



Buncombe County Board of Commissioners

Request for Board Action

Meeting Date: September 3, 2024

New Business

Department:
Budget

Presenter(s):
John Hudson, Budget Director

Contact(s): John Hudson, Budget Director

Subject: Broadband Match

Brief Summary:

Buncombe County participated in the State's Completing Access to Broadband (CAB) program. As part of this process, the State has awarded a broadband infrastructure project to Bellsouth Telecommunications for fiber expansion and Buncombe County is required to provide a financial match based on statutory guidance. Unfortunately, additional funds are required above the ARPA allocation due to the State's reconfiguration of funds. Staff have identified two sources to resolve the shortage: (1) Reallocation of ARPA funds and (2) Medicaid Hold-Harmless Funds.

(1) Reallocation of ARPA Funds

In 2021, Buncombe County was awarded \$50,733,290 in Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds via the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to invest toward recovery from COVID-19 and its negative economic impacts. These funds were awarded on a rolling basis to projects by Commissioners as selected via multiple Request for Proposals (RFP) processes.

Project	Decrease	Increase	Rationale
Renewable Energy for Volunteer Fire Districts	\$298,391.00		Project objectives are able to be met for the 10 sites that are eligible after a structural assessment was conducted. The costs for those 10 have come in under budget.
Broadband Infrastructure Expansion		\$298,391.00	Buncombe County is required to provide a financial match based on statutory guidance. Additional funds are required above the current ARPA allocation due to the State's reconfiguration of funds.

(2) Medicaid Hold-Harmless Funds

Buncombe County has received Medicaid hold-harmless funds from the State, which are unrestricted funds and reflect previously county-owned sales tax proceeds increasing above state Medicaid expenses. \$411,408 is needed to cover the remaining shortage of funds.

Recommended Motion & Requested Action:

- 1) Approve reallocation of ARPA funds for Broadband Match
- 2) Approve budget amendment for Broadband Match
- 3) Authorize County Manager to execute NCDIT CAB MOU for Buncombe-Bellsouth project

County Manager's Comments & Recommendation:

County Manager recommends as presented