

Town of Liberty Grove
Minutes of the Community Development & Technology Committee meeting on Sept 11, 2023
(This meeting was posted correctly)

Agenda:

1. Call to order
2. Roll call
3. Approve Agenda
4. Approve Minutes: 7-10-2023
5. Public Input
6. Broadband Status Report
7. Meeting Room(s) Audio/Video Quote
8. Expanded Cellular Coverage for Underserved Areas
9. Affordable Housing Options
10. 2024 Budget Request
11. Correspondence
12. Future meeting
13. Adjourn

Chairman Kirk Scattergood called the meeting to order at 4:28pm. Committee members Dan Watts, Alan Kroll, Chuck Scheckel, Jodi Bensyl, Joel Asher, and Les Keepper were present along with Administrator Walter Kalms, Clerk/Treasurer Anastasia Bell and 4 members of the public.

Asher moved, Bensyl second to approve the agenda as posted. Carried 7-0.

Asher moved, Scheckel second to approve the 7/10/2023 minutes as presented. Carried 7-0.

Public Input – Janet Johnson provided information from the most recent listening session and requested the committee review and consider addressing some of the items.

Broadband – Bob Webb, Nsight, reported the pilot project has 13 customers and 11 pending orders. WPS has approved the engineering of the last section with the new design and the hope is to complete pending orders by year-end. He reported the engineering for the Town-wide project is anticipated to be complete at the end of September and Nsight will work to determine if overhead or micro-trenching will be more cost effective for the project. This data will also be useful to create project areas in a neutral manner. Scattergood noted the BEAD funding will be administered differently than other grants we have received. It appears that needs will be evaluated to create a plan in 2024, funding will be awarded in 2025/2026 and construction will occur in 2026 through 2029. The purpose is to bring service to all unserved areas throughout the State. The Capital Project Fund (CPF) application is due in November of 2023 and funding cannot be duplicated between these sources for any location within the Town. Keith McKendry asked how soon this could be done and who would be responsible for repairs. Webb replied that it may be as far out as 2029 and Nsight has owned the network and been responsible for repairs in other similar situations.

Meeting Room Audio/Video – Asher noted the quote for the small meeting room seems fair. The large meeting room should use the current analog hardware with a new camera, DSP, and/or matrix to increase the audio/video quality for virtual participants. A budget of \$10,000-\$15, 000 should be appropriate.

Expand Cellular Coverage – Scattergood reported coverage has been declining particularly in the summer. Asher noted that the technology has been introduced to the area and he is aware of various companies working to expand bandwidth where possible. Bensyl indicated free wi-fi locations could open cellular bandwidth.

Affordable Housing – The needs of the community need to be defined; what people can afford monthly and how many bedrooms. Single-family homes and seasonal housing are separate issues. The negative impact of STRs was noted. It would be best to observe the organizations working on affordable housing

to see the scalability of their models while continuing to seek a better understanding why houses are not affordable. Businesses continue to struggle to find employees.

2024 Budget – The 2024 budget draft was reviewed, and the following changes were made:

- Remove \$1,000 for 501(c)3 audit
- Decrease Attainable Housing to \$1,000
- Decrease Develop Val-A RFP to \$1,000
- Decrease Broadband Expansion/Public WiFi to \$2,000
- Decrease Capital projects to \$0.00
- Decrease Capital Development RFP to \$0.00

Watts moved, Scattergood second to recommend the budget request totaling \$41,070 to the Finance Committee. Carried 7-0.

Correspondence – None.

The next Community Development and Technology Committee meetings will be 10/2/2023, 11/6/2023 and 12/4/2023 at 4:30pm.

Asher moved, Kroll second to adjourn at 6:13pm. Carried 7-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Anastasia Bell, Clerk/Treasurer

Approved at the 10/23/2023 Community Development & Technology Committee Meeting.