



# Minutes

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## Rural Access to Broadband Internet Technology (RABIT) Task Force

**Meeting Date:** June 25, 2021

**Meeting Time:** 11:00 a.m.

**Location:** Microsoft Teams Meeting

**Prepared by** Kyra Dunlop, Administrative Assistant Committees of Council

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### A. Call to Order

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Deputy Mayor Potter called the meeting to order at 11:01 a.m. with Mayor Soever and Councillor Sampson present.

Town staff present were Chief Administrative Officer Shawn Everitt, Director of Operations Shawn Carey, and Executive Assistant Committees of Council Sarah Merrifield. Manager of Communications and Economic Development Tim Hendry sent his regrets.

- **Task Force Member Attendance**

None

- **Additions to the Agenda**

Mayor Soever requested that the BAI Communications Rural Broadband Overview be added as Agenda Item E.1.1

**Declaration of Pecuniary Interest and general nature thereof**

NOTE: In accordance with the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* and the Town Procedural By-law 2019-56, Rural Access to Broadband Internet Technology (RABIT) Task Force members must file a written statement of the interest and its general nature with the Clerk for inclusion on the Registry.

None

- **Review of Minutes (June 7, 2021)**

Minutes reviewed and deemed sufficient.

### B. Staff Reports and Deputations

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None

## **C. Matters for Discussion**

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### **C.1 Internet Speed Test Challenge Update**

- **# of Tests completed**
  - Executive Assistant Committees of Council Sarah Merrifield noted that CIRA would be provided the analytics from the internet speed test challenge. Sarah noted that a press release had been issued the previous week to encourage residents to take part in the speed test challenge and noted that Deputy Mayor Potter had attended the Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting on June 17, and that his presentation was well-received by Committee Members.
  - Sarah noted that 2287 tests had been completed to date. Deputy Mayor Potter noted that it was nice to see a more even spread of the tests completed in the rural areas and noted that this was a good sampling of the town.
  - Mayor Soever noted that feedback should be provided to CIRA regarding the issues of people trying to drag the locate icon to their property.
- **Quotation from CIRA for detailed Data Analysis**
  - Mayor Soever asked when the Task Force would be receiving a quotation from CIRA. Chief Administrative Officer Shawn Everitt noted that Manager of Communications and Economic Development would provide an update on this issue for the next Task Force meeting and noted that staff could provide a report on this issue for the August Committee of the Whole meeting. Shawn Everitt noted that staff would internally follow-up with CIRA.

### **C.2 Resolution to Council to continue Task Force**

Deputy Mayor Potter advised he would prepare for Task Force review a report to be provided to Committee of the Whole outlining the next steps that the Task Force would be undertaking and requesting an extension of the Task Force into 2022 from Council.

### **C.3 Meeting Frequency Review**

Deputy Mayor Potter asked if the Task Force should continue to meet every 2 weeks. Mayor Soever noted that the Task Force could meet once more prior to Council's summer break. Shawn Everitt noted that if the Task Force chose to meet on or before July 9, 2021 that the forthcoming report from Deputy Mayor Potter could be included on the August 10, 2021 Committee of the Whole agenda.

### **C.4 Action Item Tracking**

- Request for Information, if deemed the right path forward
  - On hold indefinitely
- One-on-one meetings with Internet Service Providers
  - On hold indefinitely
- Internet Speed Test Challenge
  - June/July 2021

- Tim Hendry to seek quotation for detailed data analysis from CIRA
  - Additional outreach being provided via press release
- Installation guidelines for conduit in The Blue Mountains Road Allowance (“Variation Agreement”)
  - Shawn Carey will bring draft staff report to Task Force prior to inclusion on Council agenda
  - Noted that Bruce Street Technologies is contemplating services in an area of the Town and will require a variation agreement to install the infrastructure
  - Shawn Carey noted that the challenge of obtaining timely utility locates and determining any potential cost-sharing arrangements would need to be considered. Shawn Carey noted that everyone was struggling to receive timely locates at this time.
  - Mayor Soever asked if it was legislated that locates were only approved for a 6 month period. Shawn Carey noted that the Ontario One Call had the 6 month period to protect themselves for liability and in the event that emergency utility work was required. Councillor Sampson noted that he would reach out to the province on this issue and requested that Shawn Carey reach out to him on this issue, which Shawn Carey confirmed he would do.
- Eh!Tel and GBTel Inc. Universal Broadband Fund Proposals
  - Mayor Soever noted that he had heard that the Bruce Street Technologies icon would be moving.
- Installation guidelines for conduit in The Blue Mountains Road Allowance (“Variation Agreement”)
  - Shawn Carey will bring draft staff report to Task Force prior to inclusion on Council agenda
- R2B2 and The Town of The Blue Mountains
  - Consideration of hiring a student intern from the University of Guelph R2B2 program in Fall 2021 to assist in data mapping
  - CAO Shawn Everitt to follow-up with Professor Helen Hambly-Odame regarding MITACS funding for Task Force consideration.
  - [https://www.mitacs.ca/en?gclid=CjwKCAjwiLGGBhAqEiwAgg3q\\_kTztDK6hh2nKH\\_aye5X6mrGhct\\_vsjGKehu8Yhmnjh32Ap7sjCgpRoCc7cQAvD\\_BwE](https://www.mitacs.ca/en?gclid=CjwKCAjwiLGGBhAqEiwAgg3q_kTztDK6hh2nKH_aye5X6mrGhct_vsjGKehu8Yhmnjh32Ap7sjCgpRoCc7cQAvD_BwE)
- Telecommunications Infrastructure Plan, updates if any
  - Staff are preparing a public engagement plan to determine areas of need and potential strategic sites for new telecommunications tower facilities in the Town

## **D. Correspondence**

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None

## **E. New and Unfinished Business**

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### **E.1 Additions to the Agenda**

#### **E.1.1 BAI Communications Rural Broadband Overview – Mayor Soever**

- Mayor Soever provided an overview of the BAI Rural Broadband Overview presentation including:
  - Provide communities future-proofed broadband infrastructure
  - BAI's approach to underserved broadband deployment
  - Delivering a fibre-optic solution
  - Digital infrastructure benefits
  - Benefits of fibre deployment
  - The problem with fixed wireless
- Mayor Soever noted that this presentation should be provided to Council. Deputy Mayor Potter noted that this presentation may assist with the Task Force's decision about next steps.
- Shawn Everitt asked if the Task Force members would be open to having another session to include neighbouring municipalities to participate given that country road are an important piece of the infrastructure. Mayor Soever requested that the Town Clerk reach out to BAI Communications to schedule a deputation for Town Council to receive and to reach out to municipalities to advise them.

### **E.2 Items Identified for Discussion at Next Meeting**

- Internet Speed Test Challenge June/July Update and CIRA Quotation
- R2B2 and The Town of The Blue Mountains – MITACS Funding update
- Task Force Report to Council Update, if any.
- BAI Communications Deputation Scheduling Update, if any.
- Meeting Frequency
- Schedule meeting with Township of Puslinch

## **F. Upcoming Meeting Dates**

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Task Force members noted that the next meeting should be scheduled for the week of July 5, 2021.

## **G. Adjournment**

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Meeting adjourned at 11:52 a.m.