

**WEAKLEY COUNTY, TENNESSEE
FIBER COMMITTEE**

Monday, May 2, 2022 – 9:00 A.M. – Weakley County Board of Education, Dresden, TN

Fiber Committee Members Present: Mayor Jake Bynum, Commissioners David Bell, Dennis Doster, Gary Eddings and Roger Donaldson

Fiber Committee Members Absent: None

Also Present: Commissioners Eric Owen, Beth VanCleave, David Hawks, Finance Director John Liggett, Director of Schools Randy Frazier, Two Representatives from WK&T, and three members of the media.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Bell called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

II. OLD BUSINESS

None.

III. NEW BUSINESS

Appointment of New Recording Secretary: Commissioner Doster made a motion Lauren Rush be appointed as the new recording secretary. Commissioner Donaldson seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion of Current Grant Progress: Two Representatives from WK&T were recognized to provide an update. Phase I grant was completed this past Friday (Sidonia). The representative cited supply chain issues, with an additional issue of difficulty sourcing chips. Commissioner Bell asked about issues where the grant would only cover one side of a road and asked how WK&T would handle that. The representative stated that they would only operate within the grant because they only have the authority from their board to connect those already agreed upon. The representative stated that the goal of this grant is to connect everyone in the county, so those residences that have been left out of these initial phases would eventually be incorporated into a later phase. Phase II, which is located near Jewel Store and Palmersville. Commissioner Doster asked about progress toward incorporating the fire department in Palmersville because of the county's desire to use it as a voting precinct. The representatives stated the location was currently incorporated into Phase IV. Phase III, which is the Pillowville area, has recently been awarded to WK&T, and they are hopeful they will not have to ask the county to contribute funds, but with the rise in material costs, that may not be possible. Phase III will potentially begin construction at the end of this month and the grant's timeline is three years. Phase IV, which will potentially encompass the remaining parts of the county. It covers around 360 miles and 2,200 locations. One challenge of Phase IV is an issue with other providers challenging WK&T for the selected service areas. Phase IV may be awarded at the end of July 2022. The county's input cost for Phase IV would be \$2.5M. Potentially, if it is the will of the commission, a Phase V would be necessary to cover any remaining parts of the county that are grant ineligible. Phase V would probably not be grant funded. Commissioner Hawks stated concerns about citizens in the less rural areas only being able to receive Frontier internet service, and said it was unacceptable that the fiber lines are running directly past them, but they are not able to be connected to either WK&T or Charter. Mayor Bynum agreed with Commissioner Hawks, saying a plan should be formulated for these areas once we get a little further along, especially once the state infrastructure bill

passes. In closing remarks, Commissioner Bell commented that we should reassure citizens that they will eventually receive internet even if they seem to have been passed by in these initial phases. Commissioner Hawks made a request that WK&T submit quarterly reports on progress, to which they agreed. Commissioner Bell also requested that WK&T provide a timely update once they gain knowledge of locations that will be left out of Phase IV so that the county can begin planning Phase V.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

None

V. ADJOURN

: Having no other business, Commissioner Doster made a motion to adjourn, Commissioner Donaldson seconded and with that, the meeting was adjourned at 9:47 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,



Lauren Rush, Secretary

Fiber Committee

Approved:



Chairperson

Fiber Committee

Date: 10-20-22