

**MINUTES OF THE  
JOHNSON CITY ENERGY AUTHORITY  
D/B/A  
BRIGHTRIDGE**

December 15, 2021

PRESENT: Dan Brant  
James Haselsteiner  
Hal Knight  
Gary Mabrey  
James Smith  
Robert Thomas  
Jeffrey R. Dykes, Chief Executive Officer  
Brian Bolling, CPA, Chief Financial Officer and Chief Customer Officer  
Connie Crouch, Human Resources Manager  
Bonnie Donnolly, Chief Development and Market Strategy Officer  
Mark Eades, Chief Engineering and Facilities Officer  
Eric Egan, Chief Data Officer  
Stacy Evans, Chief Broadband and Technology Officer  
Rodney Metcalf, Chief Operations Officer  
Tiphonie Watson, Customer Support Manager  
Tim Whaley, Director of Public and Governmental Affairs  
Melissa Taylor, Supervisor, General Accounting  
Stephen M. Darden, Hunter Smith Davis, LLP

ABSENT: Jenny Brock  
Joe Grandy  
B. J. King  
Hal Knight  
Brian Ellis, Service Department Manager  
Donnie Hall, Safety/Environmental Manager  
David Spinnato, Physical Plant/Warehouse Manager

Chairman James Smith called the meeting to order.

Upon motion of Mr. Thomas, seconded by Mr. Mabrey, the Board approved the following Resolution, which was presented by Chairman Smith to Mr. Pete Peterson at today's Board meeting:

**A RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION TO  
JOHNSON CITY MANAGER M. DENIS PETERSON**

WHEREAS, M. Denis "Pete" Peterson has held the position of City Manager at the City of Johnson City since 2005; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure as City Manager, he also served from July, 2005 to June, 2009 as a Board member of the Johnson City Power Board. Mr. Peterson faithfully served on the Board's Land Use Committee and Personnel Committee; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Peterson offered his full support and cooperation to the Johnson City Power Board becoming the Johnson City Energy Authority on April 1, 2017; and subsequently on October 3, 2017, the Johnson City Energy Authority announced the d/b/a name of BrightRidge; and

WHEREAS, the BrightRidge Board of Directors wishes to recognize Mr. Peterson for his tireless commitment in leaving a legacy of the betterment of Johnson City through numerous projects in concert with Bright Ridge such as the revitalization of downtown resulting from flood mitigation projects leading to Founders Park and King Commons, the ongoing conversion of City streetlights to fiscally responsible LED lighting, and in the future, the relocation of utilities for the West Walnut Street revitalization project;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the BrightRidge Board of Directors, meeting in regular session on the 15th day of December, 2021, would like to express appreciation to M. Denis "Pete" Peterson for his vision and leadership in extending partnership and collaboration to BrightRidge. Mr. Peterson performed his duties while exhibiting a selfless servitude focusing on customers, employees, and the citizens of the City, with each individual being of equal importance, while concurrently balancing the strategic interests of BrightRidge and the City of Johnson City.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be presented to Mr. Peterson and be spread in full on the minutes of the proceedings of this meeting.

The motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Mr. Thomas presented the report of the Finance, Audit, Rates and Budget Committee, which met immediately prior to today's Board meeting for the presentation of the Fiscal Year 2021- 21 annual financial audit report by Blackburn, Childers and Steagall, PLC. The company once again received an unmodified or "clean" audit opinion, with no material weaknesses detected and no instances of non-compliance or other matters that were required to be reported under Governmental Auditing Standards. Upon motion of Mr. Thomas, seconded by Mr. Mabrey, the Board voted to approve the audit as presented. The motion carried unanimously by roll call vote. Mr. Thomas extended his thanks to Chad Kisner and Esther Shelton with Blackburn, Childers, and Steagall for the Committee presentation and commended BrightRidge management, staff, and employees for another clean audit opinion.

Financial reports were not presented this month due to the earlier Board meeting date.

Upon motion of Mr. Thomas, seconded by Mr. Haselsteiner, the Board approved the following items on the Electric Division Consent Agenda:

(a) The minutes of the regularly scheduled Board meeting on November 23, 2021.

(b) A 24-month printing services contract with Pulp Printing in the amount of \$274,115.98 for direct mail and other printed promotional materials. The vendor was selected through an RFP proposal process, taking into consideration minimum level of fulfillment, lead time for completion, and a commitment for 24-month set pricing. The RFP also requested mail services for certain items. Funding for the contract would come from FY 2022-24 Broadband and Electric Advertising budgets as applicable.

(c) The low bid of Williams Electric Supply Company in the amount of \$72,605.00 for 7,000 feet of rigid 2" PVC conduit (\$20,300.00), 9,300 feet of rigid 2 1/2" conduit (\$42,315.00) and 6,000 feet of continuous 2.5" HDPE SDR 13.5 conduit (\$9,990.00).

The motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Upon motion of Mr. Thomas, seconded by Mr. Mabrey, the Board approved an adjustment in the amount of \$51,588.00 to the previously approved transformer bid of WESCO. The motion carried unanimously by roll call vote. The price increase is predicated by higher-than-expected demand and loss of production due to COVID, with only two transformer manufacturers currently quoting new orders and delivery times increasing dramatically.

Upon motion of Mr. Thomas, seconded by Mr. Mabrey, the Board approved an adjustment in the amount of \$7,035.70 to the previously approved conductor bid of Border States due to a manufacturer price increase. The motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Upon motion of Mr. Haselsteiner, seconded by Mr. Brant, the Board approved the pre-purchase of two 161 to 69 kV 75 MVA base rating transformers and one 161 kV to 13 kV 25 MVA base rating transformer for replacement in the Northeast substation. The motion carried unanimously by roll call vote. The design is projected in the 2023 and 2024 capital budgets, but pre-purchase approval is requested in an attempt to lock in pricing for the transformers.

Upon motion of Mr. Mabrey, seconded by Mr. Haselsteiner, the Board approved the following retirement Resolution:

On April 1, 2017, the Johnson City Power Board was renamed Johnson City Energy Authority; on October 3, 2017, Johnson City Energy Authority announced their d/b/a name as BrightRidge.

WHEREAS, Tom Bachman was employed by the Johnson City Power Board on January 1, 1994 until retiring from BrightRidge on Wednesday, January 5, 2022; and

WHEREAS, during his twenty-eight years of service with the Johnson City Power Board, Johnson City Energy Authority, and BrightRidge, he served as Mapping Clerk, CAD Specialist, EIS Supervisor, EIS Director/Network Coordinator, and EIS Analyst; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors of BrightRidge wishes to recognize Mr. Bachman for his outstanding service to the customers and staff of BrightRidge by his many years of dedication and loyalty;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Directors of BrightRidge, meeting in regular session on the 15th day of December, 2021, that Tom Bachman be, and hereby is, officially commended for his twenty-eight years of service to the customers of BrightRidge.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be presented to Mr. Bachman and be spread in full on the minutes of the proceedings of this meeting.

The motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Upon motion of Mr. Haselsteiner, seconded by Mr. Thomas, the Board approved the following retirement Resolution:

On April 1, 2017, the Johnson City Power Board was renamed Johnson City Energy Authority; on October 3, 2017, Johnson City Energy Authority announced their d/b/a name as BrightRidge.

WHEREAS, Rickie Hall was employed by the Johnson City Power Board on June 24, 1996 until retiring from BrightRidge on Wednesday, January 5, 2022; and

WHEREAS, during his twenty-five years and six months of service with the Johnson City Power Board, Johnson City Energy Authority, and BrightRidge, he served as Custodian, Custodian/Maintenance, Groundman, and Groundman Operator; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors of BrightRidge wishes to recognize Mr. Hall for his outstanding service to the customers and staff of BrightRidge by his many years of dedication and loyalty;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Directors of BrightRidge, meeting in regular session on the 15th day of December, 2021, that Rickie Hall be, and hereby is, officially commended for his twenty-five years and six months of service to the customers of BrightRidge.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be presented to Mr. Hall and be spread in full on the minutes of the proceedings of this meeting.

The motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Brian Bolling, CPA, Chief Financial Officer and Chief Customer Officer, delivered a presentation to the Board regarding recent activities in his departments, focusing this month on the virtual queuing option for inbound customer calls, which allows customers to keep their place in line for a call-back rather than remaining on hold to wait for the next available customer service representative. In investigating areas of improvement for customer-related businesses, Mr. Bolling had determined that a long wait on "hold" and repeated on-hold messaging or music were primary complaints. The advantages of a virtual queuing option include the reduction of customer-perceived wait time and multiple call attempts, the management of spikes in call volume and the ability to more effectively serve customers without additional staff. Virtual queuing also demonstrates the company's commitment to utilization of technology in problem-solving and makes for a better work experience for customer service representatives due to less customer frustration following a long hold time. After 60 seconds on hold, customers are given an option for virtual queuing and a call-back. Mr. Bolling stated that 21.3% of customers calling in to BrightRidge had used the virtual queuing option since its rollout on June 3, 2021.

Stacy Evans, Chief Broadband and Technology Officer, delivered an update regarding the broadband project. At the time of the Board meeting, the Broadband Division has a total of 5,971 active customers, 9.32% of which are business or commercial entities.

The current broadband customer base is as follows:

Jonesborough Fiber:	688
Johnson City Fiber:	2,773
Piney Flats Fiber:	6
Telford Fiber:	143
Limestone Fiber:	230
Gray Fiber:	1,836
Kingsport Fiber:	117
Fall Branch Fiber:	15
Fixed Wireless:	163
Managed Wi-Fi:	3,808 (71.6% average "take rate")
IPTV Video:	1,227
Telephone VoIP:	815

Linear weekly customer adds remain above the budgeted goal of 58.4. As of the time of the Board meeting, the Broadband Division's customers are trending 21 customers above the linear budget line.

Aerial fiberoptic construction continues to proceed in the Johnson City Section of Phase IV of the broadband deployment project. Work on Phase IV fiberoptic construction near the Washington County grant areas will continue once the Johnson City Phase IV construction is completed.

Mr. Evans advised the Board that 44 BrightRidge Broadband households were presently participating in the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program, which has now transitioned into the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). The program currently allows a \$50.00-per-month credit toward broadband costs to eligible households, but will transition to a \$30.00-per-month credit under the ACP. However, the "eligible household" income threshold has increased to 200% of the Federal poverty guidelines. The transition period ends on March 1, 2022.

The Broadband and Technology Director spoke briefly about the 2022 Tennessee ECD Emergency Broadband grant. Only unserved areas qualify for the grant; however, non-contiguous areas can be submitted as one grant. The grant provides for up to a 70% match from TN-ECD, but 30% of the funding must be a local match. The application period is January - March, 2022, with the grants to be awarded in May. Grantees have three years to complete construction projects under grant funding. Mr. Evans estimated that it would cost approximately \$8 million to build 230 miles of fiber construction in the proposed areas, with 2,013 unserved homes covered in the application. It is hoped that Washington County can participate in local match funding under its ARP funding.

CEO Jeff Dykes announced that the "flip the switch" event for the Martin Solar Farm would be held on January 13, 2022, and he invited Board members to participate in the celebration.

Mr. Dykes stated that a Finance, Audit, Rates and Budget Committee meeting would be held on January 11, 2022 regarding broadband and engineering projects.

Attorney Steve Darden delivered an update to the Board on the BrightRidge/Red Dog Technologies/Washington County litigation. Red Dog has filed a Motion to Intervene and has also sued Washington County for \$41 million. BrightRidge has a Motion to Dismiss pending in the matter. The litigation is set for a full trial in Washington County Chancery Court beginning on March 14, 2022. It is anticipated that the trial will take three days.

Mr. Thomas expressed his appreciation for the Christmas luncheon and commended BrightRidge employees and staff for their work this year.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.