

BT Criteria Online Survey Additional Public Comments

4. Are there any other factors or considerations you believe the City should evaluate in choosing a buyer for BT?

Count	Response
1	BT Local cooperative!!!!
1	BT should remain at least 51% owned by the city or some public entity.
1	Burl telecom shd be a public utility
1	Burlington
1	Cooperative ownership. Exemplar models of other community-owned telecom services.
1	Do NOT privatize BT. It's a community asset that should be used to benefit all Burlingtonians.
1	Do not sell to Comcast, Fairpoint, AT&T, Verizon or other major "ISP".
1	Finish build out. Harbor Watch does not have service.
1	I do not think there should be a "new owner," unless it's a co-op or nonprofit.
1	I honk the city should have controlling interest in whatever entity evolved.
1	I live at Redrocks and do not yet have access to BT. I really need an alternative to Comcast.
1	If the city sells I will no longer be a subscriber!!!
1	Keep it local. Source of in State Revenue
1	Keeping BT out of the hands of Comcast or the like.
1	Local cooperative
1	Local owned, CoOp preferred. Same net neutrality standards. Same pricing standards.
1	Local ownership is should be considered mandatory.
1	Long term sustainability of the business
1	Must be local. Must be willing to allow the City to maintain at least a minority stake.
1	No to Comcast No to fair point Non profit/ public/ or cooperative ownership
1	Owners' commitment to expand service to neighboring communities
1	Please keep it local, and preferably as a co-op.
1	Prefer that the buyer be a Vermont company.
1	Public benefits model of some type for new ownership structure.
1	Strong preference for a cooperative form of ownership.
1	The city should maintain ownership of the BT. It should be treated like a public utility.
1	The new owner should be passionate about saving BT from becoming another Comcast!

Count Response

1	continued competition in the market for the services BT offers - no monopolies
1	if at all possible, serious consideration of cooperative management, at least partially.
1	local ownership by non profit, affordable access found above format challenging
1	Local control, I have lived where Fairpoint & Comcast are the only options and they are not viable for the city's plans on continued growth of the tech community and BTV Ignite.
1	I would respectfully urge the City Council to explore avenues for continued public control of Burlington Telecom. If it is absolutely necessary to sell the company, please do not sell it to Comcast and thereby strengthen their grip on information and internet access in Burlington.
1	Please don't see to a big company like Comcast. No matter what they promise, they will always be motivated by reducing cost through sameness and scale, and maximizing profit rather than reasonable profit. BTV is so important to Burlington's competitive edge for our children, our community and our economy. Not everyone realizes this yet, but more people do than ever. We must ensure that the sale does not negate the value of this incredible asset of fiber to the home with a local soul.
1	I believe the taxpayers invested (without their knowledge) - \$17 million, I would hope that this would not just be given away to some large corporation, without much benefit to us. Keeping some local control, would be essential, to make that worth it. Otherwise BTC is a wasted asset as far as we are concerned.
1	Since the broadband market lacks real competition apart from Burlington Telecom and Comcast in this area, and since Comcast is looking to impose download limits and overages on customers in order to fight Netflix and other streaming services, it will be important for Burlington Telecom to guarantee service without download limits, especially as 4K HD streaming services become available to the market over the next year.
1	As a tax payer, I have already paid the \$16.9 M, so I want to have BT remain a public utility. We have already paid. I don't care if this investment comes back tot his community (not personal tax relief directly) with a growth of tech jobs and businesses and the taxes that these will generate over the next 10-20 years.
1	Keep it local!!!! I can't say that enough. This is a locally owned asset and should remain as such.
1	There should be commitments to continue investing in the infrastructure and services that keep the residential services on the cutting edge.
1	We live within the city of Burlington, campaigned, supported and voted for BT, yet still have no BT service. Not only are we paying the \$16+K criminally stolen from the taxpayers by the previous corrupt city administration, we are getting nothing for it. Let's hope any new owner will live up to the promised commitments made when BT was established.
1	While recovering the \$16.9 million is my key result....we have to evaluate any purchase on the TOTAL value provided to the city. This value will include potential future payments, services to the City as a client, potential value to the citizens in lower costs for their data and content, etc. A one time payment is only part of the value.
1	I believe that 4 things top the list: net neutrality; affordability [especially since Burlington taxpayers funded BT]; ongoing local programming, community involvement and oversight including a strong role for the city in the ongoing process ; and lastly reaching out to grow BT in Chittenden County & with other community neighbors. I believe that return of the missing funds should have been reviewed by police early on. In my mind, the BT financial debacle is not any different than Enron, and it should have included criminal proceedings for breach of fiduciary responsibility as well as restitution.

Count Response

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- 1 Back near the end of the Consultant's involvement, I know the cost to revenue margins were all very good, but exceptionally good (best) for internet, next best for phone, and last (but still good) for TV. Therefore, I'd prioritize making high speed internet available to customers in nearby communities, and I'd BE SURE to allow purchase of internet access ONLY as a prime alternative to bundling it with telephone/and/or TV. In South Burlington where I live, I have no viable alternative for excellent high speed internet only. If it were available at any reasonable (not confiscatory) price, we'd ditch Comcast in a moment, and I suspect many others feel the same. We don't need all the bundled programs and would prefer to take our chances with what we can get for programs via the internet. Running a trunk line out to neighboring communities and letting some other legal entity be formed to do the hookups and service, takes advantage of BT's technological infrastructure and can bring in additional quick revenue at good margins without significantly adding to BT's admin and service costs.
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- 1 I never understood why a municipality was running a communications business. But since we're here, and since the Weinberger administration and Davud Provost have done so well in stabilizing it, then I advocate that ownership continue as it is now with Blue Water/Burlington. Selling to Comcast would be disastrous. The last thing we need is a local communication/entertainment provider being owned and operated by a comm. giant. Just look at its customer service ratings.
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- 1 It sort of blows my mind that the powers that be are even considering sale of BT. If that happens, history will not be kind.
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- 1 remember that the pride for the city is to have local service stay local and affordable because the competition (Comcast and Fairpoint are terrible across the board)! Do not let politicians sway the sale for money interests. The \$16.9M is LOST!!! Do not play heroes of recovery. Instead, make intelligent decisions for the peoples telecommunications future that are not fiscal recovery based.
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- 1 Ref: "Financial capacity of new owner to maintain BT's 'state of the art' capabilities": It is also crucial to be able to IDENTIFY state of the art capabilities, not least a strategy to deal with increasing demise of "cable" and evolution of new technologies. We need to keep BT "local", but be prepared to install a management team that can attract national excellence.
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- 1 Maintain some local control. This is an excellent community resource. I do NOT want to have to go back to Comcast or Verizon.
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- 1 Community ownership (is that the same as local ownership?... I think not quite). That's is, a co-op or, something similar to the ECFiber model - <http://ecfiber.net/>. Jim Porter at the State of Vermont Public Service Department - http://publicservice.vermont.gov/about_us/contact_us - would be a great person to talk to about this model of community ownership of fiber resources and other models the state is exploring for community-owned fiber. Also, at the public forum, it was brought up that the Internet service part of Burlington Telecom might be split off, giving the Internet Service business some flexibility that the "triple play" version (Cable, Phone and Internet) of BT does not currently have because of the regulations around providing cable TV services. I think this is a great idea to pursue. Many of the Vermont incumbent telephone companies split their Internet service off of their commodity telephone service business for similar reasons.... Waitsfield Telecom / Green Mountain Access is one good example. Cable TV nationwide is losing subscribers as they move to Internet-based subscription services and BT should look at taking advantage of this trend and spinning off their Internet Services, allowing them to expand freely into neighboring communities, and freeing them up from the regulations placed on them because of their offerings of cable TV services.
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- 1 I think the city should avoid the situation where the prospective buyer already has a business presence in the same domain in this area and therefore would create a conflict of interest or oligopoly by adding Burlington Telecom to their holdings (such as would be the case with Comcast).
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- 1 Continued research and investment in the local community by putting money into an investment trust of upwards of 5MM\$ Firms that have done this before in the same sort of market such as Austin, Kansas City, Provo, & Chattanooga.
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- 1 Ability to maintain high quality services and the extremely high quality of customer support is very important to me as a customer of BT.
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- 1 I live on a dead-end street that does not have BT service. I think the buyer must be required to provide service to all residents of Burlington.
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- 1 Selling out to Comcast or FairPoint, or someone looking to eventually sell it to either entity, would see the entire BT effort (which despite some flaws is overwhelmingly fantastic) turned into a massive loss for Burlington.
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Count Response

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- 1 As a BT customer I am extremely satisfied with the service and costs; before BT I never installed cable services for the same reasons. I can't answer the questions on this survey because they are skewed toward new ownership. Whatever it takes I want BT to remain only in the hands of city/taxpayer ownership. I think that it could one day be equal to the great gem that Burlington Electric is in this city. Also, this survey should have allowed for the answering of only the questions one wants to answer. Other than the local ownership question, my answers were filled in only because I had to to submit the form; they do not represent my true thoughts. The thought of Comcast owning BT sickens me.
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- 1 As a longtime residential and commercial customer and 20 year resident of Burlington, I strongly feel the city should not sell BT or even consider doing so. Choosing a buyer (any buyer) is a fool's game - the (apparently inevitable) sale of BT is the worst waste of taxpayer resources in Burlington history. I have read the settlement agreement and it does not preclude maintaining BT as a public utility. The City should maintain BT as a public utility - as it was intended and approved by voters - like electric, water, streets and parks. Any sale, by definition, will result in worse services, higher prices, less local input, etc. This resource - second only to our natural beauty - should be 100% public, taxpayer/user supported and run at all costs in order to allow Burlington to truly grow and prosper as a tech hub without outside corporate influence. Allow tech businesses and adjacent communities to pay the city (in exchange for service unmatched by any competitor) to slowly retire the debt but Do Not Sell this resource. No amount of local oversight or input will be adequate to insure service that compares to what we've become accustomed to. In my two decades of Burlington tech business experience, all Comcast users hate Comcast. All BT users love BT service. No provider other than BT offers symmetrical service, fair pricing, gigabit service and more. The future of Burlington tech business depends on local, public ownership of this resource as the Peoples' lifeline to tech/data. No sale can or will serve these needs. BT was built public, intended public, run public (whatever the foibles) and must be maintained public. Do not squander this resource. Do not sell at any price. Any sale is antithetical to the city's tech goals. Keep It Public! Feel free to contact me as I will be glad to help any effort to keep this resource public. Please do not publish my contact information. Thank you for your consideration.
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- 1 There are so many disruptive technologies coming that we need to get our money back (\$17MM) as quickly as possible. This asset that some folks believe we need to control will require a huge amount of capital for programming and other innovations to reach mobile users etc. if it is to remain relevant. Like it or not, scale is required for these types of services and we did not have great foresight when the decision was made to "overbuild the Comcast network". They have access to huge sums of cheap capital.
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- 1 Whether it's a valuable public asset. The city should retain ownership of BT just like we own our electricity which is another public asset. It's time to move forward and look towards the future and recognize if the city privatized BT they are throwing away a ton of very necessary income. If BT were to be sold I'd very much consider just going back to Comcast.
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- 1 Comcast relentlessly markets to Burlington homeowners and would like nothing more than a monopoly. I've called them REPEATEDLY to beg to get off thier mailing list. I still get junk in the mail regularly. BT, on the other hand, provides excellent service at a fair price and is a great pleasure to deal with. The taxpayer money has been spent. Therefore, let's keep BT as much as possible an independent and local resource.
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- 1 Now that this situation is stabilized, the best possible outcome includes local ownership of this entity. Burlington has already gone through the "pain" of getting BT to this point - let us now try and reap the benefits of local control/ownership. Consider the 17 million as an investment. Something the residents probably would have supported in the first place. The problem was how the money was spent - not that it was spent.
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- 1 I think the City should maintain some ownership in BT. We who have paid the price for its problems should be able to profit from its future success. It is an asset this City can not afford to lose and one that is cherished by those of limited income who can get services that are superior to those offered by corporate biggies like Comcast. It is a slap in the face to those of us who have supported it for years to divest completely in this asset.
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Count Response

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- 1 I believe at the very least that whether the City sells to any outside entity, there should still be a full vetting as to whether a transfer of ownership is going to truly meet the needs of the city's taxpayers and the reasons we voted to create BT in the first place - can we change the regulatory landscape, can we revisit ownership by BED, can the city maintain a majority ownership, and at the very least retain right of first refusal so that a new owner can't "flip" BT and sell off only portions of the business. repayment of the city should be done responsibly over a period of time, and money earmarked from that repayment to make sure there is a safety net of services available to low-income residents and new Americans, as well as micro-business startups in the Enterprise Zone. The city should not solely be looking at offers, but what is going to make the most sense long-term so that the city's residents have a seat at the table, and can reap the benefits of the risks we put forward to get BT off the ground. State regulators have done all they can to hamper BT's ability to grow outside of Burlington due to political considerations, not what is in the best interest of BT, or its health. BT was created in response to a lack of affordable options and competition in the phone and cable markets. I think many people forget how bad it was, and have allowed any of BT's transgressions to get in the way of what is a rosy and vibrant future. Without BT in the mix - or owned by an out-of-state company - it is only likely that we'll return to a time of high prices, shitty service, and a lack of creativity and connection to the community as a true partner and asset in helping to shape Burlington's future as a thriving economic, cultural, and educational hub for Vermont.
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- 1 BT should never be sold to Comcast. BT should not be allowed to be resold to Comcast. Comcast should never own the fiber optic lines in Burlington. Comcast is the antithesis of BT's origin, and what the people of Burlington stand for. Comcast didn't want to spend the money to put fiber into this city, and now they are like a vulture waiting for BT to be dissolved, or absorbed into their portfolio. Burlington spends money on things like parks, roads, buildings, etc. Burlington doesn't sell these things so that it can recoup the cost of building them because they have value to the city. Burlington could sell Leddy Park to a developer, and make money back on the investment that the City has put into the park over the years. But Burlington doesn't do this because the park has value for the citizens. Similarly, Burlington Telecom cost the City money, but there is value to the citizens. If BT is sold (either directly or in the future) to a company like Comcast, we will never get it back. Comcast is not a company that can be trusted to look out for the City's citizens, and this would be a major loss for everyone but Comcast.
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- 1 In order to place BT and its existing and future customers in the best possible position I would like to it owned and operated as a cooperative enterprise.
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- 1 I think it should be a priority to maintain BT as municipally owned, and if it cannot be entirely municipally owned, the city should have a majority interest in revised ownership, or short of that, have significant ongoing influence over the product provided and its cost and scope.
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- 1 Give priority to deep community ownership and involvement in decisions. Strongly support coop model.
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- 1 We the owners of Burlington Telecom who have invested our tax dollars to build this company and it's infrastructure, should not be forced by a bank that is too big to fail, into selling our assets for pennies on the dollar. Burlington Telecom should be like Burlington Electric, a community owned utility. Once it is sold, it does not matter what type of commitment the potential buyer might agree to. If the company so chooses it could ship customer service overseas, strip and sell off the assets, limit/change it's programming, increase it's rate structure, drop/change internet availability, or sale the telecom to another buyer with little or no input from the people of Burlington. In short, they may chose to do as they wish not what the taxpayers who paid for it wish.
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- 2 Comcast is the worst at customer service. I will pay ANY amount in taxes to avoid having to deal with them.
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- 1 At this point the recouping of the \$16.9 million seems to be a mute point. Burlington Telecom is a huge asset for the city and its residents from many perspectives. I am strongly opposed to selling BT to an entity not related to the city: the taxpayers of the city paid to get Burlington Telecom to where it is now, it seems that it would be a big injustice to sell it for someone else to reap the benefits. If anything, BT should expend its services to ensure that all residents have the opportunity to sign on if they are interested. Also, I would like to point out the fact that this survey was highly cumbersome to take. It seems like a massive task to ask folks to rake 18 statements without being able to see the top ribbon when scrolling down. I worry that many people who want to provide their feedback through the survey will not do it because the format is terrible.
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Count Response

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- 1 If you sell out to say Comcast, you have once again help create a monopoly whereas Comcast will continue raise rates to access the internet. Please keep Burlington telecom local ownership. I have cable and more recently internet for decades and the stability and speed of the internet is absolutely amazing. It is HALF the price of comcast and when i had cable TV, BT provides superb SD and HD pictures. Run it like BED. use the revenue to renegotiate paying off the creditors. WTF, Burlington School District went with the federally subsidized Springfield company that threw the pole up in front of Ethan Allen shopping center instead of Burlington Telecom.
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- 1 Yes, the history of BED should be studied thoroughly to understand how to retain municipal ownership. BED also went through financial difficulty, but the outcome of municipal ownership is that we have the lowest rates in the entire nation.
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- 1 The 16.9 million was used to help make BT the great system that it is today. The money is gone. Folks who want as much of it recovered as possible are thinking emotionally instead of logically. Bob Kiss is gone. Lose the grudge and move on. It's not as if 15 million will be recovered and taxpayers will each get a refund check in the mail. And even if I were to receive a \$500 refund, for instance, It would eventually cost me that amount and much more to get service from Comcast or a similar buyer, who would raise rates once the competition is eliminated. I hope some sort of co-op is able to buy BT. Thank you.
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- 1 Best. Case would be continued public ownership. We are about to realize return on investment, selling now is a waste of public investment and loss of public control. If not public ally owned there would need to be purchase criteria that included meaningful transparency and accountability to residents/ratepayers. And commitment to affordability. We don't need a corporate entity buying and colluding with Comcast to jack rates.
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- 1 The factors above all pale and secondary to the cable/internet ownership by customers, I.e., chop or similar structure. Only then can all the good things above be pooble, for examples, paying City back for criminal theft of \$16 million, having up to date technology, all City and beyond service (you left that out!). An KBT Local coop member. While I had to check boxes and rank above, "local ownership" by private terrible, must be public/coop. Nothing good can happen without coop/public ownership.
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- 1 Preservation of the value the city and residents have invested in BT, by keeping ownership and control local within Burlington. If this decision is made for money, then much of that value will be lost, as any outside shareholder will be driven by profit, not by our community needs. BT would not exist if we had left its building to the commercial interests of the world; we should not be taken in by some 'shiny coin'.
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- 1 Access and affordability - with access being political, social, educational, as well as technological.
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- 1 As with any city asset, we of the city must always be cognizant of the RETURN on each of our assets, from city schools, parks, public safety assets, water and sewer infrastructure, etc. Of course, the RETURN includes a DIRECT monetary return, but also includes an INDIRECT return. Our police and fire protection assets, besides protecting us from crimes and fires, save each of us financially via an improved insurance risk rating. Water and sewer, besides protecting us from communicable disease and toxic compounds, save each us from increased health costs, lost wages due to illness, and the costs to establish our own, individual, wells and septic disposal, etc. The question before the city now is, what, besides the direct monetary return on ownership/sale of a state-of-the-art fiberoptic system, are the INDIRECT benefits to the population of the city and how may they be best preserved? When these INDIRECT benefits are properly assigned value, then the city could proceed to develop a rational plan for the assets. For example, we might realize more capital on a sale of the Waterfront Park and/or "back forty" assets, or the indoor ice rink facility, or the police station, than the sale of our telecom assets. But of course we would forever give up the INDIRECT benefits they provide us. Is the loss of the INDIRECT benefits of ownership and control of a boathouse and various marinas, or an indoor ice rink with its high energy and upkeep bills, or a police station on a multimillion-dollar footprint, a greater or lesser loss than the loss to the city of the INDIRECT benefits of ownership and control of a communications network? First, put a dollar price on the (direct) and indirect values of various city assets in order to perform a rational assessment of the disposition of any one of them. Then present the findings to the voters (and the ratings agencies). Please remember that the voters approved the bonds for all the assets cited. Why shouldn't the voters ultimately determine their disposition?
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- 1 The Currently Business model is not sustainable, it needs to be reexamined with a focus on tiered services, not dependent on the "class" of customer. The internet of things is coming, it needs to be addressed and put at the hart of what BT does, distribution of content should be separated from basic network services.
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- 1 My highlighter isn't working so I cannot drag the items into the right side of the screen. Is there any other way to take this survey? Thanks
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Count Response

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- 1 Take an active role in and infuse a meaningful level of investment of resources into marketing BT's capacity, capabilities, and commitment towards positioning their service area/Burlington as a technology linchpin for business start-ups, relocations, job/career opportunities, and a first class innovation-centric community and marketplace.
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- 1 Any potential buyer should have a history of challenging National Security Letters (NSL) & zealously defending citizens constitutionally guaranteed civil liberties.
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- 1 If a buyer can be found who will pay anywhere close to the \$16.9MM, they WILL have a plan to make BT profitable. Can the city instead use the same type of plan and hire a manager to run BT, keeping it as a city owned utility like Burl. Electric, and paying back the city over time from the profits that would otherwise go to a commercial business?
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- 1 Hire local! One of the first vendors BT hired was an out of state web design firm. Just a slap in the face to our local development firms.
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- 1 The further down the BTV Ignite road we go, the options for the sale of BT narrow--and that is a good thing. A successful BTV Ignite represents an economic engine unlike anything we've seen in the history of Burlington, including the Church Street Marketplace. For BTV Ignite to be successful, it cannot become beholden to one of the large cable monopolies like Comcast. Local control and ownership is necessary for BTV Ignites success; BTV Ignite's success will return Burlington's \$16.9 million (surreptitious) investment many times over.
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- 1 I very much want BTV to succeed. It needs to be a local company that puts service to the residents first. Either a cooperative, or if it is a public service company similar to Burlington electric would be ideal. My second choice would be a locally held company. In the event that I am forced to go with a national company such as Comcast or Verizon, I will cancel my TV cable and look for an alternative for internet access.
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- 1 Just keep it local. When I need to contact BT it is nice to talk to someone on Church St. who has a clue as to what my issue is. I tried to contact Comcast for a family member. What a nightmare. BT = Great product at a fair price.
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- 1 I would like to maintain as much public ownership/control as possible, even at the expense of immediate financial/fiscal concerns. I believe that, in the long run, this will be best for the city.
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- 1 Prioritize local cooperative ownership over investor ownership, provided that a cooperative can meet financial criteria. A cooperative would maintain local democratic ownership without requiring city investment/risk.
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- 1 I feel that BT should be sold as stock, first buyers would be BT customers as of December 9, 2015. The first offering of stock would last for 2 months. The second offering of stock would be to Burlington tax payer for 1 month. The third offering of stock would be to all Burlington residents for a 2 month period. The fourth offering of stock would be to Vermont residents for 1 month. The last offering of stock would be for out of staters for a period of 2 months. This process would take 8 months. The amount for the stock would be base on the price of the worth of the company as of December 9, 2015, divided by an amount for the number of shares to be sold. All stock would sell for the same price. All stock is open as stated above but the buyers of the first offering can continue to buy through out and so on.
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- 1 I would like to see a co-op created to purchase BT and protect this asset. I would rather use the service and keep money in Vermont than send it out of state to some corporate entity.
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- 1 I actually think that the rates are high for the level of service provided to me. Some plan to reduce rates would be a good thing.
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- 1 I believe the city should reframe the question of recouping the '\$16.9m' to include the benefits of more affordable service provided historically as well as looking forward. Yes mistakes were made but the value of maintaining local and non-profit or municipal control over this essential utility should take highest priority. Once this asset is goes to market it will be very difficult if not impossible to restore the consumer oriented focus inherent with current structure. Let us not lose sight of the fact that BT provides the highest level of service for the most competitive price- period. Expand the service, restructure the debt and maintain local control.
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- 1 We have several competitive providers. That reality is stronger now than when bt was conceived. The priority should be to continue the level of service by a competent provider or else there will be no reason to sign up/continue service.
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Count Response

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- 1 Buyer committed to expanding the service to ALL of Burlington. With all of the concern about local ownership, everyone forgets that BT does NOT cover the entire city. I live in a neighborhood that is not covered for the service yet I must pay for the debt. I feel that I am subsidizing the wealthier neighborhoods' access to BT.
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- 1 Local and communal ownership is crucial. Otherwise we'll be giving away our investment to a multinational telecom, many of which are known for their abysmal customer service and corporate policies.
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- 1 Ideally we would find a partner with the financial background and acumen to create a larger and thereby sustainable model that would resemble the BED, so a partnership that would allow Burlington to recover its investment over time and someday potentially be profitable would be the best of all worlds.
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- 1 I am concerned that placing all of these criteria on the sale of BT may discourage potential investors. The number one criterion for the sale of BT should be sale price, which I don't see up there, and all of the other criteria should be considered "nice to have."
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- 1 Provide an alternative to the evil empire/worst company in America. That's really all that matters. Comcast and their contemporaries are awful because we allow them to be awful. The playing field is not level in most markets. Please, let us have an alternative to Comcast. If they don't have viable competitors, they will cap data, they will overcharge for slow service they market as "up to X speed" and they will continue to have terrible customer service and criminally incompetent billing services.
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- 1 Run it as a coop. Onion River Coop/City Market is a great model. Whatever you do, do NOT let Comcast run it; they would be terrible for Burlington.
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- 1 I have had very bad experience with Comcast and Verizon internet service. I want nothing to do with them. Local independence is very important to me. Local control by the subscribers is very important to me. I do not want outside interests telling us what we can access.
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- 1 I strongly feel the above ranking system is BIASED in that the CITY did not commit to a process to sell-that statement is not true. The city has not spoken, only a small group of elected folks who may reflect their desire to remain that way more than demonstrating the courage to make a wise future decision based upon current situations. The 16 million dead horse reflects this old hat perspective. The city has not done much to educate or really evaluate what having a flagship digital backbone as a public utility will mean to citizens in the future, both for government and citizen economic standing perspectives. This train is already off of the rails. I do not support the sale of majority ownership to anyone. This survey does not do the process justice.
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- 1 As a customer, BT it is important for residents' overall cost of living, business ventures, and equal access regardless of income that there is a continued commitment to keep costs lower and services higher than other ISP on the market.
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- 1 BT should become a municipally led utility under Burlington residential control like BED. As an essential utility like our electric department, it should not become a private profit making venture that can be bought and sold according to someone's or a small group's portfolio.
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- 1 Assure competitiveness of BT under new owner, keep crazy Burlington political meddling out of the criteria, abandon the socialist model BT was based on which of course directly or indirectly was only viable with the ability to access the City's tax base. Note, though my business address is in South Burlington, I reside on College Street in Burlington.
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- 1 DO NOT SELL TO COMCAST, VERIZON, OR TIME-WARNER! These giant corporations have proven time and time again that their profits are the only thing that matters. PLEASE allow local ownership - even if it means taken some risk - to be the outcome. I have been a happy BT subscriber since the beginning, and we would be ill-advised to let this valuable community resource become just another cog in some corporate machine.
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- 1 CO-OP ownership would be ideal, but ideally should include additional communities. Change name to Vermont Telecom Co-op.
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Count Response

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- 1 As a resident of Burlington for more than 30 years, I was a bigger support of the idea of a city run cable company. I still believe the City as a large opportunity to turn around a company which was poorly lead from the start but was a great idea. The city needs a fast cable service to keep and bring in more tech types jobs which as we have seem add great value to the city. I believe BT should remain part of the City and be promoted outside the city to provide an alternative to the local cable provider (which has a history of poor service across the country) which could increase revenue. I understand the concern of the original \$17m owed to the city but the cost to Burlington residents will be much higher if this service goes complete commercial. Rates will be much higher with poorer service and no local input. My hope would be Burlington Electric would concern purchasing or becoming a major stock holder in BT and keep control of this available asset within City control. I believe the purchase of BT is in line with Burlington Electric long term goals and would provide for better control of the poles and fiber cables which line our streets. The City credit rating has rebounded and the financial condition of the City is not the same as it was in FY2008/2009 when the financial recession was at its worst. I am a current BT customer and have been from the very start of the program. I would like to keep the program and add to it. Thanks for listening. Rod
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- 1 as you can see from my priorities I am strongly in favor of local ownership. by this I mean public ownership in the form of a co op I would not be supportive of a private investor group, be they local or from wall street. once the ownership was in the hands of abroad based local group,all the othe concerns would be naturally priori zted in accordance with local concerns
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- 1 The city needs to retain some measure of control in any case. If BT is sold to a for-profit company, Comcast will eventually get it, and all the money and work taxpayers have put into BT will be a gift to Comcast, which has the worst-rated customer service of all cable companies.
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- 1 Could a cooperative be developed to take ownership of the organization? This seems to be a great opportunity.
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- 1 Like any property real or personal, the City should sell the Telecom business at a fair market value and not below it's full value because of political pressure. It would be a disservice to the taxpayers if sold for less than fair value.
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- 1 Key is PUBLIC ownership. Everything else is important but secondary and beyond. Only public ownership not out-of-state corporations or even a local group of the wealthy will ensure delivering the other factors over the long-term. At most, only a minority interest should be sold, and the earnings should be split between the minority private owners and repaying the \$16.9 over time.
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- 1 I liked that BT was local, but I don't really care who owns them so long as it isn't one of the big conglomerates: Charter, Comcast, TWC. I am only paying \$70 for "gigabit" internet. But I would be willing to pay \$110 for BT to not be purchased by one of the huge cable companies. I think most people are using BT because they don't want Comcast, which would be my worst nightmare. I think it would come clear that most people would pay a little more to get a worthy buyer.
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- 1 Do NOT SELL to Comcast, etc. We must keep BT Locally owned and locally controlled. Do expand service so more businesses will sign on that have several locations in their businesses Keep it on the cutting edge technically I do not care whether we get better ratings or recoup money. I do want it kept LOCAL>
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- 1 1) The city should not sell Burlington Telecom. 2) Next ownership must - MUST - have city support in achieving a less restrictive CPG. The current CPG will guarantee failure and is a big reason for the financial losses to date.
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Count Response

1 Selling BT to an entity such as Comcast/Xfinity is the last and worst result residents of Burlington, including myself, could hope for. Comcast/Xfinity's business practices border on fraud and its customer service is reproachable. *Disclaimer: I am writing this comment in regards to the potential sale of BT on behalf of myself and myself alone. Nothing I write here relates to any organization that I may be associated with. Nor does this comment or its views relate to any organization I may be associated with.* The company's bad practices include placing a data cap on entry/mid level internet plans just because it can. The company's internal training documents on the data capping actually include a statement whereby they *admit* the data capping is unnecessary to ensure quality service, hence the practice is purely for profit. As of now the company has not implemented this in Vermont, but there's little reason it won't eventually make its way here. The company is also notoriously known to be extremely difficult to cancel any service (internet, tv, telephone) with. Doing basic research reveals that the company's own website provides the incorrect phone number to call to cancel service. This incorrect number, which Comcast has provided on its website, makes you sit through a long list of automated responses and options before finally telling you the correct number to call in order to cancel service. Calling that number even doesn't guarantee success to cancel service; you have to wait again through long automated prompts and options before being put on hold for a customer service rep. Whilst on hold, it is often common to be randomly disconnected, thereby forcing you to go through the entire process again. Many individuals across the country have experienced this process, including myself. The simple solution and obvious one, would be to allow service cancellation online, via a subscriber's account login. One would think such a company like Comcast/Xfinity--with all its resources--could implement this option. But no, the company *forces* you to speak with a customer service rep in order to cancel your service so that the company has a chance to "sell" you out of cancellation.

1 The survey itself is biased in favor of the misguided direction of BT. BT should have become; not clear if too late; a city utility, owned and operated by the citizens of Burlington just like BED. It could easily have been financed by assessing a small percentage on BED utility bills or through a city bond.

1 Would a new prospective owner be open to consider a certain portion of the \$16.9 million in mis-appropriated funds as the City's "investment," and treat it (a) as its right to receive annual member equity payments (as in a co-operative structure) and/or (b) as a loan that would be paid back over time. Also, would the prospective owner's corporate registration and top administrative presence be based in Burlington in perpetuity? How much of each dollar taken in from its subscribers will add to the health and prosperity of the City of Burlington? To what extent will the prospective owner meet or exceed the State of Vermont's criteria for Cable Television as found in 30 V.S.A. §504 (including the EMCO Criteria)? What vision does the prospective owner have for the future of its broadband offering, vis a vis, technically, programmatically and integrated with Burlington's social, economic and entrepreneurial ecosystem?

1 this survey is insufficient as it assumes a sale is required and inevitable. Please consider a March or November 2016 ballot measure to see if Tax payers are willing to support local ownership, given the city has already written off the \$16.9 M, so we already paid to own it. this amount can be recouped over the next 20 years like a normal bond.

1 Please, do not sell to Comcast or FairPoint. I was a customer with Comcast since they've purchased Adelphia and have received nothing but sub-par customer support and service. I was paying \$90/month for 50 mb/sec speeds with Comcast until I moved to BT to get gigabit for \$70/mon. Being in tech and working from home, my wife and I rely on Burlington Telecom, their honesty, and their ability to fix issues quickly. I have never had this experience with Comcast and find that every year their prices go up for service that is frequently down. The next comparable speed from Comcast is 250 mb/sec up/down, which is around \$200/month and still 4x slower than BT. My wife and I are planning to move in the next 2 years as our family expands and having affordable, gigabit service is a driving factor in where we move to in Burlington. Also, please, do not make the same mistake the state of Vermont did when they accepted FairPoint's purchase of Verizon. That was an absolute disaster we all remember too well. Foolish decisions like these can't continue to be made.

1 Never again should the city create a business that competes with the private sector. The city had no business creating BT in the first place. An incredible lack of expertise, miserable money management, coupled with the lack of a viable business plan doomed this business from the start. 1) You cannot compete with national chains in a market that is limited to the land (and therefore the homes and businesses) in Burlington. Not enough customer base or growth to support the endeavor. 2) Burlington is built mostly on rock, not sand. The cost of directional boring to install the new fiber lines was vastly underestimated and should have been questioned from the start.

1 Any stated "commitments" should not be given much weight; commitments are ephemeral. A structure of local ownership provides the strongest basis for ongoing local presence (especially of BT jobs) and commitment to issues of local importance, especially to local economic development.

Count Response

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- 1 Given the amount of money that the city spent and the amount of trouble management of BT has been to the city, I think the city should be as hands off of BT as possible, but not at the expense of selling it off to the highest bidder. The pain and money that the community has put into BT should be valued and we should work as hard as possible to keep BT locally-owned, locally-operated, and locally-involved. Under no circumstances should we sell it to a multi-state or multi-national operative that will take such a wonderful service and send it down the shitter.
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- 1 Fiber to home/business in Burlington is an incredibly special and valuable resource that is a long term benefit to the City. I equate this to providing Water, Sewer and Electricity to our homes and businesses. With upward of \$50-\$100 million needed for our municipal sanitary sewers alone in the next 5 to 10 years. The amount of money invested in this pales in comparison and it is very important that this remains a quasi open distribution system. While sewer service could be argued is needed for long term growth of the city, fiber will provide benefits that will far out weigh this investment. Just look at a number of articles about how important high speed access is to internet world. It will be a short sighted to give this a way especially to a firm like comcast that fought so hard to put restrictions on it at the Public Service Board that in effect caused so much the issues in the first place
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- 1 Commitment to expanding BT to connect to ALL addresses in Burlington itself. Some of us still do not have BT as an option, despite promises to the contrary. I would like to see BT run by a local co-op, like City Market.
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- 1 New owner(s) must prioritize community needs for access and reliable, quality service over profit - SMALL profit margin like other utilities (as this business IS!)
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- 1 A strong marketing campaign to attract new customers, both commercial and residential, like we haven't seen before. Growth of BT/BTV is critical to both attracting a favorable and viable buyer and to the future success of the service.
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- 1 Top of my list is whether the new owner would have strong incentives to provide value to subscribers. Second is whether the new owner has strong incentives to support the long-term growth of the Burlington economy. If the buyer is similar in structure and approach to Comcast for example, I would be concerned that the two would effectively create a duopoly of high price, poor service, and little regard for the fate of our city. If, worst of all, the buyer were Comcast itself, I would expect the resulting reduced competition to serve no one's interest but Comcast's. I could imagine a non-local owner with some real skin in the game could excel at providing value to subscribers. The advantage of local ownership seems to be in the second criteria, looking out for the long-term health of Burlington. Finally, I think the capacity of the new owner to support and develop broadband connectivity is by far more important than their ability to provide landline telephone or cable TV. Broadband is vastly more important both in terms of its likely future technological development and its relevance to the continued growth of the city.
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- 1 Be realistic in understanding the monetary value of BT is less than \$10M, possibly even less than \$7m.
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- 1 Opportunities for subscribers to take direct ownership stakes in BT before any other stake is sold.
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- 1 Strenuously avoid BT becoming part of a monopoly, in part or in whole. To the fullest legal extent possible, have the wording in the RFP reflect this desire with the goal to essentially rule out Comcast (or a Comcast subsidiary or another giant in this industry) becoming a qualified bidder. Distribution of the RFP. Make an effort to identify existing local, regional and national cooperatives and other suitable non-profit entities to receive notice of the RFP. Change in PSB Requirement. Because cooperatives are a successful business model still emerging, ask the Public Service Board to reduce its "eleven (11) year pro-forma Balance Sheet and Income Statement" requirement. Look at setting up the legal framework to sell shares in BT to local citizens and companies as a long term investment with reasonably modest returns, the main sales point being that a purchase of shares will help keep BT local. As a BT customer, it is my opinion is that the goal of recovery of the 16.9M is woefully short-sighted if the outcome is a "fire sale" to a new owner with a propensity to monopolize the field with the end result of higher customer rates and reduced local say. I consider this debt to be "forgiven" by the citizens by Burlington.
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- 1 This is a very poorly designed survey. You are listing too many options to rank. In general you don't have a list this long - and you shouldn't have a list too long for the reader to see the options all on one scree. In addition - with a list you need to allow the movement in the right hand up or down as the reader sees and considers other options. This is a waste of time.
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Count Response

1 I'm a Burlington resident and long-time BT customer. We've worked long and hard to create and hold onto something special in BT. The technology works great, customers love it, it's a contributor to our reputation as a tech hub, and Burlington is proud of it. So please don't throw it all away by giving it to a corporation that only cares about the bottom line and eliminating competition. Seems like a no-brainer to me: The KeepBTLocal co-op is ready and able to buy, and is a perfect fit for our community, so why look elsewhere?