



**BOOK 37  
Pages 200-213**



**AMHERST COUNTY  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

**Board of Supervisors**

Claudia D. Tucker, Chair  
District 2  
Jennifer R. Moore, Vice-Chair  
District 5  
David W. Pugh, Jr., Supervisor  
District 4  
Tom Martin, Supervisor  
District 1  
L. J. Ayers III, Supervisor  
District 3

**MINUTES**

**September 1, 2020**  
Administration Building - 153 Washington Street -  
Public Meeting Room  
Amherst, Virginia 24521  
Meeting Convened - 3:00 PM

**County Administrator**  
Dean C. Rodgers

**County Attorney**  
Michael W. S. Lockaby

**I. Call to Order of the Board of Supervisors**

At a regular meeting of the Amherst County Board of Supervisors held on September 1, 2020 at 3:00 p.m., the following members were present:

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:**

Claudia D. Tucker, Chair  
Jennifer R. Moore, Vice-Chair  
David W. Pugh, Jr., Supervisor  
Tom Martin, Supervisor  
L. J. Ayers III, Supervisor

ABSENT: None

**STAFF:**

Dean C. Rodgers, County Administrator  
David R. Proffitt, Deputy County Administrator  
Michael W. S. Lockaby, County Attorney  
Regina M. Rice, Clerk to Boards

Chair Tucker called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m.

## **II. Call to Order of the Broadband Authority Board**

At a regular meeting of the Amherst County Broadband Authority Board held on September 1, 2020 at 3:00 p.m., the following members were present:

### **BROADBAND AUTHORITY BOARD:**

Claudia D. Tucker, Chair  
Jennifer R. Moore, Vice-Chair  
David W. Pugh, Jr., Supervisor  
Tom Martin, Supervisor  
L. J. Ayers III, Supervisor

ABSENT: None

### **STAFF:**

Dean C. Rodgers, County Administrator  
David R. Proffitt, Deputy County Administrator  
Michael W. S. Lockaby, County Attorney  
Regina M. Rice, Clerk to Boards

Chair Tucker called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m.

## **III. Approval of Agenda for the Board of Supervisors & Broadband Authority Board Joint Meeting**

By motion of Supervisor Martin and with the following vote, the Board approved the Board of Supervisors and Broadband Authority Board Joint meeting agendas for September 1, 2020.

AYE: Mrs. Tucker, Ms. Moore, Mr. Pugh, Mr. Martin and Mr. Ayers

NAY: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

## **IV. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance**

Supervisor Martin led the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

## **V. Citizen Comment**

Mr. Caleb Martin of Amherst, Virginia, addressed the Board regarding the necessity and investment of broadband for the entire County. Mr. Martin provided the Board a copy of his concerns. **(See Attachment 1)**

County Administrator Rodgers addressed the Board and read a letter submitted by President Sabrina Kennon and Director Katie Mayo of the Amherst Chamber of Commerce. **(See Attachment 2)**

The Public Comment session was closed.

## **VI. Consent Agenda**

By motion of Supervisor Martin and with the following vote, the Broadband Authority Board approved the Consent Agenda for September 1, 2020.

AYE: Mrs. Tucker, Ms. Moore, Mr. Pugh, Mr. Martin and Mr. Ayers

NAY: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

### **A. Minutes - August 4, 2020**

It was moved that the Amherst County Broadband Authority Board adopt the minutes of August 4, 2020.

## **VII. Discussion of the Following Topics**

A. Selection of CARES Act Contracts

Deputy County Administrator/Purchasing Agent David Proffitt addressed the Board regarding broadband expansion in the County. He advised 24 prospective proposers requested the RFP and he had received three responses, which he provided copies to the Board.

Mr. Proffitt said the recommendation was to award a contract to Central Virginia Electric Coop (CVEC) for the base proposal. He explained that CVEC could perform additional work, and if approved by the Board, a separate procurement process would be necessary. His recommendation was that the Board approve the proposal by CVEC.

The Board had questions regarding Zitel's proposal and understood the company could provide service to more people on Patrick Henry Highway and the Clifford area for the same amount of money.

County Administrator Rodgers advised the selection committee's recommendation concluded that CVEC was more reliable and uncertain if Zitel could perform the work by the required deadline. The committee also encouraged Zitel to solicit future work. Furthermore, Mr. Rodgers said it was the recommendation by Lit Communities that the County contract with CVEC. **(See Attachment 3)**

Chair Tucker stated to Board members that the decision at today's meeting was to review the proposal and decide how to spend the first \$500,000.

At this time, the Board invited Rodney Graham, COO of Zitel, to provide an overview of his company. Mr. Graham said they have no customers in Amherst County, however, Zitel does provide service for parts of Bedford County and other localities.

By motion of Supervisor Martin and with the following vote, the Broadband Authority Board accepted Lit Communities recommendation of moving forward with the Firefly Broadband proposal.

AYE: Mrs. Tucker, Ms. Moore, Mr. Pugh, Mr. Martin and Mr. Ayers

NAY: None

ABSENT: None

**VIII. Adjournment of the Broadband Authority Board**

By motion of Supervisor Pugh and with the following vote, the Broadband Authority Board adjourned at 4:03 p.m.

AYE: Mrs. Tucker, Ms. Moore, Mr. Pugh, Mr. Martin and Mr. Ayers

NAY: None

ABSENT: None



**IX. Approval of Agenda for the Board of Supervisors**

By motion of Supervisor Vice-Chair Moore and with the following vote, the Board approved the agenda.

AYE: Mrs. Tucker, Ms. Moore, Mr. Pugh, Mr. Martin and Mr. Ayers

NAY: None

ABSENT: None

**X. Citizen Comment**

There was no public comment.

**XI. Public Hearing**

A. CARES Act 2020 - Appropriation to the Broadband Authority Contracts  
Finance Director Stacey Wilkes presented information to the Board regarding the CARES Act disbursement to the County budget. She also informed the Board that, included in this disbursement, approximately \$190,000 was to be distributed to the Town of Amherst. Ms. Wilkes said it was necessary to hold a public hearing as state code requires on any budget amendments exceeding 1% of current expenditures.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Proponents:

ACSA Director Robert Hopkins addressed the Board regarding additional stimulus money received. He asked for a share of this money for the Service Authority to use for HVAC improvements and to improve the separation of his office staff as per state guidelines for social distancing.

Mr. Jim Thompson of Madison Heights, Virginia addressed the Board and believed Firefly was an excellent choice to add more fiber in the County. Mr. Thompson said he also supported Zitel and some of the sites proposed by SCS.

Opponents: None

The Public Hearing was closed.

By motion of Vice-Chair Moore and with the following vote, the Board adopted Resolution 2020-0020-R, as presented

AYE: Mrs. Tucker, Ms. Moore, Mr. Pugh, Mr. Martin and Mr. Ayers

NAY: None

ABSENT: None

## **XII. Consent Agenda**

By motion of Supervisor Ayers and with the following vote, the Board approved the Consent Agenda for September 1, 2020.

AYE: Mrs. Tucker, Ms. Moore, Mr. Pugh, Mr. Martin and Mr. Ayers

NAY: None

ABSENT: None

### **A. Minutes - August 4, 2020**

It was moved that the Board adopt the minutes for August 4, 2020.

### **B. Appropriation of Additional DSS Revenue for FY 2020**

It was moved that the Board appropriate additional DSS Revenue for FY 2020.

### **C. Transfer request for Jail and CSA FY 2020 - Finance**

It was moved that the Board approve the transfer request for Jail and CSA FY 2020.

### **B. Appropriation of Revenue - Treasurer**

It was moved that the Board approve the appropriation of revenue for the Treasurer's office.

### **D. Grant Acceptance - Local Emergency Management Performance Grant**

It was moved that the Board accept the Local Emergency Management Performance Grant.

## **XIII. Ordinance - First Read**

A. Revisions to Chapter 14 - Taxation of the Amherst County Code

County Attorney Lockaby addressed the Board regarding the first set of taxation revisions that would go into effect January 1, 2021. He said these amendments would abolish the Merchants' Capital Tax and restructure the BPOL tax.

In addition to these revisions, Mr. Lockaby explained that there were several updates, compliance and "cleanup" of issues in this ordinance. He advised he would have a draft ordinance addressing the cigarette tax by the first meeting in October.

County Administrator Rodgers informed the Board this ordinance does not address the meals tax and cigarette tax. He asked the Board for direction to proceed with a 2% meals tax proposal.

By motion of Supervisor Ayers and with the following vote, the Board directed staff to advertise these ordinance amendments for public hearing at the Board's September 15, 2020, meeting.

AYE: Mrs. Tucker, Ms. Moore, Mr. Pugh, Mr. Martin and Mr. Ayers

NAY: None

ABSENT: None

**XIV. Special Presentation**

#### A. Debt Refinancing

Mr. R. T. Taylor, Financial Advisor with Davenport & Company presented information on refinancing County debt to take advantage of the current market and lower interest rates. He explained the County now has an opportunity to save on a lower interest rate, thus shortening its debt and paying off some old debt at a lower rate.

Mr. Taylor advised VRA's deadline is September 25 and requested direction from the Board by September 15. This would allow the Board an opportunity "mull over" and determine what direction to take and which projects to pursue.

County Attorney Lockaby advised that VPSA would require a public hearing but not VRA. Mr. Rodgers said a public hearing would be scheduled for September 15 at which time the Board will receive public comment regarding all the refinancing options.

It was the Board's consensus to bring this matter back to revisit how additional borrowings could be used for Solid Waste projects, and to receive public comment on the refunding of the 2016 Lease through VPSA financing, and to provide staff with direction.

#### **XV. Old Business**



**A. Appropriation of Funds - Public Works**

Director of Public Works Brian Thacker addressed the Board requesting additional funding at a cost of \$60,000 to install four new restrooms at Mill Creek, Thrasher's, Roses Mill and Seminole parks. He advised in August the Board approved CARES Act funds to use for building the restrooms at an approximate cost of \$90,000 each.

Supervisor Martin requested Mr. Thacker include the Director of Parks & Recreation in the design and placement of the restrooms.

By motion of Supervisor Martin and with the following vote, the Board approved \$60,000 to be used from the County Fine & Forfeiture reserve to complete the purchase and installation of four new parks & trails restrooms at Mill Creek, Roses Mill, Thrasher's Creek and Seminole.

AYE: Mrs. Tucker, Ms. Moore, Mr. Pugh, Mr. Martin and Mr. Ayers

NAY: None

ABSENT: None

**XVI. New Business**

**A. Support Agreement for Amherst County Service Authority Bond Issue for Graham Creek Dam**

County Attorney Lockaby addressed the Board and advised the Service Authority is proceeding to issue a new money bond on the Graham Creek dam, and adopted a resolution at its meeting earlier today. VRA has asked that the Board of Supervisors guarantee that the County undertake a moral obligation for reparation of any deficiency that may occur on the bond.

By motion of Supervisor Ayers and with the following vote, the Board adopted Resolution 2020-0021-R, and authorized the Chair to execute the agreement as presented.

AYE: Mrs. Tucker, Ms. Moore, Mr. Pugh, Mr. Martin and Mr. Ayers

NAY: None

ABSENT: None

B. Support Agreement for Amherst County Service Authority Refunding Bond Issue

County Attorney Lockaby informed the Board that ACSA is proceeding with refinancing of its existing bonds that R. T. Taylor of Davenport & Company has identified as long-term savings for ACSA. He asked the Board to adopt this resolution.

By motion of Supervisor Ayers and with the following vote, the Board adopted Resolution 2020-022-R, and authorized the Chair to execute the agreement as presented.

AYE: Mrs. Tucker, Ms. Moore, Mr. Pugh, Mr. Martin and Mr. Ayers

NAY: None

ABSENT: None

C. Appropriation for Actuarial Services

Finance Director Stacey Wilkes advised the Board when the County's health insurance plan was changed last year, the County created a blended rate payment for young retirees that equals what current employees pay. She was not aware that the County had a post-employment liability that must be included on the books.

Ms. Wilkes said she will need to hire an actuary who will look at all County employees and not just the six young retirees who are now utilizing this benefit. She requested that the Board appropriate \$7,000 from the unobligated general fund for FY2020 to pay for the cost of this service.

By motion of Vice-Chair Moore appropriated \$7,000 from the unobligated general fund balance for FY 2020 actuarial services into the FY 2021 operating budget.

AYE: Mrs. Tucker, Ms. Moore, Mr. Pugh, Mr. Martin and Mr. Ayers

NAY: None

ABSENT: None

**B. CARES Act 2020 - Appropriation of Revenue into FY21 Budget**

County Administrator Rodgers informed the Board this matter is to follow-up the award of contracts from CARES Act funds and obtain approval of an appropriation to the Broadband Authority for the proposed work. Mr. Rodgers explained the Board will need to vote on the \$500,000 appropriation from CARES Act funds and approve the \$120,000 for the Lit Communities contract. (See Attachment 4)

By motion of Chair Tucker and with the following vote, the Board approved an appropriation in the amount of \$500,000 from CARES Act funds to the Broadband Authority for the purpose of paying for the work proposed under the contract or contracts awarded during the Broadband Authority meeting.

AYE: Mrs. Tucker, Ms. Moore, Mr. Pugh, Mr. Martin and Mr. Ayers

NAY: None

ABSENT: None

By motion of Supervisor Martin and with the following vote, the Board approved \$120,000 from FY20-21 CARES Act savings to be spent on the Lit Communities contract.

AYE: Mrs. Tucker, Ms. Moore, Mr. Pugh, Mr. Martin and Mr. Ayers

NAY: None

ABSENT: None

**D. Road Name Revision**

Community Development Director Jeremy Bryant addressed the Board regarding a request by Cynthia Henderson and Douglas Broadfoot to rename their road from "Morcom Drive" to "Morcom Place." He advised there are only two residences living on "Morcom Drive", and VDOT has been contacted and is supportive of the request. Both residents have contacted Public Safety and agreed to pay for any costs incurred with renaming the road.

By motion of Supervisor Martin and with the following vote, the Board approved renaming "Morcom Drive" to "Morcom Place" as presented.

AYE: Mrs. Tucker, Ms. Moore, Mr. Pugh, Mr. Martin and Mr. Ayers

NAY: None

ABSENT: None

**XVII County Administrator's Report**

A. Boards/Commissions/Committees - Quarterly update

County Administrator Rodgers advised this is a quarterly report addressing upcoming vacancies through December 31, 2020.

**XVIII. County Attorney's Report**

The County Attorney had no matter to discuss.

**XIX. Liaison and Committee Reports**

A. Central Virginia Transportation Planning Organization Meeting, August 20, 2020

For information only.

**XX. Departmental Reports**

A. Department Spotlight - Human Resources

County Administrator Rodgers advised the HR spotlight presentation has been deferred to the September 15 Board meeting.



**B. Revenue Update - Finance**

Finance Director Stacey Wilkes provided an update and advised that revenue is higher than projected for this year. She asked for the Board's permission to consider moving forward eight projects that were put on hold during FY20-21 budget discussions. Those projects are a file server, stretcher, fire alarm for Madison Heights Library, Public Safety vehicle, voting machine and poll books for the Registrar's office and election officials.

It was the Board consensus to move forward those items.

Ms. Wilkes asked the Board to consider moving some items from FY22 back to FY21 based on the priority they were given. She explained the necessity for new financial software and explained several issues she was confronted with this past month and the difficulty to complete payroll.

Supervisor Ayers said a committee was formed to study the financial software issue and asked what would be the estimated cost including software support for upcoming years.

County Administrator Rodgers said that the estimate was based on the highest cost for a new software program, however, until the County commits to buying the software, we cannot go out to bid and make a selection.

On another matter, Supervisor Martin requested Public Safety Director Sam Bryant contact the Emergency Services Council and provide an apparatus replacement schedule. He said the data was a least six years old and requested a report before moving forward.

Mr. Rodgers said all these matters can be revisited and brought back to the Board at a future meeting.

**C. Budget Calendar for Fiscal Year 2022**

For Information Only.

**D. June, 2020 Monthly Treasurer's Report**

For Information Only.

**XXI. Citizen Comment**

There was no public comment.

**XXII Matters from Members of the Board of Supervisors**

Supervisor Ayers had no matter to discuss.

Supervisor Martin had no matter to discuss.

Supervisor Pugh had no matter to discuss.

Vice-Chair Moore had no matter to discuss.

Chair Tucker had no matter to discuss.

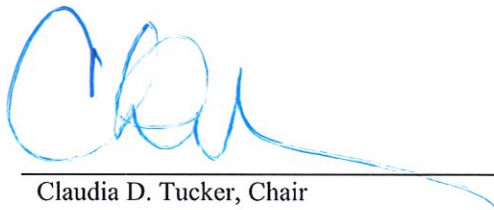
**XXIII. Adjournment**

By motion of Vice-Chair Moore and with the following vote, the Board adjourned at 6:07 p.m.

AYE: Mrs. Tucker, Ms. Moore, Mr. Pugh, Mr. Martin and Mr. Ayers

NAY: None

ABSENT: None

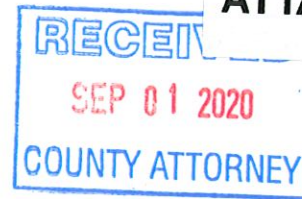


Claudia D. Tucker, Chair  
Amherst County Board of Supervisors



Dean C. Rodgers, Clerk

Caleb Martin  
1511 Boxwood Farm Rd. Amherst, VA 24521  
Cmmartin1@msn.com



Dear Board of Supervisors,

I am writing this to you in response to the broadband proposals submitted by Firefly Fiber, SCS Broadband, and ZITEL LLC. I have read through each proposal and have a few comments and recommendations as to what may best serve the County.

I first want to start with the recommendations for high speed internet, the FCC states that high speed broadband starts at 25mbps download/3mbps upload (FCC.gov) The following list is also from the FCC website for minimum download speeds:

Student: 5-25 Mbps

Telecommuting: 5-25 Mbps

Streaming HD 5-8 Mbps

HD Personal Video call 1.5 Mbps

HD Video Teleconference 6 Mbps

File Downloading 10 Mbps

These are just a few of the things that the internet is being used in a residential home post COVID-19. A greater stress is being put on the data capacity of broadband providers and consumers.

I have concerns with SCS' ability to provide adequate speed by the December 30, 2020 deadline due to offering speeds of "up to 2, 5, 7, 10, and 15Mbps with a price of \$40, \$60, \$80, \$100, and \$120 for their non LTE plan. The LTE plan is "up to" 10, 20, 30, 40, and 50Mbps at the same prices listed above. It is stated on SCS' website that "not all plans are available in their coverage area." (scsbroadband.com). I had SCS from September 2017 through March 2018. During that time, I was told I could receive 5Mbps. I would average about 2-5Mbps during normal times, but during peak hours, I would receive around 1-2 Mbps. I have concerns with the County spending \$300,000 dollars on a project that "allows fiber build out where possible with partnership with the County" (SCS proposal). This requires money to be spent down the road, when such money may not be available.

I do want to acknowledge that Firefly has proposed a plan to reach over 250 homes in the New Glasgow/Boxwood area. Their base plan is \$500,000, but it will build off the network that already runs down along the end of the Boxwood Farm and New Glasgow with CVEC. This proposal would connect part of the County that does not have access to any wired internet service. I have had fiber optic broadband when I lived in Chesterfield County, VA. For the two years I had fiber, I did not lose connection once, and never experienced speeds below what I paid for. The stress of a fiber system in a city or densely populated area is much more strenuous than what Firefly would deal with in Amherst and Nelson. The benefit of going with the Firefly proposal would be that the County could later extend service off the same lines Firefly is using. The two other proposals would cover a larger area that currently have no service available from a consistent broadband provider. I know that the County Board of Supervisors and administration are worried about a monopoly. I say that those who complain about the monopoly of Comcast complain due to pricing and changes in Comcast. Yet, they have a reliable ISP



Caleb Martin  
1511 Boxwood Farm Rd. Amherst, VA 24521  
Cmmartin1@msn.com

to service them. The North end of Amherst must pay much higher fees for satellite and fixed wireless (if available). I would also request the BOS look at the pricing for County residents. Firefly offers a "\$49.99 plan for 100Mbps down/100Mbps up" (Firefly proposal). This is in relation to the charges SCS has, but does not come close to this speed. Firefly also offers 1Gbps for \$89.99. That is ten times (10x) the speed of the \$49.99 for a \$40 difference. It also meets the need of a more reliable connection and bandwidth for multiple users. The proposal also offers a phone system for a competitive price compared to Verizon. I think this plan is smart in the fact that it connects to an already established ISP in the area and a team ready to build from day one.

My other comments are on the Zitel LLC proposal. I do not know much about Zitel other than what is in their proposal and the brief conversation I had with a representative from the company on August 31, 2020. I like what their proposal does, as it bridges the gap for the Clifford area with the CARES Act money and the Firefly proposal all in one, instead of waiting on the grant money through possible grants awarded to the County or possible partnerships. The Zitel LLC proposal is expected to give access to "242 homes in the Toytown area, 163 in New Glasgow, and 249 homes for the Patrick Henry project" (Zitel proposal). This is the December deadline output to well over 600 plus County homes and possibly more than 1200 citizens (assuming at least 2 per home). This is with a reliable Fiber to Home (FTH) connection. Zitel is also looking at an additional 531 homes through later grants (Zitel). This would put the total homes to over 1100 residence and businesses in the County. This would also give options if Firefly did not receive the CARES Act funding, but decided to expand in the future. The cost according to Zitel's proposal is "\$50 for 50Mbps to \$99 for 1 Gbps" (Zitel proposal). I spoke to a representative of Zitel on August 31, 2020. He informed me that the pricing plans would be changed to match those of Firefly. He stated that they would be \$49.99 for 100Mbps down/100 Mbps up and \$89.99 for 1Gbps. I believe the overall proposal from Zitel gives the County the option to avoid a monopoly they fear with Firefly operating in the same general area soon. This proposal seems to cover the most residents, with a guaranteed hardline connection compared to a possible expansion from SCS. They are also meeting the demand that today's broadband consumers need.

In conclusion, I know the County set aside \$500,000 from the CARES Act at the last BOS meeting. I ask that the County look carefully at the proposals, but strongly consider the Zitel proposal costing approximately \$500,000 or the base option with the possibility of Option A and/or B from Firefly. If the County is willing to add from the more than \$2 million used to pay for salaries from the CARES Act, they could address all 3 proposals for a cost of approximately \$1,780,589 to include all three proposals. That is asking the County to use approximately \$1.3 million from the more than \$2 million. I am simply asking the County to look at the countless benefits of a hardline connection compared to Fixed Wireless in spending the money in an investment that will be more reliable in a COVID-19 society.

Respectfully,

Caleb Martin

1511 Boxwood Farm Rd. Amherst, VA 24521

[Cmmartin1@msn.com](mailto:Cmmartin1@msn.com)



Caleb Martin  
1511 Boxwood Farm Rd. Amherst, VA 24521  
Cmmartin1@msn.com

## **Community Member Support**

### **Cheyrl Mares: 1665 Boxwood Farm Rd**

- Thinking of selling house and moving due to no internet access at residence other than satellite.
- Needs reliable internet for working from home

### **Sabrina Markle: 1203 Boxwood Farm Rd**

- Needs reliable internet at home for work
- Had issues with SCS in the past

### **Robin Seay: 683 Campbells Mill Rd**

- Needs internet for work purposes

### **Sandy Brown: Lipscomb Hollow Rd**

- Needs internet to work from home several days a week
- Currently uses spotty cell service to hotspot as Hughes Net does not allow connectivity due to reliability

### **Michael Beatty: Tusculum E**

- Interested in a hardline connection for the Tusculum neighborhood (ZiTELL is the only proposal as of now)

### **Cynthia Doherty: Grandmas Hill Rd near Tye River**

- Interested in hardline connection due to Hughes Net being the only provider in area
- Hughes Net is not reliable according to Cynthia

### **Laura Campbell: Bryant Hollow Rd**

- Needs internet to teach online nursing classes for work
- Drives into Town of Amherst to daughter's house just to be able to work

### **Cindy Burns: 232 Bryant Hollow Rd**

- Needs "reliable, unlimited, and affordable internet for work"
- Seiontec climbed trees and could not find line of sight to towers
- Posted on Nextdoor (neighborhood social media app) in April 3, 2020

### **Jonquil Finch: Boxwood Farm Rd**

- Needs internet for work as a public school teacher and student in home
- Child in school
- Shares internet bill through Seiontec with neighbor
- Seiontec has disconnected several times a month making working from home unreliable

**Fw: Letter in reference to broadband**

**Dean C Rodgers** to: jessica

09/01/2020 08:53 AM

Cc: David Proffitt, Michael W Lockaby, Regina M Rice, Board of Supervisors

Attached for your information is a comment to be read by a citizen at today's meeting about the three proposals. He advocates that all three be approved.

Dean C. Rodgers  
Amherst County Administrator  
(434) 946-9400

The mission of Amherst County's government is to provide limited, efficient and effective government services that promote liberty and a high quality of life for our citizens. We are a County open for business in a secure community dedicated to providing a superior work force through investments in education and economic development. Our citizens expect and we deliver a fiscally responsible and transparent government.

----- Forwarded by Dean C Rodgers/Amherst on 09/01/2020 08:45 AM -----

From: Caleb Martin <cmmartin1@msn.com>  
To: "dcrodgers@countyofamherst.com" <dcrodgers@countyofamherst.com>,  
"tmartin@countyofamherst.com" <tmartin@countyofamherst.com>  
Date: 09/01/2020 01:17 AM  
Subject: Letter in reference to broadband

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Mr. Rodgers and Supervisor Martin,

Attached is a letter I will be submitting to the Board of Supervisors for the September 1, 2020 Board of Supervisors' meeting. I will be attending the meeting and plan to speak in reference to the proposals received by the County. I wanted to attach this letter so the Board could have access to it prior to the meeting. I will also have enough copies to provide if that is easier for the Board.

Respectfully,  
Caleb Martin



1511 Boxwood Farm Rd BOS Broadband Letter.docx

Dear Members of the Board,

While COVID-19 has not brought many positives to our county, it has given us a gift. A financial gift that could continue to cultivate in this county for years to come. We are writing you today on behalf of our businesses and the children of Amherst County urging you to use this gift, in the form of CARES Act Funding, to provide and/or improve the internet situation within Amherst County.

Over the past six months we have seen a spotlight shined on the discrepancies between urban and rural areas in terms of equitable access to internet solutions. The need for reliable internet access has never been greater. Our children need these solutions to access their education. Our businesses need these solutions to survive. We as a community need both.

We have deemed ourselves a business-friendly county. We recently surveyed our members on their providers, speeds, satisfaction, and accessibility at their locations. We had thirty businesses respond, and 56% were "satisfied" with their access to reliable internet. Of the sixteen that responded they were satisfied their locations were Madison Heights and the Town of Amherst. Outside of these two localities, sometimes even by a mile or two, the situation is drastically different. One business owner responded, *"My only options is a hotspot on my phone or a hotspot device. I tried to get SCS Broadband because the county was working with them a few years ago but had a very weak signal. They wouldn't even install. I run a business out of my home building websites. Internet is vital to my business. I would gladly pay for a fiber connection like they have other places. I would love to work from home 100% but often have to drive to the library, which is closed now due to covid."* This is not conducive to being business friendly. We must do what we can to provide reliable, affordable solutions for our current businesses, and those who are eyeing Amherst County for their future endeavors.

As our member stated in the above quotation, the internet is vital. It is vital to our businesses. It is vital to our schools. It is vital to keep our community thriving. Affordable access is just as important as electricity and running water. We have an unprecedented gift to use the funds that were given to us to rectify the current situation. This will come back to us tenfold. This will attract businesses, those looking to relocate their families, and that will ensure the future of our beloved county.

Respectfully,

Sabrina Kennon, President Amherst County Chamber of Commerce

Katie Mayo, Director Amherst County Chamber of Commerce





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Over the past six months we have seen a spotlight shined on the discrepancies between urban and rural areas in terms of equitable access to internet solutions. The need for reliable internet access has never been greater. Our children need these solutions to access their education. Our businesses need these solutions to survive. We as a community need both.

We have deemed ourselves a business-friendly county. We recently surveyed our members on their providers, speeds, satisfaction, and accessibility at their locations. We had thirty businesses respond, and 56% were "satisfied" with their access to reliable internet. Of the sixteen that responded they were satisfied their locations were Madison Heights and the Town of Amherst. Outside of these two localities, sometimes even by a mile or two, the situation is drastically different. One business owner responded, *"My only options is a hotspot on my phone or a hotspot device. I tried to get SCS Broadband because the county was working with them a few years ago but had a very weak signal. They wouldn't even install. I run a business out of my home building websites. Internet is vital to my business. I would gladly pay for a fiber connection like they have other places. I would love to work from home 100% but often have to drive to the library, which is closed now due to covid."* This is not conducive to being business friendly. We must do what we can to provide reliable, affordable solutions for our current businesses, and those who are eyeing Amherst County for their future endeavors.

As our member stated in the above quotation, the internet is vital. It is vital to our businesses. It is vital to our schools. It is vital to keep our community thriving. Affordable access is just as important as electricity and running water. We have an unprecedented gift to use the funds that were given to us to rectify the current situation. This will come back to us tenfold. This will attract businesses, those looking to relocate their families, and that will ensure the future of our beloved county.

Respectfully,

Sabrina Kennon, President Amherst County Chamber of Commerce

Katie Mayo, Director Amherst County Chamber of Commerce

[www.amherstvachamber.com](http://www.amherstvachamber.com)  
434.946.0990  
328 Richmond Highway Amherst, VA 24521





Dear Members of the Board,

While COVID-19 has not brought many positives to our county, it has given us a gift. A financial gift that could continue to cultivate in this county for years to come. We are writing you today on behalf of our businesses and the children of Amherst County urging you to use this gift, in the form of CARES Act Funding, to provide and/or improve the internet situation within Amherst County.

Over the past six months we have seen a spotlight shined on the discrepancies between urban and rural areas in terms of equitable access to internet solutions. The need for reliable internet access has never been greater. Our children need these solutions to access their education. Our businesses need these solutions to survive. We as a community need both.

We have deemed ourselves a business-friendly county. We recently surveyed our members on their providers, speeds, satisfaction, and accessibility at their locations. We had thirty businesses respond, and 56% were "satisfied" with their access to reliable internet. Of the sixteen that responded they were satisfied their locations were Madison Heights and the Town of Amherst. Outside of these two localities, sometimes even by a mile or two, the situation is drastically different. One business owner responded, *"My only options is a hotspot on my phone or a hotspot device. I tried to get SCS Broadband because the county was working with them a few years ago but had a very weak signal. They wouldn't even install. I run a business out of my home building websites. Internet is vital to my business. I would gladly pay for a fiber connection like they have other places. I would love to work from home 100% but often have to drive to the library, which is closed now due to covid."* This is not conducive to being business friendly. We must do what we can to provide reliable, affordable solutions for our current businesses, and those who are eyeing Amherst County for their future endeavors.

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## ATTACHMENT 3



**TO:** Mr. Dean Rodgers  
Amherst County Administrator  
Amherst County Broadband Authority Board  
153 Washington St.  
Amherst, VA 24521

**FROM:** Brian Snider, CEO Lit Communities  
Rene Gonzalez, CSO Lit Communities  
Jessica Fowler, CCO Lit Communities  
Don White, Widelity

**DATE:** August 31, 2020

**SUBJECT:** Recommendations Regarding the Award of Amherst County Broadband Expansion RFP 3388 and for Utilization of Additional CARES Act Funding

### **Amherst County Broadband Expansion RFP 3388**

#### *Background:*

Lit Communities was asked by Amherst County on August 4, 2020 to assist with the creation of a Request for Proposals for broadband expansion within the County. The Amherst County Broadband Expansion RFP 3388 was created and released on August 13, 2020 with a due date of August 24, 2020. The Amherst County Broadband Expansion RFP 3388 asked for firms to provide either wireless or fiber connectivity solutions that could be completed by December 30, 2020 within a budget of \$500,000, utilizing CARES Act funding. Proposers were asked to address the following items in their scope of work:

- Ability to complete work by December 30, 2020
- The total budgeted cost for the proposed work
- Number of premises passed or number of premises provided coverage by the proposed scope of work
- The cost per resident for service and the service packages that would be made available
- The Customer Service Response system that would be used to respond to customer requests
- The amount of outside investment into the company
- The capabilities and qualifications for the key personnel who would be involved in the work
- Similar projects and experience in providing similar or same type of work
- Any additional services that would be provided in addition to the requested scope of work that would enhance connectivity for Amherst County residents

Between August 24 and 27th, proposals were reviewed and three firms were interviewed and evaluated by a joint team made up of representatives from Amherst County, Amherst County Public Schools and Lit Communities. A scoring system was used in the evaluation of each proposal and presentation and used the following factors:

- A. Firm's proposal falls within budget outlined in the RFP.
- B. Firm's ability to complete all work prior to Dec 30, 2020.
- C. Firm's Ability to provide coverage to unserved and underserved areas within County.



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- D. Cost per capita for customer and/or household served Overall number of previous unserved households that are afforded availability.
- E. Consistency of interoperability for long term build out.
- F. Financial capabilities of Firm.
- G. References and experiences of Firm in providing similar services to those requested in RFP.
- H. Completeness of the proposal.

*Lit Communities Recommendation for Award:*

Based on the strength of their proposal and their achieved average score, Lit Communities is recommending that strong consideration should be given to awarding the full \$500,000 to Commonwealth Virginia Electric Co-op (CVEC)/Firefly for a fiber to the premise connectivity solution that covers areas without adequate access, and areas that the school system has identified as areas of need to provide true broadband access for virtual classrooms. (Base Proposal).

CVEC is committed to extending the project to assure the federal funding is used to reach as many homes and businesses as possible if the construction costs come in under the estimate.

The CVEC proposal was selected for the following reasons:

- ability to complete the work before December 30, 2020
- strong customer service response and an in place system- CVEC is already set up as a co-op to handle customer service requests
- cost per subscriber
  - 100/100mgbs \$45.99
  - 1GB/1GB \$79.99
- strong outside investment made into the company (over \$52M)
- CVEC has been serving Amherst County since 1930- this shows demonstrated commitment to the community
- CVEC will also work with Amherst County to provide free community hot spots in agreed upon locations

Base Proposal

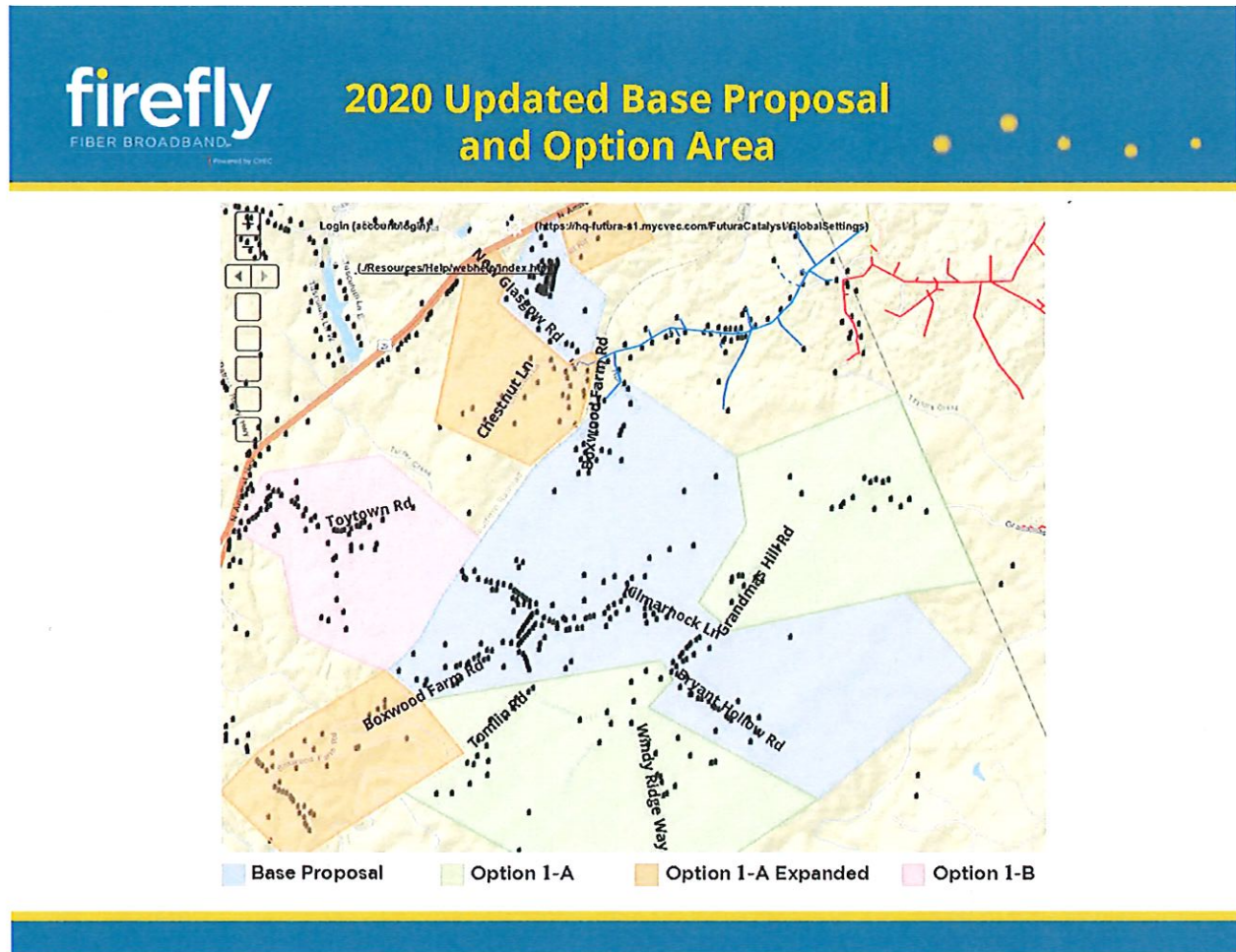
CVEC's base proposal has two separate areas which both connect back to the Firefly network at points along New Glasgow Road. The goal for the base proposal was to include the maximum number of homes and businesses passed within the proposed budget of \$500,000, and to prioritize areas of low and moderate-income housing.

CVEC's proposal includes 7.3 miles of underground (UG) construction passing 251 homes and



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businesses. The total project cost is estimated to be \$676,100. CVEC is asking the county to contribute \$500,000 and Firefly will be responsible for any cost overruns. CVEC's in kind contribution will total \$176,100. The proposed network is depicted in the blue areas in the below map titled Base Proposal-



The largest area of the base proposal runs along Boxwood Farm Road from New Glasgow Road to the point where the road crosses Turner Creek. It also extends west along Toytown Road to the railroad tracks. The area extends from Boxwood Road along Kilmarnock Lane to Grandmas Hill Road and then along Grandmas Hill Road south to Bryant Hollow Road which is also included in the project. At the intersection of Boxwood Farm Road and Grandmas Hill Road the project area follows along Grandmas Hill Road about 1000'. Several other small secondary roads are included Honeybee Dr and Lawhorne Ridge Lane are also included. The area is represented in the blue color on the Project Area Map in this proposal.

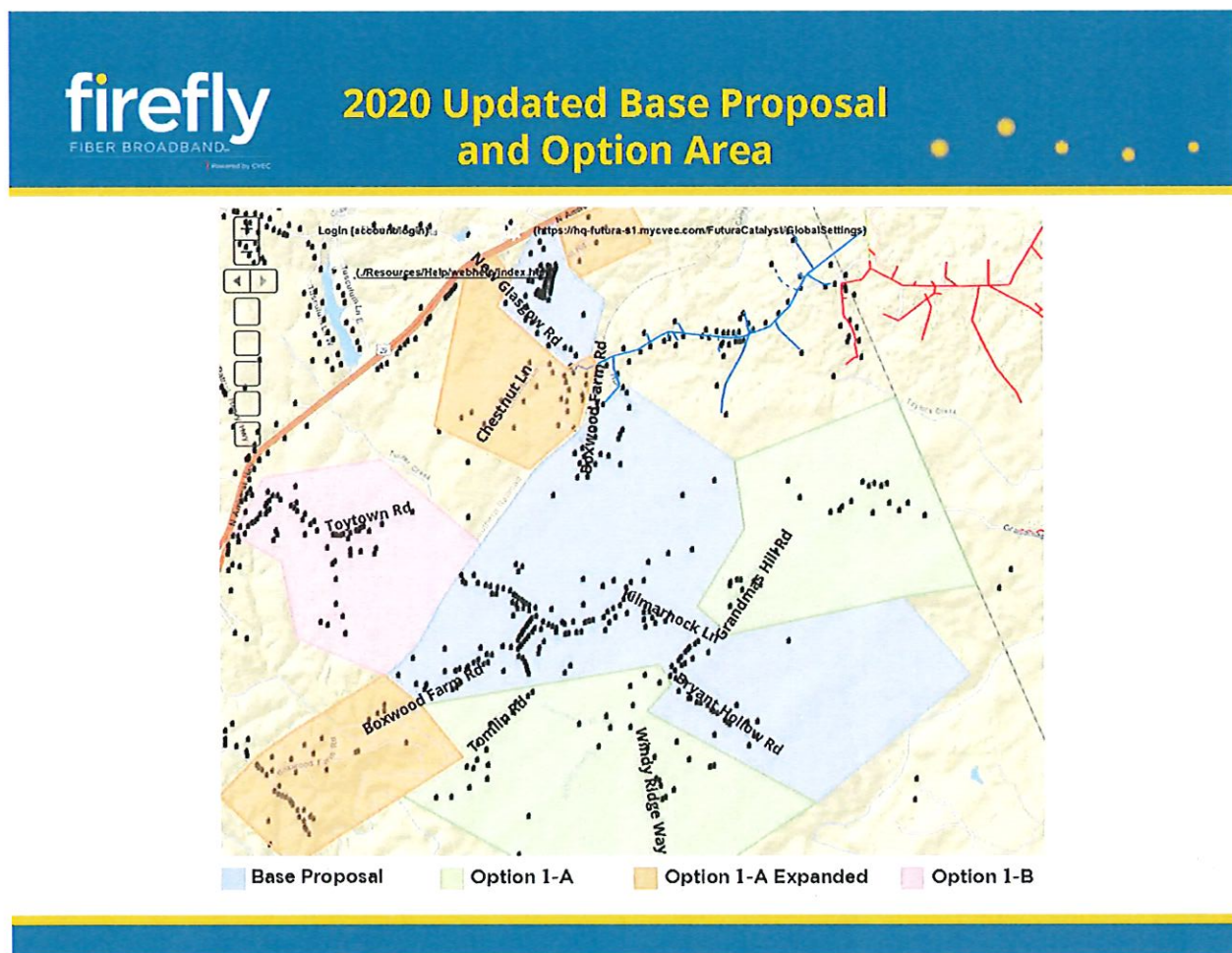
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The second area of the base proposal is on the northwest side of the railroad track, taking off from an area where Firefly already has service on that side of the track at New Glasgow Road. The project area then continues up New Glasgow Road and along Stove Hill Road, Greenock Court and then Edinburgh Drive through a mobile home community.

*Additional Recommendations from Lit Communities regarding CARES Act monies:*

During the Amherst County Broadband RFP 3388 review Amherst County leadership requested that Lit Communities contact CVEC/Firefly and ask for additional areas to consider if another \$500,000 would be made available to continue building out beyond CVEC's original submittal. After discussion with CVEC, there are two additional areas for the County depicted on the below maps that would continue to extend the fiber to the home network within Amherst County.

Option #1





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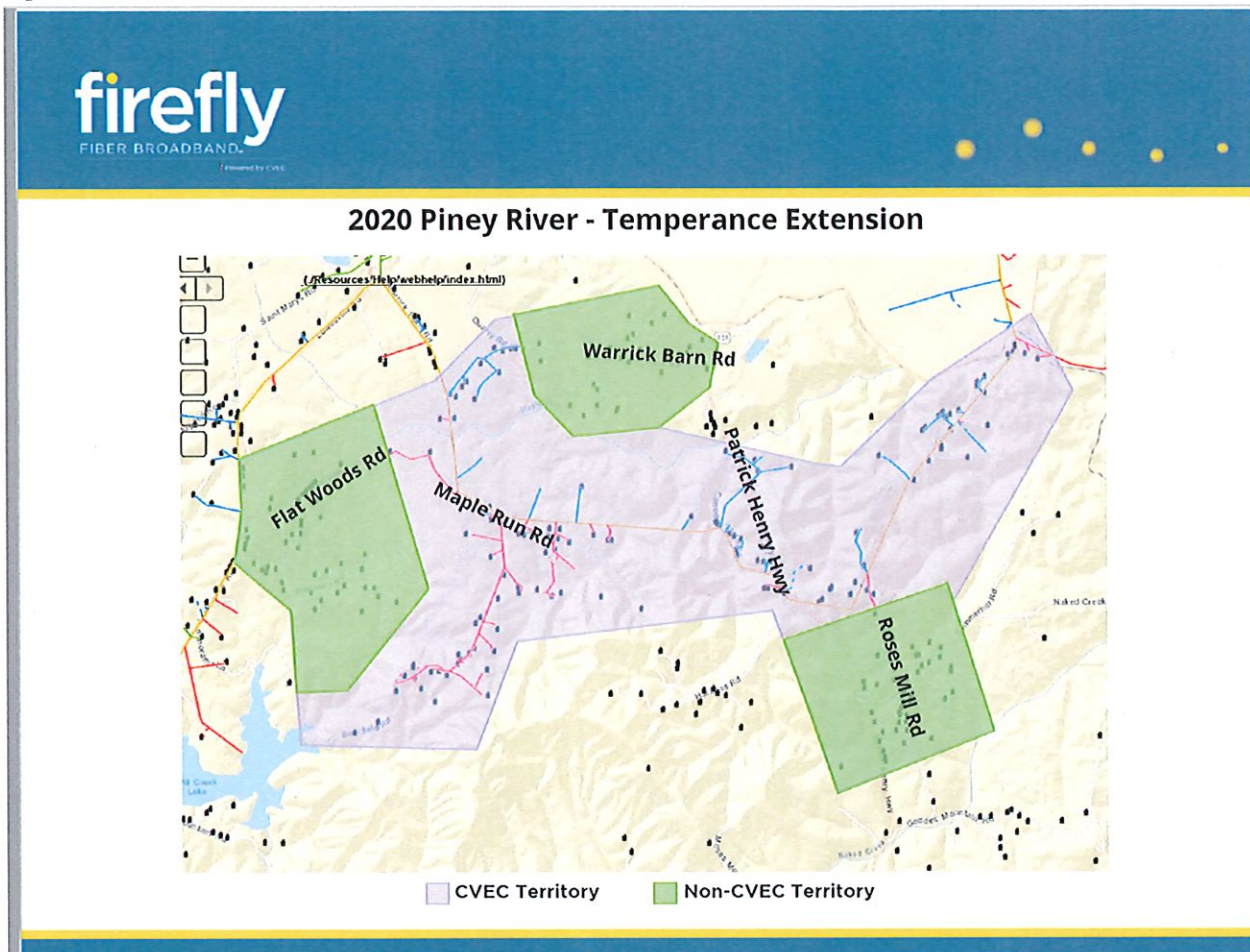
The orange and green areas (Option 1-A and Option 1-A Expanded) are proposed by CVEC and would total 7.7 miles of fiber and pass 133 homes and businesses. The major benefit is more low and moderate income areas are included. CVEC would ask for \$520,000 toward this build out and would be contributing roughly \$140,000 in in-kind services. This project area was chosen to complete the buildout of the section of Amherst County bounded by the county line, railroad, Turner Creek and the Buffalo River. There are two parts to this project area, represented by the green and orange areas in the map- (1-A Expanded, Orange area): The eastern area covers Grandmas Hill Road from the Base Proposal area to the county line and (1-A, Green area): The western portion of the area covers Grandmas Hill Road from Tomlin Road around to Bryant Hollow Road and include Buffalo Bend Drive and Windy Ridge Way. This option can be completed by December 30, 2020.

*\*\*Please note: Option 1-B, is an area that includes the western portion of Toytown Road and requires a railroad crossing permit which will require three to four months to receive. Additional time to coordinate with AEP would also be required. Option 1- B includes 2.6 miles and passes 62 homes and businesses. The project cost is \$178,800 and CVEC would ask the county to contribute \$130,000. Option 1-B would not be able to be completed by the December 30, 2020 deadline. Given this extended schedule Lit Communities does not recommend this option be considered for funding. \*\**



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Option #2



The second option is a build-out from the Piney River area toward the Temperance area. This build-out is slightly different in that it includes a section of CVEC electric territory with overhead construction and also includes three small underground construction areas outside of CVEC territory. The new build-outs outside CVEC territory would be on Warrick Barn Road, Rose Mill and Summerhill Rds, and Flat Woods/Parrtown near Temperance. The total build is about 7 miles of overhead and 6.5 miles of underground. It passes 249 homes and businesses. CVEC would ask that Amherst County contribute \$500,000, which would help offset costs for the underground portion of the network and the additional fiber in the CVEC system to serve customers not currently served by the CVEC electrical network. CVEC/Firefly would contribute about \$350,000 due to the overhead construction already having been planned for as a service to current CVEC members. This option can be completed by December 30, 2020.

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Another benefit to this proposed extension is the ability to extend from this area toward Lowesville/Woodson, a mountainous region with almost no internet options. That extension would be included in future network build-out plans.

CARES ACT FUNDING ALLOCATION					
\$5,514,828					
	Disbursement #1	Disbursement #2	Spent through August 31, 2020	Balance Remaining	
Town Portion	190,633	190,633	(190,633)	190,633	
Public Safety Shelter	80,000			80,000	
Monroe Hot Water	3,500			3,500	
Small Business Grants	300,000	150,000	(300,000)	150,000	
Non-Profit Grants	200,000		(200,000)	0	
Duct Cleaning	200,000		(5,311)	194,689	
Broadband	500,000			500,000	
Telework Equipment	134,800			134,800	
HVAC Health Department (2022 CIP)		100,000		100,000	
HVAC Projects		94,500		94,500	
Savings FY 2020	1,089,581		(1,054,124)	35,457	
Savings FY 2021		1,051,181		1,051,181	
Schools		450,000		450,000	
Misc COVID-19 Expenses	58,900	91,100	(29,097)	120,903	
Public Safety Supplies and equipment		330,000		330,000	
Park Restroom(5 parks)		300,000		300,000	
Grants					
	2,757,414	2,757,414	(1,779,166)	3,735,662	