

**CHAMPAIGN-URBANA JOINT CABLE AND  
TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
STUDY SESSION**

**DATE:** April 14, 2004  
4:30 p.m.

**PLACE:** City Council Chambers  
102 N. Neil Street, Champaign, IL

<b>MEMBERS PRESENT:</b>	<b>CITY OF CHAMPAIGN</b> Richard Atterberry Giraldo Rosales Karen Walker Brian Silverman	<b>CITY OF URBANA</b> Jim Hayes Kevin Maxson
	<b>PARKLAND</b>	<b>U of I</b> Stan Yagi

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Barb Gladney, Tom McDonnell

**STAFF PRESENT:** Jeff Hamilton

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Art Symbersky (Insight)

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Atterberry called the meeting to order at 4:35 PM

**SETTING AGENDA FOR APRIL 21<sup>ST</sup> MEETING**

- Commissioner Silverman asked that the topic of equal air time on public access for political candidates be added to the agenda
- Chairman Atterberry said that Commissioner Gladney asked him to add a discussion on the possibility of having a study session on Insight's rate structure and cable rates in general
- There were no other corrections or additions to the agenda

**STUDY SESSION ON LOCAL TELECOMMUNICATION SERVICES**

Commissioner Maxson led the discussion:

**Voice Over IP**

- Is a technology for transmitting sound or phone calls over a data network such as the Internet

- Many companies are offering this service to customers that have broadband connections
- To use voice over IP you need a router and a special phone adaptor that is plugged into the user's home network and telephone system
- The cost for the adaptor is well under \$100, some adaptors are able to switch between your local phone service and the service on your network
- Voice over IP service is between 15 to 30 dollars a month

#### **Differences between voice over IP and regular telephone**

- Many voice over IP's offer unlimited long-distance calling for a flat fee
- Almost all voice over IP offerings provide free call waiting, call return, three-way calling, call forwarding, voice mail, and caller ID
- Many voice over IP's provide virtual phone numbers and give access to on-line logging of your calls
- Voice over IP won't work without power, and typically your phone number will not be listed
- Voice over IP audio quality can be affected by broadband connection issues
- No 217 area codes available, will have a Chicago phone number for connection

#### **Many voice over IP companies to choose from**

- Packet 8
- Voice Pulse
- AT & T
- Vona
- Free World Dial-up

#### **Voice over IP's are not regulated like traditional telecommunication services**

- There are several petitions to the FCC that have yet to be decided
- FCC has already ruled that Free World Dial-up should be free of most federal regulation and it seems like that it will continue to be true

#### **Commission's Discussion**

Commissioner Silverman asked if people calling you would have to pay for a long distance call and how the system worked on multiple phones

Commissioner Maxson said that they would have to pay for a long-distance connection and that you could activate all the phones in your household with a single device

Commissioner Maxson stated that Cablevision has issued a product that works as a phone system over the cable, can have own area code, and 411 and 911 dialing works normally

Commissioner Maxson said that the service was fairly new and he wondered if Insight had any future plans to offer that kind of service

Commissioner Silverman stated that voice over IP's was part of the future for cable services and if consumers have too many choices it can become too complicated for them

to make an intelligent decision. He noted that he liked that it was not regulated, so that the marketplace can decide who survives and who does not

Chairman Atterberry asked about the potential financial impact for local communities that tax conventional telephone services

Commissioner Maxson said local municipalities currently could not tax voice over IP services

Commissioner Silverman said the cities receive a percentage of Insight's gross income, so if they added voice over IP's, he wondered if the revenue be added onto their gross income

Chairman Atterberry said that the process could become more complicated since cable modems are not subject to fees

Chairman Atterberry said that many emergency workers have expressed concern, since the product didn't work in a power outage

Commissioner Maxson stated that you could buy a device for your cell phone that would activate all of the phones in your house through the cell phones service

Commissioner Silverman was concerned that emergency services would not be able to pinpoint 911 calls made from cell phones

Jeff Hamilton of Champaign noted the City of Champaign installed a new phone system and every city facility is on the same system. The system is designed so that if a 9-1-1 call is placed, METCAD knows exactly what part of the building the call was made from

Commissioner Yagi noted that since Insight does not offer voice-over IP, people need to know that technical service may not be easy to come by

Commissioner Yagi added the infrastructure at the University of Illinois was not set-up to support voice-over IP. Cost and service issues will ultimately determine the U of I's decision to use it in the future

Commissioner Maxson added cable operator line sharing and the broadcast flag to the agenda for the regular meeting

Commissioner Yagi asked Insight if they had any plans to offer voice-over IP to customers

Art Symbersky with Insight said that telephony was in some of there systems but it was not being offered in Champaign-Urbana and he didn't know if, or when it would be

Commissioner Silverman asked if Insight could discuss the possibilities of getting Fox Sports Midwest on the Insight cable system at the next meeting

**ADJOURNAMENT**

Chairman Atterberry adjourned the meeting at 5:02 PM