a note on there stating that currently we are not serving any Rowan County residents. Angela said maybe you could invite Yadkin to come over. Mr. Simmons states it's the way FCC says if you have copper in an area, no one can come on it. That protects them. Randy states that if you go here on the map AT&T DSL is here and if you go down here Windstream provides and they don't overlap. Mr. Kluttz asked "Do you have a Spectrum or Time Warner map, Time Warner does not cover the West Rowan area and there is a large stretch on 801 that is completely bare and unserved.

What are our goals? Survey responses show demand. Goal setting priorities. We see that we have good responses from our survey respondents and so now what I would like to ask the task force and I will send it out to the schools as well ultimately we will go thru 3 phases. We are going to do goal setting of the areas and will match what assets we are aware of.

Then we will coordinate with Jim and Angela to have a provider meeting. Prior to that we will be receiving our data, I will work with GIS for maps to look at and we can start having that so that we can analyze to understand what we have and need. I want everyone to take a look at this and dig in to see what we have and any changes we may need. We will utilize from this point thru October to look at and identify the steps we should take. From the Commissioners standpoint contacts for any kind of development where there will be growth and we will prioritize the areas of growth. Commissioner Klusman states that the EDC can do that for us. We need to collect the data and find out where are the areas that two carriers but together and there is no service so that we will have it mapped and can discuss with the providers. Chris, from your standpoint any fire stations that have a need for public safety so that we can have the providers extend the areas of coverage, just like the schools. The fire stations aren't using the fiber lines so if there is a need for the providers to run coax for them to have access. We will have this list of items and be looking at it in September and October timeframe then we can take the list and go into a provider meeting first thing but everyone should know we can't do it all but need to make decisions where we should focus and prioritize a list. Mr. Soliz asks "Can you give me some type of spreadsheet for Fire Chiefs for the assets and what type of assets are we talking

about. Angela asks if we are talking about vertical assets and Mr. Cress replies towers such as water towers and buildings like community centers that could serve multiple. Mr. Soliz asks on the vertical towers, are there any technical specifications or can it be a water tower, a telephone pole or what are we talking about? Jim states the more information you have the better, who owns it, what's the longitude and latitude and where it sits. Angela states we can send you spreadsheets depending on how deep you want to go but we can share spreadsheets and you can at least get the locations, ownership and contacts. You would then be able to work with the providers on assets versus commercial. Mr. Soliz asked that a list be sent to the Broadband list and Jim stated that it would be sent. Commissioner Klusman inquired if that will include information needed for EDC growth and expansion in our County and Angela replied that it should. Commissioner Klusman states that there are several new development sites in the County now. For instance east of 85 in Southern part of Rowan County we are working on getting infrastructure for water and sewer when completed. Mr. Cress advised that it would be good to make carriers aware of this area. This would be great when you have provider meetings and break off one on one.

Starting now we can look at the timeline for our next meeting as we would have a progress check at where we are and what we want to do is utilize that knowledge and see at our next meeting if we have enough to meet with carriers soon. Jim and Angela, you have been involved in meetings in other Counties, can you let us know with what we have if we are on track to have our meeting or if we need to continue working toward our provider meeting. Mr. Simmons asked "Are the providers willing to sit down and talk with you in real terms. Angela replied, it depends on the provider, some are interested and others not as much. Jim stated that provider meetings he has been at the attendees have great interest. They are in the business of growing their business so they are there to find out what the county has in terms of demand aggregation and verbal assets so they can respond positively later to an RFP or RFI. Angela replied it's a great way for them to decide if they can grow the business profitably. Mr. Soliz states there is no way in the end to guarantee because we don't control anything so I would say at some point we need to engage in some sort of information for the expectations. Mr. Klutz stated he has had a ton of expectation dates and none of them have happened. Mr. Soliz added that they need to understand what we are doing and in the end do not have the control. Commissioner Klusman added that the Board of Commissioners are working so hard with the EDC, we figure that by the time I-

85 is complete which should be in 2019 and then we get the interchanges in 2020 things will take off. Hopefully they will come to the table and be honest. Mr. Simmons asked if it is a possibility that you could talk to the State Utilities Commission so they could enter an exception that other providers could cross their lines and get rid of this FCC mandate. Angela states it is not regulated and no one can be required to build out lines so it's really an economic issue for them to reduce cost and be able to add additions. Randy asked Jim and Angela since you have a pulse on bills at the state level, if there is anything since we are trying to expand on Broadband, can you put us on the list to be notified. If there is anything from the legislative also please notify us. Commissioner Klusman states that they need to know who those people are so they can start building a relationship with them. Angela advised Legislation will not be back in session until 2019 but we work closely with County Commissions and we will bring back the policy issues but a lot of the policy changes will be within the Counties. We will have to see what their legislative changes are for 2019 and we will be happy to pass on any changes. Commissioner Klusman stated that even though they are not in session now that if they are coming back the conversations need to start now even if we have to go to their turf because once they start back they will be bombarded with everything else. Angela stated that if there are policy changes we would be happy to discuss with you. Mr. Kluttz states that broadband is not regulated. The ISPs want to dumb down broadband because they don't want to offer it and have protection. They don't have to expand because they are already making massive profits off of people they already have. Mr. Soliz states that this work is identifying that and when we put out our RFPs that will address the issues. Maybe we can say a range of 10 and above is what we expect. Randy advised that the surveys identify that people want premium and even the unserved state they want premium. We will be bringing to the providers what the citizens want and I will reach out to all of our County providers, Windstream, AT&T and Time Warner. Commissioner Klusman added that Hotwire would also need to be contacted. Mr. Kluttz states that he has DSL at a cost of \$70.00 a month but doesn't have the maximum bandwidth. With fiber in the City it is \$80.00 a month. It's not proportionate. The data caps that America has are not legal in other countries. In other countries it is illegal for them to have data caps. It seems that all they want is to make more money and I understand they need to make more money but it seems ridiculous at this point.

Randy states that once we have our provider meetings we could turn that into an RFI process which would be the formal request from Rowan County to all the providers stating that we would like responses back as part of the expectation. That would go before the board and I would present the RFI to the board stating this is our expectation. This would be at a Board of Commissioners meeting so it would have a little different take on it. We may have providers that come in before the RFI and say "Get me started." I would like to use January for the RFI's and we have a lot of work to do in between. Jim questioned Randy as to what month you would like to do the provider meeting? Randy states the ideal would be November because that would give us September to get the results from GIS surveys and see if we could use the data from the GIS maps and publish those so the respondents are starting to see all the data. We will do a check on the task force items and have finalized for review in October. If in the month of October the agenda can be cleaned up enough that we could use that to start looking at our timeframe for a provider meeting in October. The month of December would be a Holiday. January would be the target date for the RFI but realistically we might need another month in there. That's a lot to cram in considering that we are all new at this process. Mr. Soliz states that he would like to give the Fire Departments their own survey using the same survey and he will collect them and run the numbers on them. Mr. Cress asked Mr. Soliz to have someone in his staff key in the results and Mr. Soliz agreed. Angela asked if this is equipment firefighters have in their homes or at the Fire Stations. Mr. Soliz replied that it is equipment in the Fire Stations. Mr. Klutz stated that the Fire Department at Mt. Ulla and Woodleaf would need access at their stations. He also questioned that there has not been funding from the Government like there was with phones Randy replied that Federal Government has put out money in form of grants for Broadband. There has been State money and there is new money this year for Broadband funding, Angela states that the legislature put \$10 million dollars in their budget for broadband but she doesn't know what the process is going to be, they are working on the application process. We are excited about this. Mr. Cress states that if grants do become available we can work with Rowan County's Grant Writer to apply for the grant if criteria are met.

Thanks everyone, Jim and Angela, we appreciate you being on the line with us and we will invite you to the next meeting because we know we definitely need your input.

Jim will send Randy Vertical asset data samples so he can see how they have been construed in other Counties. Randy requested that if there is any Legislative action with a watch, notify us. Also if you compile a list of names in Legislative associated with Broadband, please pass on to us and other Counties.

Next Meeting will be September 19th and Randy will reserve this room for the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted

Jane H Moore