



Public Works Department City of Bellingham

Broadband Advisory Workgroup

Meeting Notes

Tuesday, March 16, 2021

6:00pm – 7:30pm

Zoom

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

Ex Officio Members in attendance: 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

David Roberts, Peak Sustainability Group, Facilitator

1. Welcome & Approval of Notes

David Roberts started the meeting at 6:00pm.

David reported that Don Gischer has resigned from the Workgroup due to health reasons. The vacancy will not be filled at this time.

David asked if anyone had comments or edits to the Notes? Workgroup members did not have any comments, or edits. Notes were approved.

2. Administrative & Technology Items Update

Marty Mulholland provided an update on SharePoint file sharing. The city's IT department has created a SharePoint site for Workgroup members to share draft documents and documents that are a work in progress.

Any resources will be uploaded to the [Broadband Advisory Workgroup webpage](#). The purpose and use of the SharePoint site and the Workgroup website were approved by the Workgroup members.

Eric Johnston reminded the Workgroup that all resources upload to the city's webpage will be factual not opinion pieces.

Marty shared that the city is receiving Public Records Requests for activity/emails for the Workgroup. Our Public Records Officer in the Legal department is handling these requests. Other communications to the Workgroup will be responded to by City staff forwarded to Workgroup members in their meeting packets.

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3. Continued discussion of language and intent of the Resolution 2021-31

David shared the Resolution 2020-31 comments document that was prepared by Kris Keillor and Linda Fels. David redlined the document to show items that were of cosmetic nature and not requiring council action.

Eric also mentioned that he had spoken to a couple council members and the mindset was to move forward, hire consultant and the Workgroup recommend how to move Broadband ahead.

Eric also mentioned that the Workgroup's role is to define and recommend the best solution for the city.

RB Tewksbury pointed out that the Resolution is narrowly focused on fiber and perhaps the workgroup should be renamed the Fiber Workgroup.

Spencer Moore said that he wants to focus on the BAAAEQ (Broadband, Availability/Accessibility, Affordability, Equitability, Quality) issues. The general population in the city does not have access and we should take that into consideration.

Steve Spitzer asked if the members had read the Hillsboro article, and thought it was very informative.

Michelle Kopcha said it was fine to keep the name of the group as is and agreed with Mr. Moore that we are grappling with the issue of equity.

David Roberts asked how the Workgroup would like to address the remaining questions shared in Kris Keillor's document. Linda Fels said that she would be willing to draft a document of all questions that the Workgroup members had and upload to the SharePoint site for members to review. It will also provide a guide as the Workgroup addresses issues over time.

David thanked Linda Fels and asked her if she could have a draft uploaded before the next meeting (4/2/21). Linda said she would upload to SharePoint site and email the Workgroup.

Kris Keillor asked if BAAAEQ (Broadband, Availability/Accessibility, Affordability, Equitability, Quality) definitions should be taken to the Council? Eric responded that the Council is asking the Workgroup to define these terms.

Steve Spitzer said he understood there is nothing to take back to Council. Workgroup members agreed.

4. Discuss comments & ideas shared by the workgroup regarding the draft RFP

Eric thanked the members for their comments. Two versions of the RFP were included in your packet (redline version with comments and a clean copy with some comments incorporated).

Maximillian Carper asked if the RFP should be split into two RFPs: One focused on public engagement and surveys and the second with an installation/implementation focus.

Eric explained that it would be best to see who responds. David also included that consultants could include sub-consultants. Also, if we break out the scope of work, it could end up costing more than what we have budgeted.

Steve Spitzer added that \$100,000 may not be enough.

Marty also added that consultants may ask questions while the RFP is open. Atul Deshmane added that language welcoming partnering be included in the preamble.

Steve Spitzer, RB Tewksbury, Milissa Miller and Maximillian Carper volunteered to be on the RFP review team.

David asked the members if they were interested in splitting into 2 RFPs? No members were interested and agreed to leave the RFP as is.

Steve Spitzer asked for information about RFP process for the city. Eric responded: It is a 3-4 month process outlined below. If the members are satisfied with the RFP as is with minor modifications, he will:

- Send to our Purchasing Manager for review
- Hopefully we can get it published in the next couple of weeks
- The RFP will be open for 4 weeks on the city's E-Bid Portal. Also published in the Daily Journal of Commerce
- Evaluate using the rubric outlined in the RFP with the 4 members who volunteered and city staff
- Conduct interview
- Check references
- Award the work
- Negotiate the Contract
- Check insurance
- Consultant begins the work

Atul Deshmane asked if the members will receive a copy of the RFP. Eric responded yes.

RB Tewksbury made of motion to approve the final draft incorporating partnering.

David asked members for their thoughts and it was approved unanimously to proceed.

Eric reminded the members who volunteered to help with the RFP review process that the commitment is long. You must be in it from beginning to the end of the process. Reviewing written proposals, tabulate scores, interview via Zoom. David asked the 4 members who volunteered if they could handle the time commitment, all responded affirmative.

Steve Spitzer asked who prepares the questions to ask consultants? Eric responded, the staff will prepare questions and review with the RFP review group. The City may include one or two ex-officios.

Eric said that the city makes the final decision with input from the Workgroup.

Mr. Carper asked if the members thought the Rubric was ok? After some discussion, the members agreed it was ok as is.

5. Items for the next meeting

David said for the 4/6 meeting we have several presentations from the Ex-Officios:

- Port efforts, Gina Stark
- PUD efforts, Atul Deshmane
- City's network, Eric Johnston and Marty Mulholland
- Bellingham School District's network, Kurt Gazow

4/20 – Discuss the definitions of the following terms:

- "Broadband"
- Availability/Accessibility
- Affordability
- Equitability
- Quality

The workgroup members wanted to discuss the definitions first, so that topic will be moved to 4/6. Members discussed how to gather input on each definition. Iris Kaneshige will upload a table on SharePoint for members to add their definitions and email the group. This will be evaluated before the next meeting and shared back with the Members.

Atul asked to be on the May 4th schedule and thought he would need 15 minutes for a presentation.

Milissa Miller asked about presentations from the other Ex-Officio members. She would like to see them added to the schedule.

Steve asked if we could reach out to the other cities, Hillsboro, Anacortes, Mt. Vernon. Eric said yes, will also include Port of Skagit, Skagit PUD and Department of Commerce.

The meeting planning group including RB Tewksbury, Milissa Miller, and Maximillian Carper will meet tomorrow and assist David to prepare the next agenda.

Kris Keillor volunteered to be on the 4/20 Agenda planning meeting.

Linda Fels asked that specified times are allotted for presenters and allow time of Q&A. Also, Linda asked that we hear from the city first, then, Bellingham School District, then the Port. There was discussion of preparing a specific set of questions, but this was not resolved.

6. What did members appreciate about tonight's meeting?

Great meeting!

Meeting adjourned at 8:13pm

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