

Special Meeting of the American Rescue Plan Task Force
August 2, 2021 – 4:00 p.m.
City Hall Council Chambers/Zoom, 111 North Main Street Bristol CT 06010

Members Present: Orlando Calfe, Eric Clemons, Michael Dumas, Malcom Huckaby, David Maikowski, Thomas O'Brien, Donna Osuch, Susan Sadecki, Howard Schmelder, John Smith and Mayor Ellen Zoppo Sassu.

Members Absent: Cindy Bombard, Mickey Goldwasser, David Preleski,

Also present: Josh Medeiros, Stephen Bynum, Nancy Levesque, Diane Waldron, Scott Smith, Roger Rousseau, Justin Malley, Peter Kelly and Rob Longo.

1. Call to Order

Mayor Ellen Zoppo Sassu called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

2. Approval of minutes from the July 27, 2021 Special Meeting and to take any action as necessary.

Commissioner Smith made a motion seconded by Commissioner Calfe "To approve the minutes from July 27, 2021" Motion approved.

3. Update on the broadband initiative and the City's plans – Citywide IT Director Scott Smith

Scott Smith gave an update on the broadband initiative to the Task Force.

Scott explained the goals of the project include the following:

- Separate Infrastructure from Service Provider
- Create competition amongst service providers
- Lower costs to consumer
- Provide better and more reliable speeds.
- Eliminate Digital Divide issues
- Create an environment of innovation to attract economic development
- Make Bristol a more attractive place to live and work.

Scott reviewed some of the survey results which were conducted, 68% found internet service provider costs were important, 77% felt internet speed and bandwidth was important, 65% felt choice was important for internet providers and internet plans and 66% would support a city owned and operated fiber network infrastructure if it facilitated more internet choice in a competitive environments, faster internet speeds and lower prices. The next steps are the consults will present their findings and recommendations at the September 14th City Council meeting along with community engagement sessions. The City will need to decide how to phase the City buildout of the infrastructure (want vs. need) as well as decide how to fund the project.

Discussion was held on a pending federal funding provision for broadband which would go to the states and filter down to municipalities

Commissioner Huckaby questioned the current average costs per household, potential savings with this initiative, if those numbers are available. Scott stated those numbers will be in the consultant's report, a number of bills were gathered during the process and the consultant is analyzing.

Commissioner Schmedler asked if there was a plan to rollout in phases and the criteria. Scott stated they are developing a plan while looking at those who want it, based on geographical location, cognizant of the digital divide and the BOE has identified areas with no internet access available to the children

4. Discussion of Treasury guidelines and to take any action as necessary.

Mayor Zoppo Sassu stated the guidelines have still not been updated, she will reach out to Congressman Laron's office again.

5. Discussion of updated list for potential funding and to take any action as necessary.

Mayor Zoppo Sassu discussed a request from the Bristol Burlington Health District has been put forward for COVID mitigation support with funds designated for this specific purpose which fall under the guidelines, none of the other agencies to date have asked for COVID mitigation funds. The Mayor, Director and Comptroller are comfortable with \$50,000. There is no sense of urgency for these funds, but they will need to be approved by this Board to award these funds and forwarded to the Board of Finance and Joint Meeting for approval. Commissioner Calfe questioned if Burlington was contributing any funds for COVID mitigation. Mayor Zoppo Sassu stated the funds are separated within the Health District so these would be for Bristol. Commissioner Maikowski questioned if Bristol could have more programs here because we gave them these funds, which the Mayor confirmed the City could. Commissioner O'Brien confirmed this is above and beyond their budget and wouldn't be used for items such as salaries, it could be used for things such as overtime for vaccine clinics.

Commissioner Calfe made a motion seconded by Commissioner Smith "To allocate \$50,000 to the BBHD for COVID mitigation and refer to the Board of Finance and City Council for approval." Motion approved.

Commissioner Schmelder asked if they could apply again, and the Mayor confirmed they can.

Mayor Zoppo Sassu stated the Comptroller's Office needs to complete a report through July 31, which Comptroller Diane Waldron spoke to. The first interim report is March 31 – July 31, then the first quarter is due October 31 through September 30.

Roger Rousseau gave an update on the RFP. He received feedback from Commissioners Calfe, Dumas, and Sadecki all who chose the same three firms to focus on. The subcommittee will meet to interview the firms and report back to the Task Force with a recommendation.

6. Discussion of future meeting dates and to take any action as necessary.

The Task Force agreed to meet again on August 23, 2021 at 4:00 pm.

7. Adjournment

Commissioner Smith made a motion seconded by Commissioner Dumas “to adjourn” at 4:41 pm
Motion approved.

Jodi A. McGrane
Recording Secretary

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