

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

December 17, 2024

PRESENT: James Haselsteiner  
Andy Dietrich  
Ronald Hite  
Kenneth Huffine  
John Hunter  
Gary Mabrey  
James Smith  
Robert Thomas  
Jeffrey R. Dykes, Chief Executive Officer  
Rob Arnold, Chief Operations Officer  
Brian Bolling, CPA, Chief Financial Officer and Supply Chain Officer  
Connie Crouch, Chief Employee Relations Officer  
Bonnie Donnolly, Chief Development and Market Strategy Officer  
Mark Eades, Chief Engineering and Facilities Officer  
Eric Egan, Chief Data Officer  
Stacy Evans, Chief Broadband Officer  
Lori Farmer, Supervisor, General Accounting  
Tiphannie Watson, Chief Customer Officer  
Tim Whaley, Director of Public and Governmental Affairs  
Stephen Darden, Hunter Smith & Davis, LLP

ABSENT: Dr. Kimberly McCorkle  
Donnie Hall, Safety/Environmental Manager  
David Spinnato, Physical Plant/Warehouse Manager

Chairman James Haselsteiner called the meeting to order.

Upon motion of Mr. Thomas, seconded by Mr. Mabrey, the Board approved the addition of the Telephony System (ShoreTel) Replacement to the Consent Agenda. The motion carried by roll call vote.

Upon motion of Mr. Hunter, seconded by Mr. Huffine, the Board approved the following items on the Consent Agenda:

- (a.) The minutes of the Board meeting on November 26, 2024;
- (b.) The bid approval of Kendall Vegetation Services for the Line Mile Right of Way Clearance project, consisting of 63 miles in the South-Central area, in the amount of \$366,059.91;
- (c.) The purchase of Elevate UC products, as a replacement for our current MiTel/ShoreTel phone system. A three-year contract covers the initial charge of \$7,913.24

for setting up voice accounts and server hosting and will be monthly charge going forward. There is also a one-time charge of \$5,126.02 to convert the current telephone system to that of Elevate.

The motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Chairman James Haselsteiner spoke on behalf of the Finance, Audit, Rate and Budget Committee which met on December 17, 2024 prior to the Board Meeting to review the Financial Audit of Blackburn, Childers and Steagall. Mr. Chad Kisner, CPA, addressed the board highlighting the key steps in the audit process. Mr. Kisner thanked Brian Bolling and his team for the great job they did in preparing for the audit and stated it's always a pleasure to work with BrightRidge each year.

Upon motion by the Finance, Audit, Rate and Budget Committee, the board voted to accept the financial audit as presented. The motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Mr. James Smith spoke on behalf of the Human Resources & Insurance Committee which met on December 17, 2024 prior to the Board Meeting to review the Annual Performance Evaluation and Compensation Package of CEO Jeff Dykes.

Upon motion by the committee, the board approved the Annual Performance Evaluation and Compensation Package as presented. The motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

#### RETIREMENT RESOLUTION ON BEHALF OF DON CLARK

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 DBA name as BrightRidge.

WHEREAS Don Clark was employed by BrightRidge on April 29, 1991, until retiring from BrightRidge on Friday, January 22, 2025; and

WHEREAS during his thirty-three years and eight months of service with BrightRidge, he served as a Meter Reader, Groundman, Apprentice Lineman, Service Lineman, Dispatch Supervisor and Control Room Supervisor.

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

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Directors of the Johnson City Energy Authority d/b/a BrightRidge meeting in regular session on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of December 2024 that Mr. Don Clark be, and hereby is, officially commended for his thirty-three years and eight months of service to the customers of BrightRidge.

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

Upon motion of Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Thomas, the Board approved the Resolution by unanimous roll call vote.

Mr. Brian Bolling, Chief Financial Officer, presented the board with a report on the current BrightRidge customer numbers and demographic data. BrightRidge is the 6<sup>th</sup> largest Energy Authority/Utility Company that buys power from TVA. Since April 2022, BrightRidge has seen a growth of 3.17% in customers (81,412 vs. 83,995). Customer growth has been in all four of the counties (Washington Co. 3.86%, Sullivan Co. 2.58%%, Carter Co. 0.78% and Greene Co. 0.42%).

Mr. Bolling also updated the board on the ongoing FEMA claims and costs stemming from the Hurricane Helene response. Currently BrightRidge electric expenses total \$3,193,138.01 and Broadband expenses total \$130,788.79. Our first FEMA claim has been submitted for cut and toss tree trimming in the amount of \$170,885.01. It is estimated to take until the 1<sup>st</sup> of March to get all of our claims filed, as we are continuing to organize and verify work orders that are still active. Mr. Bolling is estimating 18-24 months to receive funds from FEMA.

Stacy Evans, Chief Broadband and Technology Officer, delivered an update regarding the broadband project. Mr. Evans announced that at the time of the Board meeting, the Broadband Division has a total of 18,834 active customers, of which 1,581 are business or commercial entities.

For FY25, our goal is to add 4,136 new net customers (79.54 average net adds per week needed) by June 30, 2025. As of December 13<sup>th</sup>, we are 836 customers ahead of the linear budget line (18,834 v. budget 17,997). FY25 installations total 3,930 with total disconnects at 1,185; resulting in total net adds of 2,745 (70% of installs). Currently for FY25, this puts us at 64.2% of our goal met.

The current broadband customer base is as follows:

Jonesborough Fiber:	1,889 (10%)
Johnson City Fiber:	9,920 (53%)
Piney Flats Fiber:	512 (3%)
Telford Fiber:	168 (1%)
Limestone Fiber:	426 (2%)
Gray Fiber:	4,316 (23%)
Kingsport Fiber:	1,290 (7%)
Fall Branch Fiber:	215 (1%)
Chuckey:	1
Managed Wi-Fi:	10,571 (61.5% average "take rate")
IPTV Video:	625 (410 residential)
Telephone VoIP:	1,607 (659 businesses)

Mr. Evans reported that U.S. broadband providers average between 1%-5% churn per month, with 2% considered normal. BrightRidge's current churn rate is 1.05%

including moves (0.46% without moves). Mr. Evans reported that the churn rate is now back up due to BrightRidge restarting disconnects following Helene.

The TN-ECD Middle-mile grant areas (Section A – near Fall Branch) are moving along as scheduled with 24 miles of fiber built in Washington County (339 electric meters) and 11 miles of fiber built in Greene County (152 electric meters). This is scheduled to be completed by January 2025. Mr. Evans reported that the first cabinet in Fall Branch is now on and the overall build is going well.

Mr. Dykes thanked those board members who were able to join us for the staff luncheon, which included employees from Pike and Kendall.

Mr. Dykes reminded the board of the upcoming legislative conference February 10<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> and those wishing to attend needed to let Ceilya know soon, so that hotel accommodations could be reserved.

Mr. Smith addressed the board, acknowledging Mr. Dykes and the amazing team at BrightRidge for their continued dedication and commitment to our community during a very challenging year. Mr. Smith spoke of the various community comments he receives, that are always positive and express how blessed they feel to have BrightRidge as part of our community.

Mr. Dykes congratulated Mr. Hunter on his recent appointment as Mayor of Johnson City and wished the board members and staff present a Merry Christmas.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.