**February 13, 2024 Meeting - Seattle Community Technology Advisory Board**

Topics covered included: Comcast Cable Franchise Renewal; CTAB 2023 Year-End Summary Document; committee updates

**This meeting was held:** February 13, 2024; 6:00-7:30 p.m., via Webex and in person

**Attending:**

**Board Members:** Camille Malonzo, Phillip Meng, Coleman Entringer, DeiMarlon Scisney, Femi Adebayo, Omari Stringer, Lassana Magassa, Aishah Bomani

**Public:** Dorene Cornwell, Harte Daniels, Kathryn Keller, Sara, Lassana

**Staff:** Jon Morrison Winters, Vinh Tang, Tara Zaremba, Cass Magnuski

**16 In Attendance**

**Camille Malonzo:**   Hi, everyone! It's been a minute. Welcome to the first CTAB meeting of the year. We cancelled January, just because. I think we'll start with introductions. We'll move around in the room, and then virtually, and then we'll get to the rest of our program, which includes a presentation from Jon Morrison Winters on the Cable Franchise Renewal work that has happened, and then we will look through and do a vote on our year-end summary document, which will go out to past and new Councilmembers, chairing the EDTC Committee to give them a sense of what we have done this past year.

**INTRODUCTIONS**

**Camille Malonzo:**   Next up, we have some business to approve the minutes from December, and tonight's agenda. Can I please get a motion from a board member to approve the minutes of the December CTAB meeting.

**Femi Adebayo:** I move to approve.

**Camille Malonzo:**   Thanks, Femi. Can I get a second for Femi?

**Omari Stringer:**  Second.

**Camille Malonzo:**   Thanks, Omari. All those in favor? All those who abstain? All those opposed? Awesome. Thanks. This motion passes. Can I please get another motion from a board member to approve tonight's agenda?

**Coleman Entringer:**   I move to approve.

**DeiMarlon Scisney:**   Second.

**Camille Malonzo:**   Thanks, Coleman and De. All those in favor? Thanks, all. This motion passes. without further ado, I'm going to pass this over to Jon Morrison Winters to cover the Comcast Cable Franchise Renewal work.

**COMCAST CABLE FRANCHISE RENEWAL**

**Jon Morrison Winters:**   Thanks, Camille, and thanks, CTAB, for having me this evening. Because I am out of town, I only have my laptop screen, so Vinh Tang is going to be running my PowerPoint presentation. This will be a good test of connectivity here at this hotel in Philadelphia. I'm right in the middle of center city Philadelphia, so hopefully, it will work pretty well.

It's my pleasure to be with you this evening to talk about the franchise renewal process, and in particular, the City of Seattle cable franchise renewal for Comcast. Actually, it's not on the agenda, but many of you know me, but just in case you don't know me, just to present a little more context, I am the Digital Equity and Broadband manager, so very active and involved in the City's Digital Equity Program and digital equity planning, and strategy development for programs. Of course, part of that involves working very closely with CTAB, in which I very much appreciate all of the work that all of you do. The Digital Equity Program -- and this is new -- there has always been a very close connection, but new as of about two years ago, the Digital Equity Program and Cable Office are one unit. So, we also manage and oversee the City's cable franchises, which is what I'm going to talk about today. So, that an organizational piece, and I've been in this organizational role for going on two years. it will be two years in just a couple of months. So, I'm still relatively new to this, and really rely so much on my colleagues, who have so many years of expertise, and are just great to work with, as well. But I have been tasked with heading up the Comcast franchise renewal this year in my role with the Cable Office. Part of that is an ascertainment process, which we'll talk a little bit about what that means later in the presentation. But the short version is that it really is community engagement. My background is in human services and urban planning, and so I think of it as a public or community engagement process. So, working with CTAB in the past and this time is a part of that process. That's why I'm here, but again, I'm also here because I appreciate the work you do and just want to share this work with you.

I'm going to keep this pretty informal and not go into too much detail. Vinh Tang, I think, heard a version of this presentation that was like two hours long a while back. And that's not what I'm doing today. I'm going to try to keep it high level. But this also is the opening of a conversation with CTAB and all of you, about this process and opportunities for you to be involved in this process, and how you would like to be involved in this process. That is the tip of the pyramid there. But I have it structured as an inverted pyramid on the agenda today, because I'm going to give some context at the high level of federal and State policy and organization for cable franchise renewal. And then I'll talk a little bit about the City of Seattle as a franchise authority, and what our cable code is, and what it says. And then the Comcast franchise renewal process in particular.

This is the regulatory framework of cable television local franchises. Apologies, I'm not the most graphically-inclined, so if some of these slides are a little boring -- and apologies especially if accessibility is an issue. Let's be in dialog about that, and certainly, if we're going for a broader audience, I would want to think about ways to improve it. But, with that as a caveat, please bear with me, and I will try to present the information in multiple ways to be helpful with that. The regulatory framework of cable television local franchises is the history of communications acts at the federal level. I have a whole list of information about that, so I'll try to skim that a little bit, because it really is verbatim. My source is a congressional research service report on local franchising. So that's a report for the U.S. Congress, so it really lays out all of the details of this history. I'll try to keep it high level, but basically the short version is there has been this history of these acts at the federal level that has established this regulatory framework, starting with the Communications Act of 1934, which first established the FCC. Cable didn't really exist in 1934. It was during the 40's and 50's that those communities that had broadcast reception and were basically able to get television began erecting large community antennas to pick up broadcast television signals, and then routing those signals to residential customers via wire or cable. The FCC exerted jurisdiction over cable television in 1966, due to cable's uniquely close relationship to the FCC's regulatory scheme, even though it was not an over the air broadcast. There already was local regulation at that time, and the FCC recognized that cable was a local thing in what they called 'inherently local character.' Then a couple of other acts that were passed at the federal level, the Cable Communications Policy Act of 1984. That added a lot of specificity around how federal regulation governed cable systems and preserved that franchising authority at the local level that was pre-existing. The other one -- last time I gave this, I was told that I should emphasize, because it really is the current regime. It's the Cable Television Consumer Protection and Competition Act of 1992. And the whole purpose of that really was to try to prevent what at the time really was an often monopolistic experience that consumers had with cable. So, it was trying to prevent monopolies and protect consumers. That is still in force today. I won't touch too much on the more recent orders of the FCC, except to say at at such time that we get into the specifics, there are some things to think about. The FCC has regulatory changes that they have made more recently. For example, one that is on our radar is the maximum percentage that a franchising authority can charge to a cable company in franchise fees is five percent as a franchise fee. There's also a separate fee, a PEG fee. PEG stands for Public Educational Governmental. So, there's a separate fee for public access and educational channels and governmental channels like the Seattle Channel. But the main franchise fee is capped at five percent. And there has been some controversy lately, and there is some ongoing litigation around the FCC's interpretation of what constitutes and franchise fee. So, if get into more specifics, we can talk more about that.

At the State level, there's really not a tone of activity currently. Franchise authority is granted to local entities. In our case, it's the City. The City of Seattle is the franchise authority, and so that's why we have a Cable Office.

The local franchise authorities establish their own rules and requirements within the FCC, the federal parameters. So, there has not been a ton of involvement at the State level in cable franchising, but we still do monitor. Sometimes, there are bills that come up in the legislature. And there are other states across the country that have preempted local authority, and said local governments can't have their own franchises, and there's only a state-level franchise. So, we certainly are monitoring if anything like that ever comes up at the State level.

In Seattle, we have a cable code. It's the Seattle Municipal Code 21.60, and that requires cable providers to meet technical, customer service, and privacy standards, and even a cable customer bill of rights. Currently, we have cable franchises with Comcast and Astound.

Cable franchise renewals happen every ten years. So, we do have two franchises, one with Comcast and another one with Astound. It is a lengthy process. It begins three years prior to the expiration of the franchise. There is a formal end to end renewal process, and the processes run concurrently. Across the country, the majority of the franchises use an informal process, but we do have to comply with all of the requirements. And because these processes run concurrently, we always have the option of pursuing a formal process. So, typically, that would happen. Across the country, when it has happened, the history of the cable franchising if with negotiations with the cable provider were to break down, that's the back-up option.

That's what this slide shows. It's a lengthy process for the formal process. It actually involves going out for a formal RFP, and all of the little nodes here on this flow chart show the steps in that formal process.

I was just talking about commencement of proceedings, and this is just simply to say that the process has begun, and that includes a public process.

I'm also not going to spend a ton of time. I'm not going to walk through this. The point of this is just to show that franchise renewal for Comcast has begun. There are several components there which I'll dig into a little bit, but Astound, the other cable provider that currently has a franchise in the City, their franchise will be up for renewal soon, as well. Although we have not begun proceedings with them, and have not received a renewal notice from them, we do expect to receive that probably within the next six months.

The next slide just shows some of the details of the renewal process, and what's included there. There are five major phases of that. There's the commencement resolution, which has already been approved by City Council. And right now, we're in the middle of reviewing the cable operator performance. But underneath that, there are several other pieces. So, if you can think about it as 2a, 2b, 2c, etc. on this slide, that includes reviewing the cable operator performance, auditing their compliance with the franchise. And we're hoping that includes specifics, looking at their compliance with the Cable Customer Bill of Rights, and how they've done there. We are in the middle of trying to resource that work, but that is really important because that is an important part of our franchise negotiations that we do have in the City of Seattle. It also includes a technical evaluation of the cable plant. This includes a financial review and an audit of franchise fees and taxes. So, those are the main things under Section Two, and that's what we are in the middle of right now. Concurrently with that, assessing community needs. That's a very important part of the process, as well, to ascertain that cable-related needs and interests of Seattle residents in order to inform our negotiations with the cable operator.

This really shows where we're at right now. So, the resolution passed. In terms of an update on the ascertainment process, we have engaged with a contractor consultant to do an ascertainment survey to determine what the cable-related needs and interests are. So, we just started that, and that's where certainly we can think about what would be important to ask. But this is the firm that worked with us on the Technology Access Survey that has just been completed. But we also don't just want to do that. We also want to do other forms of community engagement.

The next slide shows the ascertainment plan, which again is really community engagement. This is just what we're thinking. Currently, we are trying to resource this work. You may have heard that the City has a hiring freeze, so that's an additional challenge. We most likely will have to identify another consultant's help with this. And that's where we certainly want to think about things like equitable representation, who we are hearing from, and what kind of outreach we're doing in the community. But we do want to do the things listed here on the slide. This is very timely. CTAB engagement is listed as one of the planned components, so this is really step one of that in sharing this with all of you this evening, but we want to go beyond that. We want to do as much as we can with community engagement, recognizing that it is just one component of the broader process.

The last three slides -- I'm not going to read through this text verbatim, but the reason why I went ahead and included them here was because what they are and what they show is the franchise benefits that were negotiated in the past few times that the franchise was renewed. In particular, 2006 is just on there for some historical context, but 2016 was the most recent franchise. That's when it started, and so the renewal process was in 2014, ten years ago, when we were having similar conversations about this. These are some of the things that were negotiated at that time. The PEG fee that I mentioned for public education on governmental channels, that switched from a per-subscriber fee to a percent of gross revenue fee. And that was really important for the Seattle Channel to be able to tap into those fees to do the important work that they do, and to support our PEG operations. Looking at a percent of gross revenue is a much better way to really get them back from the operator. This is another example. The second one there is technology grants for digital equity. Already the franchise fees that cable operators pay support our digital equity programs. This was negotiated in addition to the fees that they already pay, so $500,000 additionally on top of their franchise fees, and that ran for the first five years of the franchise. We haven't claimed them over the past couple of years, but that was really important to the digital equity work that we did in those years.

The next slide is similarly just some additional things that were negotiated. These were other non-monetary things that were negotiated. We need to start the conversation with all of you. What are some of the types of things that we might want to think about and ask for in this negotiation with Comcast.

The next slide is just that. It's Q&A, and based on how much time we have, if you want to think about that this evening, or if you would like to continue the conversation, I would be really open. I know in the past when a cable franchise was being renewed, CTAB has been very involved in the process. So, I would be open to whatever involvement you would want to have in terms of that. Would it be appropriate for a subcommittee to work on this? Or maybe just a couple of CTAB members who would volunteer to engage more, or whatever your preference is. But that's all I have for you this evening. I just wanted to open it up if we have time. I would be happy to answer any questions.

**Camille Malonzo:**   Thank you so much, Jon, for this presentation. If you have a question or comment, raise your hand and I will move to you to ask that question. I have a couple. The first one is negotiations, I would imagine, happened with each municipality that each provider would have to go through. Are we similar? Are these contracts similar across similar states? And also, I see we have two with Comcast, and Astound, but are there other cable providers? Has there been any interest in the last few years for another company to participate?

**Jon Morrison Winters:**   Those are two great questions. Maybe I'll start with the second one, and then, don't let me forget. We can loop around to the first one. The second one, yes, the two operators currently in the City of Seattle are Comcast and Astound. We quite recently -- the main years were between 2015 and 2019, maybe into 2020, we had a third cable franchisee, which actually was CenturyLink, which was formerly Quest, and now Lumen. I didn't go into that in my presentation, but that's just another piece of historical and broader context. What happened at that time, around 2010 to 2015 or so, that was when bundling became really all the rage in the telecommunications industry. By bundling I mean taking the video service and packaging that along with broadband, and along with telephone. What happened was, competitively speaking, the cable providers were really well-suited to that because they already were providing broadband and cable television. So they were able to add voice, a voiceover internet protocol service, telephone service. And that was the "triple play bundle." The incumbent telephone providers were a little bit less suited to that, because oftentimes they had the telephone, which was copper, and they had DSL technology for broadband, so ultimately that became obsolete. They couldn't keep up with speeds on the bandwidth for DSL. So, some of the telephone providers, notably Verizon, did a lot of it. And then, Lumen, as well, decided to upgrade from DSL to fiber. And that allowed them to introduce a bundle that included cable television. By the way, the other thing I didn't explain, is that these franchises do only regulate the video part of the business for these companies. Frankly, I think it's fair to say that it is a bit strange, because the majority of our work that we do in digital equity really is focused on broadband. We don't pay it as much attention as we did ten years ago, or certainly 20 years ago, on video and cable television, And that's just sort of the reality and almost historical accident almost of the regulatory regime that we're under, that these local franchises only really govern the cable video portion. So, what that meant was that when Lumen wanted to add video service, that's what triggered their requirement to have a local franchise. So, they had that bundle for a while, and they were trying to compete in that arena, and as many of you probably know, in more recent years, video service has really fallen out of favor, frankly. In exchange with the streaming services, everything is switching to. It was not profitable. It didn't make sense for CenturyLink/Lumen to continue with their triple play bundle. Ultimately, they decided that they were not going to make any money on TV, so they got out of the cable television business. And when they did that, they no longer had to have that cable franchise. So, they ended their cable franchise. so that's a long answer about one specific cable franchise that has existed recently in Seattle. Currently, because the cable franchises are specific to that video piece, there's no other providers who are currently getting into providing video service. Everything is moving to streaming. So, we don't anticipate additional cable franchises at this time, although we do not have exclusive franchises. We're not allowed to have exclusive franchises. So at any time, if another provider wanted to, they would be able to walk through the process to get a franchise.

And your other question was?

**Camille Malonzo:**  I was just wondering. Presumably, other cities and municipalities would have to go through these negotiation processes with similar companies. Are we similar in terms of contracts with similar cities?

**Jon Morrison Winters:**   Yes. There are some similarities and some differences. I've got to give credit to my predecessors running the Cable Office. Seattle has really been, I think, out front in emphasizing the needs and interests of Seattle residents and cable customers. In particular, I would point to the Cable Customer's Bill of Rights as something that I am not aware that other cities have that. Many cities do have customer service requirements for their cable franchisees that franchisees are required to meet. But to really codify them into a bill of rights, like we have, I'm not aware of another city that does that. So, we really are out front. And that is something that I would like to continue. Hopefully, there is a public interest in continuing to really make sure that the consumer is front and center, certainly in our mind as a regulator and franchise authority. But apart from that, there are some similarities, certainly in support for PEG channels, public education or governmental channels in many communities across the country. But that's part of the process that we need to do in our research is to see what current franchise renewals have looked like. As an example, I did talk to a staff person from the City of Tacoma that just renewed their franchise, because they are also in Washington State. Obviously, there is some similarity there. I happen to be in the City of Philadelphia, and we often hear that the City of Philadelphia did a good job in negotiating a franchise that is really beneficial to their residents. So, we definitely want to look at them. And they are on a similar timeframe, as well. I believe they may have just renewed or will be just finishing renewal of their franchise with Comcast. So, we will definitely want to take a look at that, as well.

**Camille Malonzo:**  Thanks, Jon. Do folks have other questions for Jon?

**Vinh Tang:**  Thanks, Jon. I just have a comment, not a question. I think in Seattle, we only have about 75,000 cable subscribers now for Comcast, and for Astound, like 4,000. Back in 2015, I think there were about 130,000 or 140,000. So, it has almost been cut in half. Our franchise revenues and (unintelligible). Think about that. This really is only impacting about 75,000 cable subscribers when it comes to the cable franchise renewal process. Did I get anything wrong, there, Jon?

**Jon Morrison Winters:**   You know what? Those numbers sound about right. And I can get the exact numbers and bring them back, if there is interest in that. That is an important part of the context, I think. I don't want to say it's more important, because this is an important part of our role as the franchise authority, to do this renewal. But at the same time, there is advocacy that is happening among cities to figure out ways to address what you just mentioned. That's something that we're doing, as well, in trying to understand what might our options be. Because our hands are tied in some respects for regulating internet, for better or worse. You could argue that either way, but internet is just not regulated the same way that cable television is, and so our options are more limited in terms of generating any kind of fee revenue to replace the franchise fees that we lose when the cable operators lose subscribers.

**Camille Malonzo:**   I have a follow-up. Excuse my ignorance in this space, but what about YouTube TV, or there are these streaming platforms that provide a cable experience. Is that not in scope to any of this? I don't know. I would imagine that's streaming, but is that similar enough to cable?

**Jon Morrison Winters:**   That's a great question. Those services sometimes are called "over the top" services. It really is a video service, but the argument of the folks providing that service is that they are providing it via the "public internet" meaning it's not in their right-of-way. And really this franchise authority that we have is connected to our ability to govern the rights-of-way in the City. And so, because they are not in the "right-of-way," they are not subject to franchise regulations.

And there is a lot of ongoing litigation about this very issue, and a lot of debate about this issue that's going on. In fact, there was a webinar. I was not able to attend the webinar because I'm here at the conference, but there was a webinar on this very topic that the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors put on just today on this issue on how do you define a cable service, how do you define what is in the right-of-way when certainly these are wire-lined broadband connections, so they do go through the right-of-way. But how much of that can you really pin on a provider like YouTube TV. There are a lot of questions about this that a lot of lawyers and people smarter than me are trying to figure out right now.

**Vinh Tang:**  Camille, I think it would be great to ask CTAB members if they are interested including this as an item in the 2024 work plan. So, to the members on this call, if you're interested in being part of a smaller group to just focus on this, we can make sure that CTAB members know what is going on. Any volunteers?

**Camille Malonzo:**   Think about it and email me. Okay, DeiMarlon Scisney has raised his hand.

**DeiMarlon Scisney:**   Yes. I wanted to raise my hand, especially for the community outreach portion and whatever else I can help out with. But definitely on the community outreach. And that kind of intersects with (unintelligible) as well.  I can definitely assist with that.

**Jon Morrison Winters:**   Thank you. This might be a little too inside baseball. I don't know if I should say this, but frankly, I was hoping to be able to hire an outreach specialist to do some of this work, and that is part of the reason there has been a little bit of a delay in getting this off the ground. But currently, with the hiring freeze, I'm just not going to be able to do that, so we have to look for some other avenues to get some of this work done. I would love to talk to you or anybody, really, on the call who has any ideas for consultants, or just non-peers who could help with this. I'd love to talk about that.

**Camille Malonzo:**   I think we can start up an email thread to get that conversation going. I'll start that up, and De, me, and other people can get involved in that conversation. Going forward, I don't want to speak on behalf of the 2024 leaders of CTAB, but I think it would be great if this were a topic for next year, but I don't want to dictate that until after elections. Do folks have other things for Jon? Thank you so much, Jon.

**Jon Morrison Winters:**   All right, thank you. I really appreciate it. Sorry about the technical difficulties. I'm going to go ahead and drop off the call. I'm on east coast time, so it's getting pretty late, but I just appreciate all of you and we will continue the conversation via email.

**Camille Malonzo:**   Thanks, Jon. Good night. Now, I'm going to share my screen, and if it dies halfway through, hopefully Vinh Tang could take it over. This will be quick. We are now moving on to a review and then a vote for the 2023 year-end summary document. We shared this at the end of last where, where we went through what we have accomplished in the last year. Thank you to all of our CTAB members and community members for all of their great work in support of our actions last year. We have called them out. And also, thanks to Meira Jough for fact-checking the numbers here for the Digital Equity Grants. That has been updated since December. you will see accurate numbers here, and other than that, the only update since December, which was the last time you have seen this stuff, was, thanks to the Digital Equity Committee for drafting the summary and for sending it over. That has also been updated since December.

**CTAB 2023 YEAR-END SUMMARY DOCUMENT**

**Camille Malonzo:**   I'll just show this for people to review. This will also be posted as part of the agenda, as well, for folks' review. I'll give just a minute for people to review, and then I'll head over to the Digital Equity Committee change. Thanks again for amending this and sending it over.

<https://ctab.seattle.gov/2024/02/09/february-13-2024-agenda/>

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1PQKRJ7Fu8dWZmkdn-uTmByTpp26RIRfznuA4tx-r2pI/edit?usp=sharing>

**Camille Malonzo:**   Is it BEAD, B E A D?

**Vinh Tang:** Yes, it's BEAD.

**Camille Malonzo:**   Okay.

**Harte Daniels:**   It took a while to trim the number of words for everything that committee has been doing. So, bravo to the committee members who were able to edit it down.

**Camille Malonzo:**   Yes, this looks great.  Are folks comfortable to vote on this? The context here is that we're going to vote on this as a group, that we endorse the document. And then we will be sending it to Councilmembers Hollingsworth and Sara Nelson. We will be sending it to some Councilmember.

V**inh Tang:**  We will be sending it to the CTAB web site, and I will work with you on this.

**Camille Malonzo:**   Will we also be sending this to other people?

V**inh Tang:**  We will be sending it to the tech chair on the City Council.

**Harte Daniels:**   Could you remind us by putting the URL to the draft in the chat, please? Not that anybody is going to make anymore changes.

<https://ctab.seattle.gov/2024/02/09/february-13-2024-agenda/>

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1PQKRJ7Fu8dWZmkdn-uTmByTpp26RIRfznuA4tx-r2pI/edit?usp=sharing>

**Camille Malonzo:**   Okay. I would like to call a vote on this adoption. Do folks need more time or do we think we're good to vote.

**Omari Stringer:**   I think we're good to vote. I would like to make a motion to do so.

**Camille Malonzo:**   Awesome. Thank you, Omari. Can I get a second for Omari?

**Coleman Entringer:**   Second.

**Camille Malonzo:**   All those in favor? All those opposed or abstaining? This motion passes. Thanks again for those contributing to this document, and also for the good work that is being reflected in this document. So, before we head over to committee updates, just to tee up elections for next month. The update is that we have three open positions for this year to be filled. Vinh Tang is doing some work to fill those positions, so we're waiting for that to finish. And we will introduce and welcome our new members next month, but we will also be voting on the new chair and vice chair for CTAB. I will send out a document from last year where we outlined the elections, but it's not going to change. If you would like to run for chair or vice chair. please look at that document. I'll also share my screen. For nominations, if you are nominating yourself for chair or vice chair, please let me and/or Vinh Tang know by email before a date that might be March 7. If you would like to nominate someone else, please tell that person and coordinate with that person, and also let me know before that date, as well, so that there are no surprise nominees. Each nominee should prepare a share speech, usually about your vision for the next year, your qualifications, and your interest in either of these roles for CTAB next year. The background is for chair and vice chair, you are stewarding the meetings for CTAB, and the agenda for CTAB, call for votes, and organize with Vinh Tang and Digital Equity for each CTAB meeting, and then also plan for what the agendas will be for those meetings. Chair gets to chair the meetings, and then, if the chair cannot be there, the vice chair is able to step in and do those duties during the meetings. The voting process will be a call for nominations for other people first, and then for self-nominations; and then people will give their speeches; and then you will send your votes to Vinh Tang for chair and vice chair for the next year. There are no elections for committees. I think folks have done a great job in self-organizing, so we want to keep that within the committees to decide what the structure and leadership should be within those committees. Any questions?  I will send over these docs to the board members.

So, for committee updates, I think we'll head over to Digital Equity.

**COMMITTEE UPDATES**

**DIGITAL EQUITY COMMITTEE**

**Harte Daniels:**  So, obviously, we put the last committee updates for the past two meetings updating the end of year statement. Prior to that, we did do an after-action report on a lot of our work, assessing what went well, how to improve, and with some brainstorming, how we would want to go forward with the beginning steps of going forward in the new year. We are going to be circling back to that. Part of that is outreach and adding some new members. We did one in the last quarter of last year. Also, you will notice on Camille Malonzo's last document, we as a group usually vote on the committee leadership and leadership style. So, that would be what we will be focusing on immediately going forward. Yes, we have some ideas, but right now we want to keep this report short. Dorene Cornwell and Coleman Entringer, do you have anything? Part of what they were talking about was trying to, with Philip Meng, engaging and following up on that telecom. How can we engage them more prior to a forum? Dorene, Coleman, do you have any comments or additions?

**Coleman Entringer:**   Yes. I think that pretty much covers most of it. So, focusing on end of year summary recapping prior activities. And also, in our last session, doing some forward planning on the beginning of the new year, as we get started, and what 2024 could look like, and what it might look like to follow up on past activities, including the forums and candidate questionnaire that we worked on previously. We are going to get those things started and progress as we go into 2024.

**Harte Daniels:**  Of course, we want to congratulate Aishah Bomani on bringing in a little addition to her family. We wait with bated breath to see whether sleepless nights, etc., to see if she comes back Digital Equity or not. But she has done a great job, as you can see from the report that she gave to the board about what her job is like. Thank you again, Aishah.

**Camille Malonzo:**   Yes, congratulations, Aishah. We will head over to Femi Adebayo for an update with Outreach.

**OUTREACH COMMITTEE**

**Femi Adebayo:**   I think it maybe is the time for the meeting, which is on every third Thursday of the month. I have not been getting quorum. I think the last time was in July. I wasn't able to get quorum. Just myself and another person on the call, who had to drop off. I was there for about 30 minutes and nobody joined the call. So, I'm not sure if it is something about the timing or we need to move the timing. But I'm not sure what other way to approach it because we have not had quorum in that meeting for a while. If we can figure out a time that works for folks, it looks like the timing does not work for other people. I was the only person on the call, so I was unable to do anything.

**Camille Malonzo:**   For sure. I think that's it for committee updates. With the start of a new year, there is always going to be an opportunity to, with the new leaders, rethink priorities for the next year, including what committees exist and think about CTAB for the next year. Now we go to public comment and announcements. Do folks have anything? The floor is open.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Harte Daniels:**   There was a poll, if anyone wants to read it, doing an assessment on the age discrimination and how it has actually increased during Covid, and its effects on individuals. I'm wondering if it has a trickle down effect on choosing CTAB members and the work that we do, primarily trickle down or influenced indirectly subtly without realizing it, because much of this discrimination comes from some of the organizations or companies that CTAB is drawn from. It might be something to reflect on in choosing new CTAB members. There is research done, etc. I can share it. I know it sounds like old news, but the drastic dip for it seems like it's the last bastion of whom it is okay to discriminate against. There was additional research to see whether anything has improved, and instead, the research showed that it had drastically increased that discrimination. That also expands out to those with physical or other disabilities. It's something to be aware of, especially when we're choosing leaders or community advisers.

**From Chat:**   from Harte Daniels to everyone:    7:18 PM

This article originally appeared on USA TODAY: Older workers see rampant age discrimination in the office

From <<https://finance.yahoo.com/news/older-workers-less-tolerant-workplace-120248942.html>>

**Camille Malonzo:**   I think that article would be a good grounding.

**Harte Daniels:**   Philip Meng has been one of our big stars, who had been doing a lot of work this year, and really took some of the new, innovative ideas and brought them to fruition, especially in the telecom conference.

**Philip Meng:**  Thank you, Harte. I really appreciate that.

**Camille Malonzo:**   Thanks for the article, Harte. Do folks have any other public comments or announcements?

**Harte Daniels:**   I do, personally, am working on a speaker or whomever is going to lead CTAB. I ran into somebody who is going from the PDA to here, and they're looking at the community information network and assessing what has happened to the 211 system, etc., when it comes to helping the variety of our clientele, where the target audience is especially for digital equity and the rest of CTAB. If I can get him, I will bring that forward to the next chair. They are working on another type of community information network platform.

**Camille Malonzo:**   Thanks, Harte. Last call? Thank you all. Good to see you at CTAB. Have a great rest of your February. See you all in March.

**ADJOURNMENT**