Don't sell BT to corporate investors. Keep it local with KBTL.

Suggestion: Sell land set aside for South End parkway and partner with KBTL to buy back BT.

Lea
Open Letter to Councilors Joan Shannon and Karen Paul,

As you may know, I’ve been involved in several Vermont Public Service Board (now Public Utility Commission) cable television dockets over the years, stretching back to 1989. Without going into my extensive resume, I’d like to focus on my experience with the governance of companies that have evolved since then from simply television providers to full-fledged triple-play telecom companies.

Back in the ‘90s when the PSB struggled with how to cure Adelphia Cable’s government and consumer intransigence when the company was renewing its CPG, the Commission (I’ll use the PSB’s current name) created the CAB, or Cable Advisory Board. Since then, the CAB idea had been an integral part of all cable television CPGs up until Comcast’s renewal last year when the company proposed eliminating it. All parties agreed, and in fact this is something that I, as a community media consultant, had been recommending for some time because not only was a CAB essentially powerless, it was also difficult for the cable operator to find volunteers to populate and stay on it, exactly because of its powerlessness.

At the idea’s inception, and while skeptical, I testified to the Commission that a CAB would be a good additional check on Adelphia’s behavior above and beyond that which was provided by the public access centers and their boards of directors. In fact, when managing CAT-TV in Bennington, I tried to help the cable company recruit CAB members, and later, while living here, I was chair of Burlington Telecom’s CAB for several years. But with direct experience, my opinion about the efficacy of this sort of governance check changed drastically.

This brings me to the question of whether the residents of Burlington, and other municipalities as the new owner of BT expands its fiber lines, will be properly and consciously served if the only checks on its behavior are the cable TV CPG (which is a contract between the State and the Company) and a sales agreement contract with the City of Burlington. Compounding my concern is that of the other communication services, telephone is nominally regulated and broadband is not regulated at all. This means that neither a cable TV CPG nor a side agreement contract can substitute for an on-going and meaningful community governance check that can deal with not only new and unanticipated developments and concerns over an 11-year cable TV CPG, but also with an unregulated broadband.

Neither a CAB nor a CPG has been, nor will a side-agreement contract ever be, a solution to this huge question.

Now I suppose a privately-held, Indiana-based company like Schurz might be trusted to always do the right thing for the community because it has a strong middle-America grounding, plus it has Sheriff Joe Arpaio looking over its shoulder where it operates in Maricopa, Arizona. And I suppose a publicly-traded company like Ting might be trusted because it’s answerable to its parent, Tucows based in Canada, because we know Canadians always do the right thing for their communities.

But more seriously, since I was approached to assist in formulating a co-operative solution to our BT ownership dilemma, I’ve grown to believe that only a community-based, subscriber-owned corporation, with a built-in efficacious check on its behavior—that is a community-elected board of directors—can provide long-term, sustainable monitoring. There is no other substitute for correcting a questionable direction a telecom company might take, short of a lawsuit or a petition to the Commission. Much better to have a way to immediately recognize and deal with emerging management and service provision issues, than have to resort to other questionably less effective avenues.

As elected officials, surely you can understand this logic.
Thank you for your attention.

Greg EplerWood
369 South Union Street
Burlington, VT 05401
(802) 860-6473 - Home
Let's not throw away our investment of $43 MILLION. We can do better with BT Local. The big value is in the long run when we control our own future. Utilities, such as ISPs are natural monopolies or duopolies. We need local ownership and control. Think City Market---that could have been a Shaws, but we have the best coop supermarket in the country.

Time to use imagination.

Ted Hobson
As a 36 year resident of Burlington I’ve already been the victim of fraud against the citizens of Burlington by one administration. Should the City Council vote to accept the coops bid over the others that are more advantageous, I will sue to protect the interests of our community. If anyone has taken a look at the coops proposal they will see that the early years do not generate sufficient cash to service the debt and put BT at great risk of failure. A deal that doesn’t provide for the highest upfront cash and also doesn’t show ability to cover obligations would be irresponsible to pursue. Michael Seaver
I am a long-time Burlington resident and have been a member of BT since their inception. Let's work together to make it work.

--
Carol Stenberg
Colibri Architects
802-999-4095
Jordan Redell

From: roger bergeron <rogerbergeronvt@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 12, 2017 4:43 PM
To: BT Feedback
Subject: I Support the Keep BT Local Coop’s Bid to Buy Burlington Telecom

Roger Bergeron
3 tallwood Ln
burlington
It’s the logical choice, for so many reasons! We have enough outside entrepreneur presence in our town, and we know we can make this co-op work! Please listen to the people who live & consume here, not the businesses that stand to profit by this transaction.

Becky Galvin
Ward 5 resident
Yes, Yes, Yes I support this 100%
I have been a financial supporter for a long time.
I was a beta member of BT when it first started
My business thrives exceptionally well because of BT
I have a long term contract to keep the price stable.
I get help when problems arise almost immediately
BT people are super to work with.
They even send thank you notes to new users!
I want to keep Stephen Baraclough on as the head of BT. He will go with the bidder whose philosophy matches his. I hope KBTL is the one he wants to work with.

Our money should stay LOCAL period.
When the rest of the country was going under. Burlington stayed afloat because ALL of our BANKS were local. Now that they aren’t it is harder to find a local bank to work with you. And when the rest of the world went under, we did too.

LOCAL LOCAL LOCAL.

DO not let an outside big bank scare you. If they sue, we will deal with it.
But do you even have this in writing, on official letterhead.????
Or was it just a phone call to the mayor.
We have an amazing team and we need to keep everyone in place for the transition.

Shurz to me is way better than Ting, but they have never ever put any money into Vermont, let alone Burlington. What do we really know about either of them? Nothin

I know I and many other user of BT, if asked, will poney up money to help KBTL take care of all financial problems. With $3 MIL a year in profits, if we used it all to buy out Maine Fiber of $10 mil well we can do it in 4 years.

So please relax about all of this.
KBTL, as all of you know IN YOUR HEARTS is the only solution.

Thank heavens you chose city market coop instead of Shaws for our local market.
But you almost did, remember. What a horrid mess we would have had if they had come in.

Thank you for listening.

Carolyn
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Check out my new video by clicking here.