

## ARLINGTON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ADVISORY COMMISSION

6:00 PM, Wednesday, April 28, 2021

Virtual Meeting via TEAMS

### MEETING MINUTES

In attendance:

**Chair:** Mary Crannell

**Vice Chair:** Frank Jazzo

**Members Present:** Jonathan Adelstein, John Burke, Mike Carleton,  
Phil Caughran, Martha Moore, Kevin Robins,  
Jackie Snelling,

**County Staff:** David Herlihy, County Staff liaison  
Jack Belcher, CIO

**Members of the Public:** Kevin Broadhurst, Comcast and Louise Anderson, Verizon

**Visitors:** Lynn Borton, Independent Media (AIM)  
Gary Thayer, Independent Media (AIM)

**Meeting called to order by Chairman, Mary Crannell**

6:00 PM

### Public Comment

None

### Update from Arlington Independent Media (AIM), Lynn Borton and Gary Thayer

- **Lynn Borton:** started with information on AIM for those who may not know their function. AIM is the 'P' in the PEG of the Public Education and Government money coming out of the cable franchise. AIM's mission is to promote and facilitate free speech by providing access to both established and emerging media.
- That has changed over the tenure of AIM's history. AIM tries to build the Arlington Community by bringing independent voices together to exchange ideas, through opinions, artistic expression and feels.
- It is especially important to create opportunities for underrepresented voices to be heard, which is one way that AIM they feel that they can support some of the County's priorities.
- AIM is offering everything from introductory classes to professional level Masterclasses; individual to professional productions.
- AIM is providing training facilities and dissemination networks for those locally produced personally relevant and wholly independent media.
- AIM's educate people about media's power and how to leverage that power for free/
- Especially important now to have independent media being at this intersection of technology, art and civic engagement.
- Over years of activity AIM have garnered probably what they were trying to do.
- AIM has won more than 30 national awards

- AIM founded in October of 1982 and the cable franchise agreement, public Access, TV station. Since then a low powered FM station was added in December of 2015. WERA s where all of the programming streaming takes place.
- Online AIM has YouTube channels and the Rosebud Film Festival.
- AIM's facilities include a TV studio, audio productions, various editing rooms, digital classroom, meeting spaces and a huge archive of Arlington's documentary history.
- AIM is a membership organization, which means that people get trained and then they have their certification.
- Members can use and rent equipment and use the facilities.
- Funding has historically come from the County and working on enlarging and diversifying that funding base
- In the last couple of years, AIM has been operating under a 5% step down. That was in recognition of the declining cable franchise revenues that the state and County are receiving for a couple of years. Money was actually split between operating budget and additional funding that the County Board put in as a onetime fund.
- It has been noted that AIM's current funding does not make the most sense going forward, that AIM should disentangle the allocations for AIM. The cable revenues should be more reflective of the values that the County Board and the County Staff see on as what AIM's; contributions to the community should be.
- The board has approved a little over \$380K in fiscal year 2022 that's been allocated and also have additional funding streams, which comes from wildly popular classes, summer camps from commercial clients, studio fees membership and increasingly from individuals.
- AIM has launched their Spring Fund Drive and invitation to first ever virtual gala as well as a two-night local music event call COACHELLA. AIM has an online auction and fund drive.
- AIM offers something quite unique that's not available anywhere else in the County that we are a convener.
- AIM provides technical assistance in the nonprofit community, Workforce Development and tell the story of our community from a lot of different perspectives which is what you hope technology allows you to do.
- AIM has had more than 15K programs on their various channels. 20% in languages other than English, including Vietnamese, Farsi, Spanish, Arabic, Korean and a TV show that goes now for the Mongolian community in Arlington.
- AIM has been a critical resource for nonprofit communities because of COVID
- Aim closed their doors March of 2020, using the TV studio on a limited basis but not the radio booth or audio production suite. Looking to reopen sooner rather than later once everybody get their vaccine and follow protocols.
- One of AIMs Commitments this year is to continue to really try to serve the nonprofit community.
- List of things AIM is doing that is illustrative of the scope of how AIM has tried to show up in the community:
  - Providing training and remote audio production for storytelling
  - Interview skills for safety net providers so that included the Arlington Free Clinic, APA, AJA, Futura AFAK to record stories of their clients during COVID and use that for sharing their work.

- In partnership with Arlington Historical Society, AIM launched series with special focus on Arlington history but unknown black history with the Black Heritage Museum of Arlington.
- Provided staff and board of the Arlington County Fair to help them make the fair virtual.
- Arlington NAACP about producing their own series.
- Worked with the Church of Clarendon and the Central United Methodist Church to provide technical advice and consulting to support streaming their worship services.
- Lumber Run Summer concert series
- Columbia Pike Blues Festival
- Biggest challenge now is location currently occupying, 7000 Sq. Ft in Clarendon. In kind rent for years so the luxury of not having to pay a couple of years ago that changed and the building that AIM is currently in .
- The building is up for sale and lease and AIM is looking to relocate, near Comcast.
- Just hired a new CEO who begins work in a week. She brings a very exciting mix of journalism, community media and new business models .
- Paula Valley, longtime executive director resigned for health reasons the beginning of last year.
- AIM has been essentially operating the last year with jut two plus FTE's.
- Was able to secure two small business administration PPP loans at the first of which was fully forgiven.
- In terms of finding additional funds, the strategy is to work to engage wealthy local donors and corporations in helping area nonprofits. An exciting partnership with Marymount for a federal work study employment program.

#### Gary Thayer

- We are totally committed to engaging in a full-fledged partnership with the community and with the county. We want to do everything we can to maximize and leverage the function that AIM can offer to the community.
- We are hoping to engage in discussion focused on the technician's area of concern and much of that has to do with emergency preparedness and security to the community.
  - At some point better dialogue or questions and answers. What factors are important to you?
  - What are you looking for in terms of what AIM might be able to offer as a broadcast radio station?
  - What can we do to enhance the relationship that we have?
  - What do we have on the table for us?
  - What remains to be done going forward.?
  - What kind of opportunities are there that we can develop?
- **John Burke** states that the model of engagement at this point is being able to go look at a summary of something and figure out how to dive deeper if needed. The production and producing that content takes work, effort, talent skills at very least having a capability facilitated by AIM to produce a more objective view of what's going on in the County Government space and for citizens to facilitate that engagement,
- Other media outlets that are commercial and profit driven are tending toward the sensational which is problematic for our society for a lot of reasons. A nonprofit like AIM could be an antidote to that for people who are looking to stay informed but react negatively to the sensationalism of other profit driven media outlets.

- New CEO's name will be released at the April 29<sup>th</sup> GALA.

### **Department of Technical Services (DTS) Update – David Herlihy, DTS Arlington County, Tech Commission**

#### **Liaison**

- Two rounds of public engagement, for the public, further refresh related the information architecture:
  - What do you want to see on the page?
  - How do you want this to work?
  - What are your expectations to see for navigation?
- This is really going to help drive the whole information architecture.
- There is a lot of analytics that we're using behind the scenes and can combine it together.
- Received our first two rounds of design and received feedback.
- We have product owners, internal product owners' group which are a lot of the content holders and editors review with us.
- We went another round with the company, we've been working with, Open Cities.
- The website will be very service oriented, meaning we get you to the services that you want whether its to get mulched, pay your bill or find a job.
- Things like permits, better faster and more efficient.
- Still looking at beta in August that seems to be tracking well and then a release sometime this fall.
- Will continue with briefings as we move along.

Jack thanks AIM for the services they provide, that work they have done for the County.

#### **Legislative Update—Frank Jazzo**

- Friends at Comcast has announced that they are going to invest \$1billion over the next 10=years to close the digital divide and reach up to 50 million low-income Americans, which will include additional support for their Lips Zone initiative which establishes Wi-Fi connections safe spaces and over 1000 community centers nationwide for students and adults by the end of 2021.
- The internet essentials speed has been increased to 50 megabits per second, for the low price of \$9.95 per month.
- The FCC will soon accept applications for the second round of COVID 19 Telehealth program. It's \$249 million reimbursement program, not a grant program, so applicants will be raged to prioritize hardest hit in low include areas.
- The FCC continues its ROBO call enforcement efforts. The FCC has now asked major telecom companies to provide it with information regarding their ROBO call fighting efforts.
- By April 30<sup>th</sup>, they were asked how they measure their strategies affectedness and how they prevent interference with emergency services. The FCC has a website now to help track these reports.
- Question /Comments for Frank from Jonathan: The last bill in December for \$10 billion for the states for broadband, the Treasury department has not issued regulations on that yet, but is Virginia thinking about what they are going to do with that and how it might benefit Arlington? However, Frank has not seen any further reports on Virginia's plans for that or what Arlington County's plans are at this point. Broadband certainly is a big topic for the infrastructure proposals. No information on how the \$10 billion will be divvied up.

**Review 24 March 2021 Meeting Minutes**

- Because of some technical issues with producing March's minutes Phil Caughran proposed to wait until May 28, 2021 meeting to adopt minutes.

**Clarendon Project, John Burke**

- The Safety and Innovation Zone demonstration project that Holly Hartell briefed us on previously has formed a privacy oversight panel which essentially a governance board to pilot the County's privacy principles and privacy program in partnership and in collaboration with this demonstration project. Had the first two meetings posted on the project website, which can be found by searching Safety and Innovations Zone demonstration project.
- The first meeting to kick off to review the charter and discuss some initial thoughts and feedback.
- Will be meeting monthly.
- The charter is posted on the website as well as a project FAQ
- First two meetings discussing the questions that we have had when Holly briefed us that we still have.
- Opportunity to sit in on a briefing from Holly to the Clarendon Courthouse Civic Association, who had many of the same questions.
- I've encouraged County staff to get some answers to these types of questions because they are predictable and the answers that we have right now are not satisfactory, nor did it seem the Civic Association members were satisfied with the answers.
- One question is to explain that there is something called an optical sensor, but it's not a camera that won't retain pictures or images, how is the data process.
- Think that this Commission is in sync with the community members who showed up to the meeting.
- One issue to raise for the Commission's feedback on as it was originally briefed both. Watched the video for the County Board Approval of the project and in the briefing to us and the FAQ, it seemed as if this was an experiment to see if we could generate data and indicators that could be used for those public safety use cases.
- They were not intended to be used operationally to make operational decisions for fire and EMS type dispatch or police public safety type dispatching and resourcing decisions.
- If these data and indicators will be used to make operational decisions, it substantially changes the risk profile of the pilot, and this should be a significant concern, and is not consistent with what was briefed to the Board when the project was approved.

**Broadband Authority Feasibility Study (New Urbana Report)**

- The feasibility study, outlines what some of the price tags are for the different routes that Jack and team could take in order to deliver to the underserved.

- If you had an opportunity to look at the feasibility study, you get a timeline of where you're going and then we can open for questions.
- Jack states, It lays out the coast and the ticket and the technical approach that they want to take. The real question is the technology adoption and the end user support, what does it look like. We've surveyed many cities across the country and what they do. Some basically turn on Internet broadband access and say go for it. Others have somebody that can help you.
- Is there an upfront cost for infrastructure, concern of manager and overall cost.
- It is really critical that we start looking at how do we provide services to communities, to everyone in the community. We should have the same approach as we do with the neighbor saying I have no electricity but my neighbor does. You make sure they have electricity. We need the same approach for broadband.
- APA believes that they shouldn't build a new residence, unless it is has full broadband at the speed they want and they are willing to invest in it.

**Adjournment**

7:20 PM

**Next Meeting**

Next Virtual Meeting: May 26, 2021 at 6pm via Teams