

**City of Alexandria, Virginia  
Commission on Information Technology**

**December 14, 2020 IT Commission Meeting Minutes  
7:00 – 8:30 PM  
Virtual Meeting**

**In attendance:** Catharine Rice (CR), Chris Soghoian, Ricardo Alfaro (RA), Brandon Mosoriak (BM), Lynda Bennett (LB), Christopher Lewis (CL), Marcus Washington (MW), Sara Crifasi (SC), JD Maddox (JM), Sundar Kanagarajan (SK)

**Staff:** Ryon Saenz, Patrick Eze

**Absent:** Michelle Rief, Darrlyn Franklin, John Sczech.

**Guests:** Members of Public attended.

- 1. Welcome/Introductions**
- 2. Approval of March 9, 2020 minutes** – Motion by RA, seconded by CL, minutes approved by unanimous vote.
- 3. Update/Presentation on City’s broadband project (Patrick Eze)**
  - A newly-released ITB is out, it closes 1/29.
  - There is a pre-bid conference for prospective vendors on 1/16.
  - Consists of two conduits: one full conduit for City use, one empty conduit for private sector use.
  - CS: Will project be reaching Potomac Yards? Yes, will connect Virginia Tech with the City’s fiber network.
  - Will conduit be to only Virginia Tech or to all the residents/businesses of Potomac Yards? The conduit will cover all main streets. Patrick will double check where exactly.
  - ITS should be put into the permitting process so they are aware of development. We’re not sure that this is happening at the time.
  - CS: Who is going to provide internet to the City’s central locations? RS: Probably diverse vendors, no decision made yet.
  - CS: Have we talked with Virginia Tech about riding on their network? RS: Not at a high-level. CR: Please check w/Vanetta as I believe she has had a discussion w/Vtech about working together
- 4. City’s Digital Equity Plan (Ryon Saenz)**
  - CR: Council’s COVID Recovery Plan included instruction to IT Department to create Digital Inclusion Plan. Next step is for IT staff to reach out to City Boards and Commissions. CR sent Vanetta various examples she was familiar with.

- City IT staff said will be doing a survey. How should survey surrounding the plan be sent out to ensure everyone is included? Discussion around website and social media.
- CL: Please send the commission a link to the Council presentation.
- RS: ITS is working with RPCA (Rec/Parks department) to catch segments of the population that may be overlooked.
- CS: We should require, as part of the ITB, to ensure free or reduced internet for low-income households.
- RS: As part of the ITB vendors can't choose to only serve certain neighborhoods in the City.
- RS: Will discuss this with the City Attorney for language, this could be a great opportunity to build these ideas in.
- JM: There seems to be more interest in the current ITB than the previous one.

#### **5. Homework Gap Committee (Catharine Rice/Michelle Rief)**

- After COVID pandemic began, ACPS identified 1,200 students who didn't have broadband at home.
- ACPS has tried to work with Comcast Essentials but has run into roadblocks.
- There are currently 1,594 Kajeets issued now, and 120 households on Comcast Essentials, paid by ACPS.
- RS: ITS in working with ACPS to increase network speeds in school buildings to help with upcoming hybrid learning.
- CS: Has the City increased Kajeet budget due to the COVID pandemic?
- Should we have a Homework Gap Committee? If so, what should its purpose be?
- CR: Recommends folding Homework Gap Committee into a new Digital Inclusion Plan Committee.

#### **6. Wireless Broadband Authority (Catharine Rice)**

- 27 communities in Virginia have created wireless broadband authorities.
- Should we send a letter of support for these local authorities?
- CS: Has Alexandria considered creating an authority? If not, they should. As of this time Alexandria has not considered creating an authority.
- Arlington is considering creating an authority.
- RA & CL: A letter should come from the Commission. This motion passes unanimously.
- Should we create a Policy Committee? JM & SC are willing to be co-chairs.

#### **7. Cyberawareness Committee (Ricardo Alfaro)**

- RA: Which direction to we want to go with this committee?
- JM: There is an opportunity to help with combatting disinformation and media literacy awareness.

- CL: We can work on tying this in with the City's digital equity plan. CR & RA recommend folding Cybersecurity issues into Digital Inclusion Plan Committee.

**8.** Adjourn by unanimous vote at 8:30pm. (Next meeting is via Zoom **January 25, 2021.**