Broadband Advisory Workgroup
Meeting Notes
Tuesday, March 2, 2021
6:00pm – 7:30pm
Zoom

Workgroup Members in attendance:
Maximillian Carper
Linda Fels
Kristopher Keillor
Michelle Kopcha
Milissa Miller
Spencer Moore
Steven Spitzer
RB Tewksbury

Ex Officio Members in attendance:
David Brinn
Atul Deshmane
Michael Gan
Kurt Gazow
David Namura
Gina Stark

City Staff and Facilitator in attendance:
Eric Johnston, Public Works Director
Marty Mulholland, IT Director
Iris Kaneshige, Public Works - Administrative Support
Rush Duncan, Public Works Webinar Support

1. Welcome & Approval of Notes
David Roberts started the meeting at 6:00pm, and asked if anyone had comments or edits to the Notes? Workgroup members did not have any comments, or edits. Notes were approved.

2. Process clarifications & roles
Agenda Planning Group consolidated the Workgroup questions and concerns and developed the following list to discuss and clarify.

Meeting Frequency:
Eric Johnston stated that the Resolution states, “shall establish its own meeting schedule but shall meet monthly…” Eric shared that it is ok for the Workgroup to meet twice a month, but it does impact city staff time support and cost of facilitator. It is ok that we are behind schedule, as we started 6 months after the Council approved the Workgroup.

The Workgroup agreed to meet twice in April (4/6 and 4/20), then once a month thereafter.

Recording Meetings:
On 2/22/21, Council approved the amendment to the resolution to record the meetings during COVID-19 Operations. Starting tonight, all Workgroup meetings will be recorded during COVID.

Timeline Clarification:
Eric clarified that we had a late start, don’t worry about the stated timeline in the Resolution.
Roles of Workgroup & Ex-Officio members:
Ex-Officio members may have their cameras on. Please put EO in front of name to distinguish Ex-Officio role.

Eric clarified that both the Resolution and the Staff Memo states that the Workgroup will be comprised of 5 to 9 voting members as appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by Council. The role of the Ex-Officio members is to support the Workgroup members. Ex-Officio members should be included in all communication.

Mr. Spitzer disagreed that Ex-Officio members be included in all communications. After much discussion, 7 Workgroup members approved including the Ex-Officio members in all communications.

Budget:
The Resolution states that $100,000 was approved by council in the 2019-2020 budget to fund a consultant study to develop a business plan and consider options to use the City’s fiber optic network for public purpose and further desires to consider fiber as critical infrastructure to meet society’s needs both today and in the future. Funding for facilitation is coming from a separate source.

Using Social Media to express opinions about the Workgroup process:
Eric clarified that Workgroup members should not speak independently as to the intent of the workgroup as a whole. The workgroup needs to speak as one voice. It would be ok to share personal impressions, but not criticize the Workgroup.

Mr. Spitzer asked if a member of the Workgroup could be let go, if inappropriate comments were made? Eric responded yes.

Group email management:
The public email address: g.proj.broadbandadvisoryworkgroup@cob.org is monitored and managed by city staff. If there are questions/comments that the public may have for the Workgroup, staff will disseminate to the Workgroup with your agenda packet or separately by email.

File sharing with SharePoint
Marty Mulholland updated the Workgroup on the status of using SharePoint. Marty reported that she has consulted with our city attorney and has done a lot of research on sharing documents and Public Records requirements.

Any resources that Workgroup members or city staff have shared have been added to the City of Bellingham - Broadband Resources Webpage

Mr. Keillor added that it is difficult to sort through comments via email threads and that a SharePoint site would be helpful to edit/review one document. The emails are static and does not allow for discussions.

Marty agreed to trying out a SharePoint site for all members of the Broadband Advisory Workgroup to share working documents with editing/reviewing capability. More to come.
Ms. Fels asked if the draft consultant’s report would be on SharePoint? Eric said no, that would not be an editable document for the Workgroup.

Mr. Carper asked if all links would be added to the webpage – Resources section? Marty responded, yes. David suggested this information be considered a resource from which the Workgroup learns and makes decisions. All members agreed it would be ok to place all links shared by members to the Resources page.

**Agenda development & coordinating group:**
David stated that the resolution allows for 2 members to assist him with meeting planning, and that he had asked for volunteers at the 2/2/21 meeting. Three volunteers (Milissa Miller, Michelle Kopcha and RB Tewksbury) offered to participate. Tonight, he asked the Workgroup if anyone else was interested. Mr. Carper, Mr. Keillor, and Mr. Moore stated that they would be interested as well and suggested a rotation.

Mr. Tewksbury reminded the members that this group is not making any decisions but placing items on the agenda suggested by members and helping David set times for a successful and productive meeting.

Ms. Miller said that consistency would be good, but that it would also be a good experience for everyone. Ms. Miller is unavailable on 3/3/21 so, Mr. Carper would participate.

Mr. Spitzer and Ms. Fels were not interested in participating in the Agenda preparation group.

**Note taking:**
David shared that the Resolution states the facilitator will take notes. But it is too much for him to take notes and facilitate. So, Iris Kaneshige has offered to take notes which David reviews and edits before distribution. The notes are sent out one week prior to the upcoming meeting. The Workgroup agreed to this process.

**Ex-Officio presentation schedule & coordination**
David pointed out that the Ex-Officios have a lot to share. He suggested the Workgroup start scheduling 2-3 presentations per meeting.

Ms. Kopcha suggested that the Ex-Officios coordinate their presentations with each other and determine who goes first.

Mr. Moore asked if there could be presentations from other jurisdictions and experts in the field? Eric responded, yes.

As for timing of the presentations, Eric suggested that we issue the RFP and schedule the presentations while we wait for RFP responses.

Some members felt that we should have presentations and research before the RFP was issued.

Eric suggested that the Workgroup will be well served to not define Accessibility, Affordability, Equitability and Quality early in the process, have the consultant tell us what the national as well as industry trends are, and also define broadband.
Mr. Moore asked that the consultant not define affordability, and that the Workgroup should define it.

3. Review the Purpose, Mission & Goals document

Ms. Kopcha asked if the Workgroup had any comments or suggestions to the Broadband Advisory Workgroup: Purpose and Mission document, with edits that were incorporated.

Ms. Fels commented under Evaluate section, accessibility be added in the 2nd bullet point, as it is stated in the Resolution. In the fourth section “Assess expanded…” add Dark Fiber leasing.

The Workgroup approved the Purpose, Mission & Goals document with the above edits. Broadband Advisory Workgroup Purpose and Mission

4. Discuss comments & questions regarding the Resolution

David asked for people’s thoughts on the discussion of the Resolution. Members agreed that it would be best to table the discussion for the next meeting, as it would be longer than 10 minutes.

Mr. Keillor provided a quick summary of the input received. He reported that lots of good comments and questions were submitted by the members. Key topics included:
- 1/10/40 gbps speed
- Amending schedule
- Technology vs. business model
- Dark Fiber mid-mile

Eric cautioned the members that it would be prudent to avoid going back to Council to amend the Resolution. He suggested the Workgroup take a broad interpretation of the Resolution.

David suggested the Workgroup continue this discussion at their next meeting.

5. Items for the next meeting

The Workgroup reviewed the list of potential future meeting topics and identified the following agenda items for the March 16 meeting:
- Discuss the Resolution comments and questions submitted
- Discuss the RFP comments and questions submitted
- Define how we want to define the following terms, as noted in the Future Agenda Items Document (for April 6th):
  - Broadband
  - Accessibility
  - Affordability
  - Equitability
  - Quality

The meeting planning group including Mr. Tewksbury, Ms. Kopcha, and Mr. Carper will assist David to prepare the next agenda.

6. What did members appreciate about tonight’s meeting

We are heading in the right direction
Starting to get to the nitty gritty issues, which is great

Meeting adjourned at 8:04pm

Next meeting scheduled for Tuesday, March 16th at 6:00pm via Zoom