



Lancaster County Broadband Authority
Report to the Board of Supervisors
May 28, 2020

Complete minutes of the Broadband Authority's meetings will be available online at www.lancova-broadband.org, but this report will update you on important items that are in process.

1. In response to a request made at last month's meeting to increase our public communication, we placed two articles in the Rappahannock Record this month setting out all the information related to the Dominion situation and our pending ReConnect grant. LCBA Chair, Cassie Thompson, also appeared on WIGO and WKWI FM to discuss the status of these matters. Those interviews aired May 21.
2. Last month, we also indicated that we would take appropriate action with regard to the impending deadline to respond to Dominion Energy about their Memorandum of Understanding. Executing the MOU is required in order to participate in Dominion's Northern Neck pilot project. Signing it would have required us to agree to the MOU's "non-compete" provision. We had asked Dominion to waive the "non-compete" requirement, so that we could participate while we moved ahead with our \$22 million ReConnect grant application. They declined to do that but extended the deadline to accept the MOU until May 8. We responded timely to Dominion, and explained that we do not have any way to tell whether our pending ReConnect grant application will be approved until the grant awards for this cycle are announced in early fall. We noted that our application is being evaluated now, and that funding for the current grant cycle has been increased. We advised Dominion that we believe it would be unwise for us to withdraw our grant application in order to sign the MOU. We asked again that they waive the non-compete provision to allow us to participate. Alternatively, we asked them to extend the deadline for us to sign until the grant award cycle is complete. They were not willing to make any accommodation for us, and closed the door permanently on our participation.
3. While we believe that our ReConnect grant application is solid and competitive, we are also aware that it may not be selected for funding. With the Dominion project off the table, we are continuing to pursue other funding opportunities. We are actively engaged in discussions about two different possible Virginia Telecommunications Initiative (VATI) projects. As you know, VATI projects are relatively small, whereas the ReConnect grant would cover all unserved areas of the County. VATI applications are due in mid-July, and the timing of the grant cycle would allow us to withdraw our application before awards if we are selected for ReConnect and to stay in the running if we are not. We will have specific details available next month, including the County

contribution that would be needed to support a competitive VATI application.

4. In order to be prepared for activities to implement the ReConnect grant if we are chosen, we are starting the formal process to identify an Internet Service Provider for our network.
5. We are also seeking a volunteer web master to work on issues pertaining to our website. We expect this to be resolved in the next few weeks.
6. The Telecommunications Planning Grant funds have still not been released, but our requests for reimbursement are being reviewed. We hope that those funds will be forthcoming soon.