UNAPPROVED

Broadband Advisory Council

Work Session Meeting

October 22, 2018

**TIME AND PLACE:** The Broadband Advisory Council met October 22, 2018 at the Capitol, Richmond, Virginia.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Delegate Byron, Chair

 Delegate Boysko

 Delegate Brewer

 Senator Carrico

 Ray LaMura

 Rosemary Wilson

 Duront Walton
 James Carr

**STAFF PRESENT:** Chuck Kirby

 Caroline Luxhoj

 Jeff Sharp

**ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM:** With eight members of the council present, a quorum was established.

**CALL TO ORDER:** The work session meeting was called to order at 3:30 PM.

**ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION**: Delegate Byron led a round table discussion that addressed a variety of questions including:

1. What barriers still exist?

There was a wide-ranging discussion on this issue. Mr. Carr stated that a public infusion of capital is needed to address access in rural areas where no private solution is forthcoming. He also stated that he believes that VATI can be more cost-effective by serving the unserved rather than promoting competition and that "zero access" should be the priority. There was then a discussion of the merits or appropriateness of treating broadband as a utility and it was pointed out that the industry was built with private investment. Delegate Boysko asked to what extent are localities and regions being assisted with preparation of applications or are receiving other support and it was mentioned that funding for such assistance will be ramping up. Delegate Byron raised the issue of whether localities should be required to participate in a workshop prior to funding.

1. What barriers have been removed (policy progress since last session)?

It was mentioned that VDOT had agreed to work in a cooperative way to address issues that have led to barriers for provision of broadband. It was also discussed that the pole attachment issue has not been resolved but that progress has been made. Mr. LaMura stated that the Council has a role to play in promoting a more cooperative spirit to help meet the Governor's broadband goals.

1. What are the priorities and benchmarks to ensure deployment progress?

It was emphasized that it should be a priority to continue investing in the VATI program and that serving the unserved should be the Commonwealth's priority. Delegate Byron asked whether we know how many unserved exist and how the Commonwealth is perceived by business. It was stated that there may be approximately 660,000 Virginians without access and that Virginia is seen by many as a model state for future investment.

1. How can we leverage external funding to maximize the impact of Commonwealth dollars spent?

Mr. Carr emphasized that the VATI program is underfunded and will not attract many applications from bigger players at its current funding level. It was also stated that Virginia has done a good job of leveraging money from federal projects.

1. What are anticipated technological innovations affecting broadband?

It was stated that there is no silver bullet on the horizon and that government should remain technology neutral.

1. Are there anticipated budget requests that could affect broadband policies?

It was mentioned that the BAC will need legislation to continue its work past the current 7/1/2019 expiration.

1. What do we want to include in our broadband report to the Governor?

There was a brief discussion of including the various topics that have been discussed at previous BAC meetings such as the Trans-Atlantic cable update as well as issues from the meeting to follow on 10/23/2018.