



Public Works Department

City of Bellingham

Broadband Advisory Workgroup

Meeting Notes

Tuesday, February 2, 2021

6:00pm – 7:30pm

Zoom

Workgroup Members in attendance:

Maximillian Carper
Linda Fels
Don Gischer
Kristopher Keillor
Michelle Kopcha

Milissa Miller
Spencer Moore
Steven Spitzer
RB Tewksbury

Ex Officio Members in attendance:

David Brinn
Vincent Buys
Atul Deshmane
Michael Gan

Kurt Gazow
Allan Meeks
David Namura
Gina Stark

City Staff and Facilitator in attendance:

Mayor Seth Fleetwood
Eric Johnston, Public Works Director
Marty Mulholland, IT Director
Iris Kaneshige, Public Works - Administrative Support
Rush Duncan, Public Works Webinar Support

David Roberts, Peak Sustainability Group, Facilitator

1. Meeting started

David Roberts started the meeting at 6:00pm. The Mayor thanked the members of the Workgroup including ex-officio members for taking the time to be involved in this important topic for the city and left the meeting.

David asked the Workgroup members to introduce themselves and briefly share their interest in serving on the Workgroup.

David asked the Ex-Officio members to introduce themselves and share their affiliation

2. Open Public Meeting and Public Records Requirements

David asked Eric Johnston to provide an overview of Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) and Public Records requirements. All city meetings are subject to the Open Public Meetings Act. Notice of meetings are posted to city's website.

More information on OPMA: <https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=42.30>

3. Purpose & Objective of the Workgroup

David asked Eric to review the resolution: [Bellingham Broadband Workgroup Resolution 2020-31](#)

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The purpose and mission of the Workgroup is to evaluate the possibility of municipally owned broadband infrastructure as one way to further the goals of greater availability, affordability, equitability and quality of broadband access across the community; to address policy considerations, and the financial costs and benefits thereto; to assess existing conditions related to broadband access, equity and affordability as well as options and ways to use the City of Bellingham fiber optic network as it exists today, or as may be expanded or improved, to improve access, equity and affordability to quality broadband and to the report findings and recommendations to the City so that the Council can hold public discussions on a broadband infrastructure policy.

Eric stated that the role of the Workgroup is to advise and recommend. Council sets policy.

Mr. Spitzer asked what resources the Workgroup has access to?
Eric responded that there is access to city staff, also the Ex-Officio members. We can also invite other speakers if needed.

Mr. Carper asked about the scope for the Workgroup, which seemed limiting according to the Resolution.
Eric responded that the first task at hand is to develop a Request for Proposal (RFP) to hire a consultant to prepare a report assessing current conditions and future options for municipal broadband.

Mr. Carper asked if the Scope could be expanded?
Eric responded yes, we can go to Council, if needed.

Mr. Keiller asked if the Workgroup has to write the RFP?
Eric responded that staff will help with the nuts and bolts of the RFP document, the Workgroup will define the RFP Scope of Work.

Meeting scheduled was discussed for the Workgroup. It was agreed that for the next two months, the Workgroup will meet twice a month on the 1st & 3rd Tuesdays in February and March, then once a month April through December at 6:00pm-7:30pm. Schedule as follows:

- February 16th
- March 2nd and 16th
- April 6th
- May 4th
- June 1st
- July 6th
- August 3rd
- September 7th
- October 5th
- November 2nd
- December 7th

A quorum is 5 members
Agendas and meeting materials will be sent electronically, 1 week prior to meetings.

RB Tewksbury, Michelle Kopcha and Millisa Miller volunteered to be Agenda reviewers.

David asked if the Workgroup would be interested in using a web tool that the city has called [Engage Bellingham](#). This is an interactive tool for the public to engage in conversations on particular topics that the city is working on. We will present more information on this at the next meeting.

4. Creating open and safe culture for exchange of ideas David reviewed the ground rules for the Workgroup:

- Start and end on time
- One speaker at a time
- Stick to topic at hand
- Ask questions to increase understanding
- Limit distractions
- Do homework
- Acknowledge all participants bring legitimate purpose, goals, concerns and interests, whether or not there is agreement
- Let facilitator manage the meeting
- Have Fun 

5. Introduction on terminology The terminology from the Washington State Department of Commerce – Broadband office was sent out to members. Here is [Washington State Dept of Commerce - Broadband Terminology](#)

6. Vision for our meetings shared by the Workgroup David asked each Workgroup member to share their vision for a successful meeting:

- ❖ See each person's face
- ❖ Thoughtful
- ❖ Engaged
- ❖ Prepared
- ❖ Concise and specific information
- ❖ Conversational discussions
- ❖ Positive
- ❖ Great ideas
- ❖ Intelligent
- ❖ Directed
- ❖ On task
- ❖ Short as possible
- ❖ Come out with deliverables
- ❖ Tangible results
- ❖ Planning forward

7. Agenda for next meeting David asked about items for the next meeting:

- Role of Ex-Officios
- Engage Bellingham
- Begin the work of drafting the RFP, Eric will share information from the Port and other possible RFPs from other jurisdictions

Meeting adjourned at 7:30pm

Next Meeting will be on February 16th at 6:00pm via Zoom