

City of Alexandria, Virginia
Commission on Information Technology

January 20, 2022 AGENDA
IT Commission Meeting- ZOOM CALL
7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

1. **Introductions & welcome** (Introductions & Welcome Vice Mayor Jackson, new School Board Rep Kelly Booze)
2. Approval of December 9 Minutes (below)
3. **-Update on City's Fiber Backbone project** - (IT Staff, City of Alexandria)
(Map showing progress areas?)

-City's Competitive Provider proposals (Vanetta; Catharine)- 4 proposal received by the City (Shentel, Lumos, TING, North American Tower Company) -IT Commission asked for insights.
4. **Digital Equity Plan Committee** (Co-Chairs: Kelly Booze/Catharine Rice/)
 - Update on ACPS Digital issues
 - Update on City's ARPA funds (\$420k) for Digital Equity Plan (Catharine) See attached)
 - a. Computer Core --# of IT Commissioners spoke w/Donna James Walker
 - b. Digital Equity Plan study (Lead by Planning & Zoning; interdepartmental group, IT Commission asked for names to send RFP);
 - c. Broadband Analyst (Lead by IT Dept); Separate funding needed for Digital Equity Director.
 - FCC Emergency Connectivity Fund – Now converted to [Affordable Connectivity Program](#) via Federal Infrastructure & Jobs bill – puts FCC in charge - \$14.2 billion (\$30 monthly subsidy)
5. **Legislative Committee** (Chair: Sara Crifasi +Catharine Rice)
 - a. Federal – ARPA [Final Treasury Rules](#) issued. Opens up funds for urban broadband needs use through wider terms.
 - b. Federal Infrastructure & Jobs Act ([\\$8 billion for VA overall](#)) NTIA [requesting public comment](#) on broadband piece (Feb 4 deadline) & [holding public listening](#) sessions (next Jan 26).
 - c. VA Broadband Grant program update
 - i. Leadership staff out under new Gov
 - ii. [HB 249](#) (Delegate Davis seeks to widen access to VATI funds by urban communities)
6. **CyberSecurity/Disinformation Committee** (Stephen Morris, Tim Casey (Co-Chairs), J.D. Maddox, Ricardo Alfaro) – update?
7. **[Charter Rewrite Committee](#)** volunteers?
8. Next ITC meeting –February 17?

City of Alexandria, Virginia
Commission on Information Technology

December 9, 2021 IT Commission Meeting Minutes
7:00 – 8:30 PM
Virtual Meeting

In attendance: Sara Crifasi (SC), Ricardo Alfaro (RA), J.D. Maddox (JM), Brandon Mosoriak (BM), Catharine Rice (CR), Chris Soghoian (CS), Steve Davidson (SD), Sundar Kanagarajan (SK), Tim Casey (TC), Stephen Morris (SM)

Staff: Steve Chozick, Smail Farid, Tori Butler, Patrick Eze

Absent: Darrlynn Franklin, Michelle Rief

1. Welcome/Introductions

- Two new members: Tim Casey and Stephen Morris

2. Approval of October 14, 2021 minutes

- Approved unanimously

3. Update on City's fiber backbone project (Steve Chozick)

- New City Manager (James Parajon) starting 1/18/22.
- Things are progressing as planned on fiber backbone deployment.
- Eight miles out of approximately 40 have been completed.
- The second phase will consist of pulling of fiber and splicing.
- Commission and ITS staff looked over the map of the fiber project.
- SD: Is it intentional to have two loops instead of branches? SF: The map shows the physical topology, not the logical topology. The logical topology consists of six hubs.

4. Digital Equity Plan (Catharine Rice and Michelle Rief)

- Computer Core is looking for help to be add new members to their board and/or volunteer as teachers
- \$420K has been set aside for Digital Equity Plan, Broadband Strategist and Policy Analyst. This was bumped from Tier 3 to Tier 1 due to IT Commission's lobbying.
- Alexandria Workforce Development Program for upskilling: will look into this.
- SD: Met with head of Computer Core, am impressed and believes there is potential there.

5. Legislative Committee (Sara Crifasi & Catharine Rice)

- There are a number of companies interested in providing 'fiber to the home' service
- There will be an announcement of proposals on 1/11/22.
- Is the City negotiating franchises by itself or using a company/contractor to assist? Negotiation is being handled by the City Manager's Office.
- TC: Is there a set number of providers? SC: Not that he knows of.
- PE: The City is open to be ISPs and vendors who would lease to other ISPs.

6. **Cybersecurity Committee**
 - TC: is interested in restarting this committee.

7. **Adjourn by unanimous vote at 8:30pm. (Next meeting is January 20, 2022).**

Digital Equity Plan update:

\$420k ,000 ARPA funds approved fall 2021:

1a. Community Tech Support (\$60k) – contract being rendered w/Computer Core

The City will partner with Computer Core an Alexandria-based nonprofit and also one of the region’s leading nonprofits in addressing the most pressing and overlooked factors regarding the digital divide—those who have ready access to computer technology, digital navigation skills and internet access and those who do not. CORE maintains a singular focus on the goals of this contract: closing the digital divide. Through this program, Computer Core will create and publicize a community call center for City residents to ask computer use questions. Staffing this center with CORE student interns who are members of Alexandria’s diverse communities and who serve as trusted Community Navigators able to build rapport and converse in a variety of different languages. CORE proposes to staff this call center through its “15 Program” in which it pledges to hire 15 Alexandria resident adult student interns at \$15/hour for 15 weeks and 15 hours/week. Some interns may be hired on continue the center’s work (beyond the scope of this program). All will gain valuable work experience and be able to move into similar help-desk employment.

In addition to providing this “on-the-ground” program and directly assisting residents, Computer Core will set-up a ticketing system to track community questions and requests. This system will provide data to understand what the most common community needs are, such as device help, literacy programs, or financial assistance. The data will inform the digital equity action plan.

1b. Digital Equity Action Plan (\$60k) -Planning & Zoning Dept Team has lead

The City will seek a contractor in the creation of the Digital Equity Action Plan (DEAP), a plan that will uncover specifically what digital equity means in Alexandria and what actions should be taken to address the gaps. Part of the action plan will include quantifiable measures that can apply to digital equity and be improved upon. The contractor will support the development of the plan by creating, executing, and performing analysis on a survey and facilitating focus groups with targeted populations. The selected contractor will design and administer three (3) focus groups targeting three types of households: Low-income; Disadvantaged households; Non-English speaking households; and Low-income elderly households (age 60+), that address the following questions:

- What level of access to technology do Alexandria households currently have (household devices, internet plans and cellular services)?
- Are Alexandria residents using the internet to its highest potential?
- Do Alexandria residents have the necessary skills to succeed on the internet? What gaps currently exist?

(Note: This approach is based on Arlington County’s recent [Digital Equity Action Plan](#)).

1c. Broadband Strategist: \$300K – IT Dept has lead

Related:

\$1.12 million for Re-employment & Upskilling project

260 residents will be served through individualized support to boost their competitiveness in the labor force and improve their household income. The components of the program are listed below:

- **Re-employment and Up-skilling:** These efforts play an essential role in addressing the immediate needs of the economy and improving household incomes. This component includes provision of retraining opportunities that lead to industry recognized certifications, work readiness, digital literacy, and other critical supportive services to employment.
- **Work-Based Learning: Work-Based Learning (WBL)** is an educational approach that provides individuals with real-life work experiences where they can apply academic and technical skills to develop and increase their employability. WBL can be any activity that places the participant in an authentic workplace, and could include work sampling, job shadowing, internships, or apprenticeships. Individuals will be compensated \$15.00 - \$20.00 hourly based off education and experience. Work-Based Learning hosts will be responsible for the oversight of the participant and provide professional development, skills-training as well as weekly supervision and support.
- **Digital Literacy & Equity for Employment:** The Digital Literacy & Equity for Employment will support residents' digital literacy needs as well as help underserved populations maintain the operation of their personal internet-connected technology. Services include purchase of laptops and hotspots, vouchers to computer repair services, tuition for digital literacy training, individual coaching covering the usage of technology and the internet for job search activities.