



# CITY OF BLOOMINGTON

Information & Technology Services

## Bloomington Digital Underground BDUAC Meeting Memorandum

Per the state disaster emergency order that ended March 3rd, 2022, this meeting was held in a hybrid format with board members able to attend both virtually and in person.

### Thursday, May 5th, 2022 4PM

Location: Zoom  
Facilitator: Rick Dietz  
Board Attendance In Person: Mike Allen, Chris Robb, Mike Sullivan  
Board Attendance Remote:  
Staff Attendance: Desiree King, Rick Dietz  
Members of the public: None

**Quorum was not met at this meeting. No official action was taken. However, discussion between staff and members is captured in this meeting memorandum.**

### ITS Department Updates

- The Wifi in the Parks project is underway. This project is part of Mayor Hamilton's Recover Forward initiative and the Digital Equity Strategic Plan. Crestmont, Buter, 3rd Street (Buskirk), and Peoples parks will all have public wifi by the end of the year. Equipment is currently being installed in these parks.
- The BDU census is finished, providing an accurate look at manholes, placement of conduit, and count.

### City-wide Fiber Broadband Initiative

Dietz: Under non-disclosure agreement for several items with Meridiam, but can share some details. Under a master agreement, discussions continue to be positive, strong commitment on all sides to continue partnership. Meridiam has a construction contractor lined up, ISP contractor is close.

Robb: Move forward with overall agreement before locking down ISP?

Dietz: City's agreement is with Meridiam. It can move forward before ISP but contains requirements for the ISP.

Dietz said that the digital equity plan with Meridiam is almost ironed out, will be able to bring a fairly high-speed service that will possibly be free with the government subsidy available.

Trotzke: What are the federal dollars available?

Dietz: The Affordable Connectivity Program subsidy is \$30 and Meridiam has been able to hit that. The City is talking about providing some funding but that might cover part of the cost of the drop to provide resident access.

Robb: This is just internet service, not television?

Dietz: Yes, just internet. We will be announcing several things to do with this partnership in the near future. One is a tax incentive that will reduce tax for Meridiam.

Robb: This is the spider TIF?

Dietz: Yes, same TIF discussed when MetroNet was a potential partner. Announcement part of this process will probably start next Friday. The BDUAC will need to weigh in on if the excess BDU conduit can be used by Meridiam. Public Works will ultimately decide, but BDUAC will review and discuss and can choose to send a recommendation to the Board of Public Works (BPW). Will be valuable to have BDUAC be a part of this process. Unsure of schedule, when this will take place. BPW decision may happen in a couple of months or longer, but will find a time when entire committee can attend and participate.

Have shared with ITS staff that the next couple of months will be very busy pulling everything together. Could still fall apart at any point but we're closer than we've ever been with other potential providers and Meridiam also provides a very good fit for the community.

Trotzke: What is the TIF process?

Dietz: Goes before the Redevelopment Commission (RDC), then to the Plan Commission, then EDC Economic Development Commission, then City Council and then back to the RDC. Not entirely familiar with the process but understand this is a rough process.

Robb: Target date to deploy this in community?

Dietz: Unsure, but Meridiam is interested in moving forward quickly. Bloomington will have bulk of resources, but other firms will be assisting partner communities with moving forward.

Robb: Can you share expected build time?

Dietz: Bigger project than past attempts, but it could be a couple of years once construction commences.

Sullivan: Can the State step in and torpedo this?

Dietz: That is a huge risk as you know, but not that I can see. This is a private entity that made a business decision to locate here. We are providing normal economic development support for this. Our conversations have been a model here for surrounding communities. Not sure if they will look at partnerships elsewhere in Indiana beyond our southern Indiana project, but they might..

Trotzke: What are the benefits Meridiam is getting from the City?

Dietz: TIF tax relief, potential funding for the digital equity program.

Robb: Will subsidies/resources be available to other providers?

Dietz: Would need to be willing to make the same commitments as Meridiam.

Robb: Think a lot of people won't distinguish between infrastructure and ISP, will equate the two.

Trotzke: Thinks pushback will come from incumbent providers, putting pressure on State lawmakers.

Dietz: It will help that we have partner communities in this project. Looked at similar communities early on when it was evident that Bloomington wasn't big enough for Meridiam's investment threshold.

Robb: The attitude has changed a lot in the past couple of years, Can't imagine a lawmaker looking at this, seeing a problem with a private investment doing this.

Trotzke: Important to get out in front of any potential pushback from the State.

Dietz: In terms of next steps from the BDUAC, will have some kind of convening public meeting in the future, date to be determined. May or may not take place during regularly scheduled BDUAC monthly meeting. Stay tuned for next Friday's press release.

## **Digital Equity**

King talked about the 2022 Digital Equity Grants award year. The application window opened Monday, May 2nd and will close on Friday, June 10th at 5:00pm. Hoping that this long window at the end of the school year will encourage educators to apply. Chose to move up the application window to avoid end of year City business.

King again asked members to share information about the grant with any not-for-profits that might be interested. King and Dietz are also looking for two or three additional members to serve on the Digital Equity Grants committee. This committee determines recipients and award amounts and two members have had to step back this year.

## **Member Reports (Items not on the agenda)**

Robb: Leaving IU, last day is tomorrow. Will be starting up with ESnet, part of the Department of Energy (DOE). Will be working remotely for one of the University of California colleges. Robb, knows half the staff already, still managing GlobalNOC. Have been with IU for 24 years. DOE contracts with the school for the lab, paycheck comes from the university. Interesting, still have to comply with California work standards, and the HR department still hasn't figured out remote work policies yet.

Trotzke: Periodic has moved out of the Mill, yet to move into the Trades District Garage space since it's still being renovated. Some people temporarily working at Cornerstone. Will be great to have Exclaimer in garage. Another tenant is desiring to back out of the Kiln, looking for replacement. Was finally ready to go with redevelopment tax credit at the beginning of this spring, but now tenant has opportunity to buy the property they're currently in. Negotiating with a number of potential companies to occupy the 5000 square foot space.

Discussion ended.

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