

**CECIL COUNTY
BROADBAND TASK FORCE**

MINUTES

April 2, 2014

PRESENT: Dave Warnick, Don Newcomb, Danny DeMarinis, Sean Brimm, David Black, GIS Coordinator, Ted Pibil, Harford County Director of IT , and Jim Massey, Council Manager. Visitors: John Hartman and Sherry Pistor.

Dave Warnick, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m. Chairman Warnick called the roll of members. Chairman Warnick acknowledged David Black for his continued assistance with the task force.

Due to lack of a quorum, approval of the minutes of March 19, 2014 was tabled.

Mr. Warnick announced that representatives from Kent County, Maryland Broadband Cooperative and Comcast have been invited to the next meeting on April 16. It was noted that the Comcast presentation may be subject to a closed session, as permitted by the Open Meetings Act under the circumstances of a business to locate, expand or remain in the State.

Ted Pibil made a presentation on Harford County's progress in expanding high speed broadband. Harford worked with One Maryland Broadband and the Inter-County Broadband Network in developing the network. Harford County was required to match \$15M in funding from the State, which covered the cost of engineering, construction and maintenance of the network. He emphasized the value of designing rings for the fiber network so that there was redundancy. There is an enhanced economic value in offering broadband service to business and residents. Harford focused on County buildings, schools, libraries, emergency operations, and fire companies. They are developing a business plan to sell to dark fiber to businesses. Broadband is essential in attracting high tech businesses. They are looking to offer wireless service to residents without existing broadband. He suggested that the fiber network include service to radio towers to provide redundancy. As a service provider, Harford hopes for revenue generating for service to businesses, which will pay for the project in 12 years. The County will be able to eliminate more expensive Centrex telephone service and utilize voice over IP. Harford will be servicing 120 sites within the government network. They must have service agreements with an outside contractor for line maintenance, estimated at \$270,000 annually for 120 miles of fiber. Verizon and Comcast were unwilling to share any information about the locations of their lines.

Mr. Pibil suggested that the committee include municipalities in developing a system. Some communities are offering free Wifi to their residents. He indicated that Howard County is already selling service to businesses. Harford County does not intend to be a service provider, but will sell bandwidth to outside service providers.

The committee asked whether Cecil County could be part of Harford County's system. Mr. Pibil said that it could be possible. He is seeking to connect to "Carrier Hotels" in Baltimore City. There would be value in data center sharing and providing a backup to emergency centers (mutual aid agreements).

There are likely no State funds available. Grants may be available from the Emergency Number Service Board (State's 911).

Installing fiber underground may be initially more expensive but the cost of renting, maintaining and replacing fiber carried on utility poles costs more in the long run. Obtaining the right of way on State and County roads is usually easier than to acquire right of way from the railways.

An estimated cost to extend a "lateral line" from an existing point of the network to Harford County's northwest corner (Norrisville) was \$800,000.

Mr. Pibil offered to share RFPs for construction, engineering, network design, fiber maintenance, and network management. He agreed to come back and update the committee at a later date. At the end of his presentation, Mr. Pibil was thanked by the committee for his presentation and offer of assistance.

Chairman Warnick requested that a sign in sheet should be provided to visitors, which should include contact information.

The committee discussed their requirement to provide a final report and recommendations. Members suggested a rough outline to include: introduction, background, tasking, restraints, executive summary, analysis-findings-approach, meeting with providers, conclusion, recommendations, funding sources, grants, demographics, and appendices with maps that David Black provided. Chairman Warnick will prepare an outline and distribute to members for comments.

Mr. DeMarinis stated that TEDCO could be a source of funding.

The County Executive has asked Scott Mesneak, Cecil County IT Director, to attend the meetings and offer his assistance to the committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

The next meeting of the Broadband Task Force will be held on Wednesday, **April 16**, 2014 at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Massey