

SUMMARY MINUTES

CITY/COUNTY TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION Wednesday, December 6, 2023

VANCOUVER CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
415 W 6th Street, Vancouver, Washington

APPROVED AGENDA

I. CALL TO ORDER – 3:37 p.m.

A. Roll Call

PRESENT: Dicker, Hale, Rogers

EXCUSED: Green, Hinds, Shephard

ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Demmon, Halvik, Peck

B. Approval of Minutes for June 7 and October 18, 2023

Minutes approved as submitted.

C. Review and Approval of Agenda for December 6, 2023

No changes.

II. CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS

No communications taken.

III. OLD BUSINESS

A. Cable Franchise Renewal Update

Demmon reported that staff held work sessions with the Vancouver City Council and Clark County Council in November to review the major points of the negotiated franchise and to get their feedback.

He stated that the Councilors, for the most part, agreed with where negotiations are going. They agreed with 1% of gross revenue model for PEG fee collection and thought it was more equitable. He added that one County Councilor expressed some frustration with how long the franchise renewal process takes and asked many questions. He added that staff will follow-up with this councilor as the process continues.

Demmon stated that negotiations continue to go well, and continue to have negotiation sessions twice a month. He said that staff is planning a Commission work session February 2024 to review the draft negotiated franchise agreement and bring it to the Commission at the March meeting for a recommendation to approve. (The work session was subsequently rescheduled to March 20, 2024.)

IV. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Report from the PEG Committee on PEG Capital Support and Funding Recommendations

Hale reviewed the recommendations. He stated that the applicants did a great job of putting together their applications this year and he appreciated the technical committee's review and input.

ACTION: THE COMMISSION UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED RESOLUTION 2023-05 REGARDING RECOMMENDATIONS TO AWARD PEG CPAITAL SUPPORT FUNDS TO DESIGNATED ACCESS PROVIDERS (attached).

- B. PEG Capital Support Funds for Equipment Repair and Replacement Amendment

Demmon reported that staff received a recommendation from TV ETC to adjust the amounts set aside for equipment repair and replacement in the PEG Capital fund. He stated that those amounts were decided about 10 years ago and are not sufficient to cover current costs.

Hayes reviewed his recommendation. He stated that in 2013, the Commission agreed to allow the PEG providers to request PEG funds for equipment repair and replacement – \$1,000 replacement and \$2,500 for repair. He stated that he is recommending that those amounts be increased to \$3,000 for replacement and \$1,200 for repair, which is a 20% increase.

Dicker requested that Hayes provide an example of when these funds would be used and if it is enough of an increase.

Hayes replied that the equipment used in the schools is used for many years and when something breaks or stops working it may be too old to repair or the warranty has run out. He added that's why he's proposing making the replacement funds available more than the repair funds.

Hale stated that the schools do use their equipment for as long as they can before they replace it and agrees with TV ETC's proposal.

Demmon recommended waiting until the new cable franchise is adopted in July and then bring the proposal back to the Commission. He said that if the 1% of gross revenue model for the PEG fee is adopted in new franchise, then there will be more money in the fund. He recommended having the PEG Committee convene to recommend the amount of funds to be set aside for repair and replacement and for government Comcast Business Services customers. He added any recommendation from the Commission will also have to go to the legislative bodies for approval.

Dicker thanked TV ETC for bringing this forward to the Commission. He said that the PEG Committee will review this after the franchise is adopted. He stated that it would be useful for the providers to prepare a list of equipment that needs replacement and the costs to either repair or replace.

Demmon added that staff is reviewing whether the designation of access providers can be changed to every two or three years instead of each year, but it would be up to the Commission to make that determination.

C. TV ETC Update

Hayes provided an update on TV ETC activities. He reported that TV ETC to date has already surpassed 100 hours of original programming for the school year – that includes over 80 hours of fall live sporting events.

Hayes reported that Vancouver Public Schools took a group of students and staff from across the districts to Tacoma to cover the state high school football championship games. This programming was not live but will be airing on the channels.

Showed a video highlighting programming produced by TV ETC members.

Dicker commented on the great work of the students in the video programs in the schools and the fact that students are provided more opportunities to learn how to use and operate the equipment and produce programming.

D. Clark/Vancouver Television Update

Demmon showed a video highlighting CVTV 2023 election coverage. He stated that every year CVTV partners with the League of Women Voters to cover their election forums. He said one of their forums was held in LaCenter and CVTV was able to air it live using LiveU technology. This technology will allow CVTV to go live anywhere there is a good internet connection. He added that since COVID candidate interviews have been held remotely and that CVTV hopes to have in person candidate interviews next year.

E. Review and Adopt Tentative Meeting Schedule 2024

Demmon reviewed the meeting schedule for next year (attached). He stated that the January work session to review the draft franchise was moved to February 21. He added that the designation of PEG providers was moved to mid-July after the new cable franchise is adopted.

V. COMMUNICATIONS

A. Comcast

Ridderbusch updated the Commission on several technology enhancements Comcast has made. One is new remote technology to make for greater accessibility such as larger, backlit buttons. She said that customers do need to request this remote and it's available in several of the Comcast stores. She said that Comcast now offers storm-ready Wi-Fi. When the power goes out the device, which runs on the 5G network, allows to the Wi-Fi to stay available for up to four hours.

Ridderbusch shared that Comcast provided 75 laptops and a \$2,000 donation to the Boys & Girls Clubs in Clark County and provided a \$20,000 donation to Operation Military Family along with 100 laptops. She also shared that Comcast just had a double-match day – where Comcast employees could contribute to approved organizations and Comcast matched up to \$250.

Ridderbusch announced that Comcast recently remodeled their NE Plaza Road customer service store.

B. Commission

None.

C. Staff

None.

VI. NEXT MEETING DATE: February 21, 2024, Work Session (subsequently changed to March 20, 2024)

VII. ADJOURNMENT – 4:20 p.m.

AN AUDIO RECORDING OF THIS MEETING IS ON FILE IN THE CITY CLERK'S OFFICE; A VIDEO RECORDING OF THIS MEETING IS ON FILE IN THE CITY/COUNTY CABLE TELEVISION OFFICE.

Attachments:

1. Resolution 2023-05 Regarding Recommendations to Award PEG Capital Support Funds to Designated Access Providers
2. 2024 Tentative Meeting Schedule

Approved _____
Date

Paul Dicker, Chair
City/County Telecommunications Commission