

Board of County Commissioners

Stephen A. Wantz, President
Edward C. Rothstein, Vice President
C. Richard Weaver, 2nd Vice President
C. Eric Bouchat
Dennis E. Frazier



Carroll County Government

225 North Center Street
Westminster, Maryland 21157
410-386-2043; 1-888-302-8978
fax 410-386-2485
MD Relay 711/800-735-2258

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Chris Winebrenner
410-386-2043

Broadband: Feasibility Study, Grant Updates and Possible Help for Rural Areas

Westminster, MD, Thursday, March 7, 2019 –On February 28, 2019, during Open Session, the Board of Carroll County Commissioners approved a Broadband Feasibility Studies Grant application, heard an update on the Carroll Broadband Grant Program and discussed new ways to expand internet to rural residential areas.

Carroll County Director of Technology Services Mark Ripper presented information on a FY20 Broadband Feasibility Studies Grant application to the State of Maryland's Department of Housing and Community Development's Office of Rural Broadband efforts to assist the expansion of broadband into unserved rural areas of Maryland. If awarded, the grant will assist Carroll County in understanding the costs of, and issues relating to, delivering broadband to currently unserved rural residents and businesses. The county is seeking up to \$30,000 in match funding from the state to conduct the \$60,000 study. The study promises important data pinpointing areas currently without access to internet service and will potentially aid the county in receiving future broadband development funding from the state.

A second presentation provided updates on two Carroll County broadband expansion grant programs approved in FY18.

In the business park program, two of the four projects, Warfield and Twin Arch, are complete. A third project, Liberty Exchange recently received right of entry permission and development is now moving forward. The last project showed no interest after dozens of attempts to extend broadband to the park. To date, the county used \$131,000 to extend broadband to these parks.

A second program, Carroll Broadband Grant Program, provided matching grant funding to local internet service providers and business enterprises seeking high-speed broadband by expanding internet access in underserved or unserved areas. To date, the program awarded three grants totaling \$45,460.

CARROLL COUNTY

The Americans with Disabilities Act applies to the Carroll County Government and its programs, services, activities, and facilities. Anyone requiring an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication or who has a complaint should contact The Department of Citizen Services, 410.386.3600 or 1.888.302.8978 or MD Relay 7-1-1/1.800.735.2258 or email ada@carrollcountymd.gov as soon as possible but no later than 72 hours before the scheduled event.

As over \$770,000 in available funding remains, the commissioners directed staff to regroup and formulate next steps to further expand high-speed internet in the county. The plan could include a two pronged approach:

- 1) Work with Economic Development to consider running fiber to the next group of business parks
- 2) Consider a new grant program to help "light up" residential locations in rural areas without internet access

Staff will return to the board in several weeks with feedback and recommendations.

The Open Session is available for viewing on the [county meeting portal](#) and the county [YouTube channel](#). In addition, all meetings will be rebroadcast on Comcast Channel 24.

#