

Town of Liberty Grove
Minutes of the Special Town Board meeting joint with the Technology Committee on
September 19, 2022

(this meeting was correctly posted)

Agenda:

1. Call to order
2. Declaration of a quorum followed by pledge of allegiance
3. Approve Agenda
4. Public Input
5. Review of Bertram Communication Proposal for Town-wide Fiber
6. Town-wide Fiber Optic Internet Project
 - a. Presentation from Baileys Harbor Representative
 - b. Update from Nsight Representative
 - c. Contracts with Nsight
 - d. Recovering Town investment in Town-wide Fiber Optic
7. Correspondence
8. Future meetings
9. Adjourn

Chairman John Lowry called the meeting to order at 6:15pm. Supervisors Nancy Goss, Cathy Ward, Janet Johnson, and Dan Watts and Technology Committee members David Studebaker, Joel Asher, and Kirk Scattergood were present along with Administrator Walter Kalms, Clerk/Treasurer Anastasia Bell and approximately 9 members of the public.

Lowry moved, Ward second to approve the agenda as posted. Carried 5-0.

Public Input – None.

Bertram Communications Fiber Proposal –Scattergood: the proposal was a sales pitch, any contract would need to be extremely specific where non-performance could be a concern, and Nsight has a positive track record. Studebaker: Bertram is a 20 year-old company with less than 100 employees in two locations whereas Nsight is over 100 years-old, and has many employees nationwide. He also noted that Random Lake was awarded a grant at the end of June and this project was reported as being complete during the presentation. Watts: it was difficult to find positive reviews for Bertram, the price doesn't seem appropriate for all components of an AON. Johnson: it was a sales pitch and installation will not be as easy as described based on topography, best to stay the course started with Nsight. Ward: glad to have heard from Bertram and noted she is impressed with Nsight thus far. Asher: the price seems okay, but it could change if it's found that overhead installation is necessary. Goss: it seemed too good to be true and it was said other companies could use the old towers, but they had not been contacted for confirmation. Lowry: Towers on presentation display were in locations that had significant objection when discussed as possible locations by the Town.

Baileys Harbor Report – Kurt Kiefer, Baileys Harbor Committee member, indicated the Finley study should be kept for reference material. It has been the standard to turn over networks to the private partner in a public/private partnership. The return on investment is not present and will require a partnership with investment from both parties. The claw-back provision of the agreement would all the Town to recuperate assets for a breach of the contract. The Town investment can be justified because the network will be available for years to come and the Town can negotiate access for Town properties. The tax bill impact and monthly service fees are likely to result in an overall reduction for household budgets with better internet available.

Nsight Report – Bob Webb, Nsight, the Pilot Project budget will be less than the anticipated grant budget due to sharing costs for the backbone work and lower make-ready costs from WPS. The project will be done in 2 phases with 12 installations in the spring, and they're currently seeking contractors for the drops. Completion, including all grant filing, is expected by mid-year 2023. The Board should have the

final agreement at this time. The Engineering design agreement is with the attorneys. This project is expected to take 7 months once the agreement is signed. Baileys Harbor is hoping to begin construction in spring of 2023 and there may be opportunity for cooperation during construction. WPs has not provided data regarding the burial of lines on Door Bluff Road. Nsight is working on the first draft of the Town-wide agreement, the financing language will be generalized since there are no active grants involved.

Contract with Nsight – Lowry noted the Town-wide agreement should come before the engineering study agreement. Ward noted the financial impact of broadband will be less than current Town road maintenance. Webb noted the current intent is to serve all households, regardless of current service options. The areas already served will not receive grant credit. Jodi Bensyl, Sister Bay, noted Bertram provided a sales pitch that included a great vision and unrealistic costs. Standard installation estimate is \$100,000 per mile for our area. **Lowry moved Watts second** that the Board proceed with signing the Pilot agreement with Nsight. Roll call vote with Goss, Ward, Lowry, Watts, and Johnson voting aye, no nays. Carried 5-0. Kiefer noted that Baileys Harbor signed the engineering agreement before the Town-wide agreement.

Recovering Town Investment – Scattergood noted increased property values and better quality of internet are two items that show a return on investment. Watts noted that many improvements are unknown because we have yet to experience it.

Correspondence – None.

Lowry moved, Goss second to adjourn at 7:30pm. Carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Anastasia Bell, Clerk/Treasurer

Approved at the 10/5/222 Town Board Meeting.