

MINUTES
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
SPECIAL JOINT STUDY SESSION
FARMINGTON HILLS CITY COUNCIL
FARMINGTON CITY COUNCIL
JANUARY 25, 2021 – 6:00PM

The Study Session meeting of the Farmington Hills City Council was held electronically and called to order by Mayor Barnett at 6:03pm. Members were asked to state their name and location (city and state) as to where they were attending the electronic meeting.

Farmington Hills Council Members Present: Vicki Barnett, Farmington Hills, Michigan
Jackie Boleware, Farmington Hills, Michigan
Michael Bridges, Farmington Hills, Michigan
Valerie Knol, Farmington Hills, Michigan
Ken Massey, Farmington Hills, Michigan
Mary Newlin, Farmington Hills, Michigan
Matthew Strickfaden, Farmington Hills, Michigan

Farmington Council Members Present: Sara Bowman, Farmington, Michigan
Joe LaRussa, Farmington, Michigan
David DeLind, Farmington, Michigan
Maria Taylor, Farmington, Michigan

Council Members Absent: Steve Schneemann – Farmington City Council

Others Present: Farmington Hills Acting City Manager Mekjian
Farmington City Manager Murphy
Farmington Hills City Clerk Smith
Farmington City Clerk Mullison
Farmington Hills Director Monico
Farmington Hills City Attorney Joppich
Farmington City Attorney Schultz

BROADBAND TASK FORCE PRESENTATION

Aaron Paluzzi, Chair of the Broadband Task Force, commented on the time the task force members have spent on researching municipal broadband and urged the Councils to consider implementation of the proposed plan. He introduced Doug Dawson of CCG Consulting & Finley Engineering.

Doug Dawson and Dean Mische of CCG Consulting and Finley Engineering discussed the process taken in developing the final report that included feasibility studies, residential and business surveys, network design methodology and design and business plan and financial assumptions.

Mr. Dawson outlined next steps for the community that included picking an operating model, public outreach, partnership options, finding a local champion for the project, funding, pushing incumbents to do better and investigating the Metro Act for options.

In response to council comments regarding the ability to offer free Wi-Fi to families in need, Mr. Dawson indicated that Chattanooga, TN has a low-income product that might be an option for cities that own their own network.

City Attorney Joppich cautioned that there could be some issues with providing free Wi-Fi service from a legal standpoint that would need to be reviewed.

The Farmington and Farmington Hills City Councils discussed staffing requirements, the option of using existing dark fiber already in the ground, required penetration rates and options to lower rates by partnering with neighboring communities.

It was questioned whether residents surveyed were aware of the proposed costs involved. Mr. Dawson indicated that those costs were not known at the time and the survey was to gauge sentiment of interest but now that costs are known, part of the next steps he suggested included further public outreach.

Mayor Barnett offered to research non-profit corporation options and due to time constraints asked about meeting again at a future joint study session to further discuss this topic. There appeared to be a consensus for a future joint meeting.

It was noted that members of the public in attendance at the meeting were invited to make comments at the regular session during the public questions and comments portion of the meeting that will begin in a few minutes.

Clerk Smith acknowledged an email from Mr. Larry Cannell on the subject. Mayor Barnett stated that she would read the email into the record at the regular session.

ADJOURNMENT

The study session meeting adjourned at 7:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Pamela B. Smith, City Clerk