



Minutes for August 5, 2021

Members attending the meeting:

Christina Boulter, Tiki Dixon, Erin Gill, Tim Hill, Terry Ledford, Kent Minault, David Myers, Vivian Shipe, Stephen Smith,

Others in attendance:

Facilitator: Dr. Bill Lyons

KUB Staff: Gabriel Bolas, Jamie Davis, Susan Edwards, Derwin Hagood, Elba Marshall, Tiffany Martin, John Williams

KUB Board members: Kathy Hamilton, Celeste Herbert, John Worden

Old Business

None

New Business

The Community Advisory Panel met at 6:00 p.m. on August 5, 2021 at KUB's Fleming Operations Center.

Dr. Lyons welcomed the panel members and asked if anyone had corrections to the meeting minutes from last month's meeting. There were no corrections.

Dr. Lyons explained the agenda for this meeting was for the panel to have opportunity to discuss their interests in future meeting topics to plan future meeting agendas. He explained the agenda also includes discussion about KUB's broadband plans, as this is a timely topic on which the panel may provide input to KUB's board.

The group reviewed results of a survey that had been sent to the panel to provide input on meeting topics.

Stephen Smith expressed he feels it's important to have different perspectives presented in the information shared, possibly with external guest presenters or by having panel members with knowledge on certain subjects to share information with the panel so they may be more aware of alternatives. He also shared suggestions related to topics that are complex, such as rate design, for which it could be beneficial to have more than one meeting to discuss. If some topics need more discussion, he suggested having meetings in two consecutive months so there is better continuity in the discussion.

Dr. Lyons agreed the panel may want to choose an order of topics and not place constraints on the timeline for discussion on a particular topic so the panel may determine when sufficient discussion has occurred. He also shared it may be best to have guests address the panel during the public forum and keep the rest of the meeting discussion among the panel members, as they are there to represent the different viewpoints across the community and bring those perspectives forth during meetings.

Vivian Shipe suggested meeting every other month so the panel may receive information, digest it, take it back to the community for input, and then have more discussion. She also feels it's important to start with discussion on rate design.

Kent Minault said he envisioned panel members taking certain topics and arranging for the information to be shared, including by bringing in outside subject matter experts.

Dr. Lyons expressed he feels it is more effective to limit outside guests to the public forum and ensure the panel members are able to have their discussions amongst themselves, as each of them is serving with diverse backgrounds to represent the community.

Erin Gill agreed the panel may want to have discussion about certain topics, then determine what questions they have and what they may want to research further or ask KUB staff to provide more information on.

Stephen Smith expressed rate design is a very tricky topic, and some of his staff have expertise that could be helpful. He suggested possibly having other subject matter experts in the audience to be called on by the panel when questions arise so that the panel has information from sources other than KUB staff.

Dr. Lyons suggested there are various ways to ensure diverse perspectives. He suggested another way to approach this is to have reports provided to the panel to address other perspectives. He said it's important to have all of the information brought forth, and he asked how others felt.

Terry Ledford asked if the meetings are open to the public, and Dr. Lyons confirmed they are. Mr. Ledford suggested various others could be asked to attend by the panel and address the panel.

Dr. Smith agreed it could be helpful to have others to call on in addition to having KUB staff help answer questions. He suggested the panel spend some time defining what is meant by "rate design," as it is a very complex topic with many aspects.

Tiki Dixon suggested first going back to answer the question of how often the panel wants to meet. There was some discussion among members, and it was agreed to set a monthly schedule with an understanding the panel could decide each month if they would like to cancel the next month's meeting.

To define where to start on a discussion about rate design, Terry Ledford suggested starting with a discussion about what KUB's current constraints are as a TVA distributor. Erin Gill added it would also be beneficial to understand background on what the current rates are and why. Vivian Shipe asked if the panel could be provided the background information through the month of September so they could review it, then meet in October ready to have discussion about that information. Stephen Smith explained he would like to have information about alternative rate design surfaced to the panel at the same time, so alternatives can be considered along with KUB's information about rates. He offered to work on this information. Erin Gill suggested starting with thorough discussion about the current rates and design in order for the panel to discuss what they feel they like and don't like about them, then consider what information may be needed to consider alternatives for what they feel should be changed. Vivian Shipe expressed the need to spend time understanding the background information about KUB's current rates and considering that information, then coming back together to consider alternatives.

Erin Gill suggested the tour be conducted in September, so the panel has the opportunity to see the infrastructure KUB manages so everyone has this background information as they discuss the rates necessary to maintain the utility systems.

Tiki Dixon expressed a preference for the background information to be presented, not sent by email, so there is an opportunity to ask questions and have discussion.

Stephen Smith asked if the discussion on rates would include both rates and fees. The panel agreed to include both.

Kent Minault agreed with the thoughts shared by the other members and expressed he's in favor of spending time on all of the background information so the panel may represent the community well.

The panel agreed the discussion should include all rate classes – residential, business, and industrial. They agreed the next meeting will be in October, and the panel would determine as they move forward how many meetings will be spent discussing rates.

The panel requested to have the presentation materials for the October meeting in advance so they may review it and be better prepared to ask questions. It was agreed the materials would be shared ahead of the meeting.

There was discussion about arranging the tour, and it was decided Elba Marshall will send options to panel members for scheduling the tour in September.

Jamie Davis, KUB Vice President of Fiber Deployment and Chief Technology Officer, joined the panel for discussion on broadband. He reviewed information about KUB's initial deployment plans with a \$700 million investment to build out the system over seven years. He reviewed the upcoming consideration by the KUB Board in August for rate actions to support the fiber deployment, as was shared with the panel and public throughout the approval process for the business plan. The panel asked about funding the deployment

with bonds and grants, and Jamie confirmed KUB is using bonds and seeking grants in addition to the rate increases.

Jamie discussed the deployment strategy, including consideration of where KUB already has fiber and what areas are underserved or not served at all. He asked the panel to provide input to help KUB determine what areas they may know are underserved and should be considered earlier in the deployment plan. Dr. Shipe mentioned the residential area adjacent to downtown that is in a food desert and lacking other resources should be considered, and she also referred to South Knoxville. The panel asked if a map of substation locations could be provided as well as any segments of fiber that extend from the substations so they may be able to make recommendations based on the existing assets. Dr. Shipe asked if census information could be used. Jamie confirmed KUB is looking at this, however, it is somewhat outdated. Christina Bouler asked if there is a way for the public to report to KUB on their access to service, aside from being able to send an email. Jamie explained there is currently not, and one of the issues is that the buildout will take quite some time, and while members of the public tend to speak up about not being satisfied with a current provider, KUB really needs to know even more what areas have no service at all. Jamie discussed information about schools that have students who do not have adequate access, and the panel indicated this is a good approach. Dr. Smith asked if KUB is open to information from neighborhood groups that could collect information about the number of households that would be interested in subscribing. Jamie emphasized KUB is open to all input, and really values input from this panel along with information KUB is gathering from research and other public input.

Jamie also discussed plans for developing the program to provide internet service for low-income households and asked for the panel's input on this concept. Jamie explained an obvious challenge is the great need and limited funding, and therefore, the panel's input will greatly assist KUB in deciding how to proceed. He provided his contact information so panel members may share their thoughts with him.

Kent Minault suggested that KUB work with SEED to gather community survey information to inform the broadband planning.

Dr. Lyons noted there were no members of the public registered to address the panel this evening and asked if there was any other discussion from panel members. With there being none, the meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.