



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
ROWAN COUNTY RURAL BROADBAND TASK FORCE
JANUARY 16, 2019-9:00 AM
ROWAN PUBLIC LIBRARY, HURLEY ROOM

Rowan Coop Extension Director Amy-Lynn Albertson, Rowan County IT CIO Randy Cress, Commissioner Judy Klusman, Rowan Salisbury Schools IT Clark Poole, Emergency Services Chief Chris Soliz, Citizens Lee Simmons and Brad Godwin were present. Special guests were NC Broadband Office's Jim Corrin, Commissioner Chairman Greg Edds, Rowan County Planning Director Ed Muire and Columbus Hawks from GIS, Grant Writer Cari Price, Rowan Salisbury Schools Michael Dumas, IT Creative Services Manager April Everett, and IT Administrative Secretary Jane Moore. Vendors present were Charter Spectrum's Mike Tank and Bill Donaldson, Windstream's Stacy Hale, Open Broadband's Kent Winrich, and LightLeap's Bill Shillito.

Meeting called to order by Randy Cress and Randy asked for review of minutes for November 19, 2019. Commissioner Klusman made a motion to approve the minutes and Chris Soliz seconded with motion passing unanimously passing. Agenda was presented and Commissioner Klusman made a motion to accept the motion and Chief Chris Soliz seconded the motion.

Individual Introductions were made by all Task Force Members, Broadband Providers and Special Guests. Randy Cress stated that we do have Hotwire and AT&T listed. I have had a conversation with AT&T's Kathleen who was unable to attend and also spoke to Jeremy an engineer who is not involved on this end of service.

Randy states that he wants to give an overview. We started last January about this time. We have worked over the past year with Jim and Angela and their staff at the State Broadband Office to go thru and receive guidance for proceeding. We have identified the underserved and unserved and what issues they currently have. We have sent surveys with our tax mail listings and have gone thru the replies we have received and GIS has mapped the areas for us. We received over 2000 responses and have identified the areas of concern and areas that we will focus on. We have our Rowan County/NC Broadband page. In talking with Mike Charter has special pricing for low income and Kathleen states

that A&T provides special pricing if you receive SNAP. These are things that we did not know about. If you wish we can get information to you on a flash drive or thru a URL. Advise us what information you need or want added. If you have questions feel free to email me. As you can see we have responses from all over the board and you can go to the maps and see the data, there is public information showing. We have around 2000 responses and those are the green dots on the maps. We looked at the data and know areas that are a priority and have layers showing additional information. Our primary area of interest is A thru J which is Scotch Irish and C which is Morgan. You can look at the map and see what the house density is so you can get an idea of the per capita. Mike Tank asks, in your GIS can you do overlays of the houses, what's the density of the unserved and not served pockets? The green dots are for parcels. Mike replies I am looking at households whether they responded or not. Randy replies we can overlay the FCC map on this. Columbus states we can do a structure count for an area which is what I think you are wanting. Mike Tank replies I am looking for the homes whether they responded or not, not the respondents. Columbus replies if we go to layers we have addresses as well with structure points. I can also adjust the layering; it looks like the addresses need to come on a little sooner. Mike asks can we get a spread sheet print out of the addresses. Randy states we can email that information to you. We do have our Fire Stations listed on the maps. We are also looking at what options are of interest to you and also identify all of our tower structures as well. Two main points that Rowan has a tower structure in the South Rowan area and it is owned by Rowan County and there is another tower of interest that has not been built yet, and is going thru a feasibility study, will be at Young's Mountain area in Cleveland so the County does own tower space and can get you some elevation. We do own land there if there is need for a tower to be built. We also have school structures that are using fiber, we have lake front property and Chris had expressed concern re public safety in these areas with use of DCI for Sheriff's vehicles going out. These are areas with high population for weekend traffic and there are homes there also.

Chris Soliz states our responders have daily needs for training requirements which are delivered thru access and some of the areas at Fire Departments may have to forego their training at that location or travel to areas that have access. Notification of where shelters are, etc. is also daily, when we have power outages or ice storms. The daily needs are affecting every single aspect of public safety.

Amy-Linn Albertson states that most of our farmers are using GPS and they have extreme need for technology that works so when they are in the field the reporting can be efficient. Most of our farmers do not have good service for their Internet and are having to purchase Hot Spots which are not reliable or cost effective. I have a farmer that puts his tablet in the upper window and has to position in a certain direction to be able to download data. He is technically savvy but does not have access. Some of the farmers have to come to a county building because they don't have access in their area and can't report to the Cooperative Office. That is in the Mt. Ulla area which is not in the highest priority area heading towards the Scotch Irish area. That is an example of their struggles and need for access. They need Broadband to report critical information. Bill Shillito asks "Are those hot spots data caps?" He did not say because we were discussing the problem, it is not the data cap but the signal. Bill states there is not a great deal of population in that area and Amy-Linn agrees. Maybe the grain silos could be used to help with elevation to get signal.

Randy states that Rowan County wants to work with you and want to know what you need from us. What can we provide you? Now we are reaching out to you guys after gathering our data. Is there anything further we can provide? Are there any cap funds. We do have cap funds and it is by provider. We are a Tier 2 County. Mike Tank asked is the County looking at any grants. Randy replies that Carrie has looked but there are not any active and if you know of any we would appreciate you letting us know.

Mike Tank asks Jim Corrin if he can give any updates. Jim states he can share that the requests for funding ends January 1st. Legislature since it is their legislature they are watching very closely and we understand that if the program goes well this time, they will go back and ask for more money and possibly to include Tier 1 and Tier 2 Counties. This is all I have now but it is a long session this time so hopefully we will know soon. Bill Shillito asks when results will be seen. Jim states awards will occur around April.

Randy states we have run the numbers, how many sites do you have etc. We are asking that you to take some time to look at our data and help us with direction. Bill Donaldson asks are the Fire Stations in these areas unserved or underserved. Columbus Hawks states that there are Fire, EMS and Police in that area. Chris states that it is a concern for safety with the Fire Stations with the Wi-Fi capability. When a Fire truck or ambulance gets to the far regions of the County they can not report back to the Hospital the info such as an EKG on a person so that the hospital can be ready to take over in saving this persons life. That wireless access is not working. Provider asks who are the providers in Rowan County. Chris answers we have Hot Wire, Windstream, DSL, fiber and Time Warner. Then question was asked who the Electrical providers in Rowan County are. Randy answered REA, Duke and Energy United. Question asked where that Fire Station on J & M is. Randy & Columbus agreed it would be Atwell. Randy states EMS stations have Broadband served by co ax. We do have Windstream DSL in one or two areas also. When you have a school with 2000 students you are going to run Fiber. We have Metro E for libraries which make it more affordable.

Commissioner Greg Edds states that schools are in the middle of their RFQ for updated E rates. Is there any reason for the County and School to get together and have a conversation about what you guys are doing? Clark Poole states it is two fold, Schools have 33 sites now and have 4 Gb/s at some sites. There are build outs in those areas and that helps us leverage with the one and two mile areas. As far as School System we have Wireless access on our properties. We have looked at extending our capabilities but if you tell a student you have Wi-Fi and it goes down you need someone available for support 24 -7s and Rowan Salisbury Schools does not have capability for that kind of support. Randy states we are at 80% reimbursement for our erate at the libraries. Question was asked once you get fiber to your schools how is it delivered. Clark replies that 90% of the schools traffic is thru our wireless access points. Clark states that School System is open to any ideas. Randy replies to Greg that it might be a good time for Salisbury Schools and Rowan County Commissioners to get together. Bill Shillito encourages all to not use data caps. Randy states that Rowan County has a tower in the South Rowan area and may build one in Young's Mountain area.

Commissioner Edds states that Rowan County has made application and is now a Renewal District which is the first in North Carolina. All 33 schools are given like Charter School flexibility. Legislature had been looking for a community to do something way out of the box and now every kid has an iPad or laptop so as we are addressing issues of public safety and economic development, kids should also be able to leave school and go to an area that has access. Legislature wants Rowan County to be a shining example of renewal. Perhaps the fact that we are an exception County would help you to get Rowan County access. States are watching over this also. Stacy Hale states that his son goes to Jesse Carson School and I was very impressed when he came home with an iPad. This is a big state and national deal that would warrant pushing things along for Rowan County.

Randy Cress states "I appreciate you guys taking the time to come and listen to what we have. We are very grateful that all of you came." Question asked when the surveys are updated. Randy advised we are updating this live and are still receiving some responses due to tax bills going out and being back in early January. Chris went to Fire Stations and had the Fire Depts. complete their surveys. The green dots on the map are the responses.

Commissioner Edds adds "Please look along I-85 at Exit 65 (Beatty Ford Rd area) which is being built now. The state is putting in a \$120 million new interchange there. There will be 500 homes, a hospital, industrial, institutional and retail and a full build out at \$700 million dollars. I don't know if that means anything to you but if you haven't heard about it, it is Rowan County. The interchange will be complete the fourth quarter of 2019. I don't know what the service there is but we haven't had any responses." Clark states we have looked at the area and there is 3 Providers out there. Greg states there will be water, sewer, and infrastructure there. Provider states that conduit should be run there. Greg will talk to County Manager re the conduit. Randy states this is something we need to know because this is all new to us. This is perfect timing. Greg states Rowan County is partnering with Kannapolis as they are just around the corner. Kannapolis is annexing about 350 acres for this.

Randy states next meeting will be Wed, Feb 20th 9AM at Rowan Public Library.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane H Moore