

**CHAMPAIGN-URBANA CABLE TELEVISION AND  
TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
QUARTERLY MINUTES**

**DATE:** October 17, 2007  
4:30 p.m.

**PLACE:** Urbana City Council Chambers  
400 S. Vine St., Urbana, IL

<b>MEMBERS PRESENT:</b>	<b>CHAMPAIGN</b>	<b>URBANA</b>
	Rick Atterberry	Barbara Gladney
	Karen Walker	Durl Kruse
	Ken Pirok	Danielle Chynoweth

**PARKLAND**  
Tom McDonnell

**UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS**  
Stan Yagi

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Peter Resnick

**STAFF PRESENT:** Jeff Hamilton - City of Champaign  
Douglas Miller, Bill DeJarnette – Urbana

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Carl Caldwell – WILL-TV/UI-7  
Art Svymbersky – Insight Communications

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Atterberry called the meeting to order at 4:32 p.m.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Chair Atterberry asked Jeff Hamilton to note the attendance.

**3. MODIFICATIONS TO AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Agenda was approved as presented.

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the July 18, 2007, and August 15, 2007 minutes were approved as presented.

## **5. CORRESPONDENCE**

Correspondence was accepted as presented in the Commission's packet, including cable complaints, Insight notices, and notes in support of SCOLA.

## **6. OLD BUSINESS**

### **A. Annual PEG Report (UI-7)**

Carl Caldwell presented the UI-7 report to the Commission. He reported the budget problems have hindered the University's ability to increase local programming. His PEG Report includes a recommendation which he sent to the Chancellor to secure equipment and staff for UI-7. UI-7 has some new programming including weekly meetings of the Student Senate and monthly meetings of the faculty Senate. The Chancellor's office has not yet responded to Mr. Caldwell's proposal.

Commissioner Chynoweth asked what timeline is expected to process the proposal and what relation this has to the franchise renewal.

Mr. Caldwell responded that he cannot give a timeline. He said he needs to talk to the new Vice Chancellor and see if the proposal can be moved forward.

Commissioner Walker asked if there was a possibility of increasing student productions.

Mr. Caldwell reported that Broadcast students do newscasts now. He would like to expand this, but budget constraints had held this back. A limited number of production classes are offered at the UI. There is a lot of video content produced on campus and he hopes that a new video server would permit UI-7 to run more local programming.

Commissioner Chynoweth stated resources are needed for UI-7 and is disappointed that UI cannot identify those resources. She stated many campus presentations could be shared with the viewing audience and as we move forward in the franchise renewal, the Commission needs to collaborate with the UI to improve all our community channels. She said our PEG entities need to work together and share resources.

Mr. Caldwell advised 3 years ago, a detailed budget proposal was submitted to the UI to buy field equipment and hire staff to record campus presentations. That proposal was rejected. The University would be interested in collaborating, but perhaps another person should be contacted.

Commissioner Kruse stated that during the renewal, the cities need a direct line with the UI and asked who that would be.

Mr. Caldwell replied that he welcomes help from the Commission to push forward and try to get a financial commitment from the University to enhance UI-7. The new Vice-Chancellor for Outreach and Public Engagement would probably be a good start.

Chair Atterberry volunteered that after the needs assessment reports are complete, he will ask to meet and share the report with the UI.

Commissioner Yagi added he'd be happy to help as well. We should re-state the sense of urgency in helping UI-7 along.

Mr. Caldwell stated Channel 7 has been under used and is hopeful that progress can be made.

### **B. Cable Commission Annual Report**

Jeff Hamilton presented the Commission's annual report and stated that it had been sent to the Champaign City Council. The report summarizes the Commission's activities over the past year and also includes the annual PEG report.

### **C. Cable Transfer Update**

Mr. Hamilton informed the Commission that Champaign and Urbana had successfully negotiated cable franchise transfer agreements, which were subsequently approved by both City Councils. The signed agreement has not yet been received back from Comcast, so this remains an open issue.

Commissioner Gladney asked who drafted the transfer agreement. Mr. Hamilton responded that Brian Grogan (cable consultant) had created the document with help from both City staffs. The agreement was then negotiated with Comcast, which resulted in minor language changes.

Chair Atterberry asked for clarification on payment of the consultant's fees. Mr. Hamilton stated that early on, Comcast said they wouldn't pay for the City's legal fees related to the transfer, which the Cities argued was required by our current franchise agreement. Ultimately, Comcast agreed to pay for these fees.

Commissioner Gladney also stated that Comcast agreed to accept our community needs assessment report, which was completed during Insight's operation of the system.

### **D. Franchise Update**

Mr. Hamilton reported that the needs assessment process has been completed and that the Refranchising Committee is reviewing draft reports from the consultant. The Committee has requested a few corrections be made before the final report is accepted and made public. He stated that staff will request a November 14, 2007, special meeting of the Cable Commission so that Brian Grogan can present the reports and his findings directly to the Commission. This would be done before the reports are presented to the City Councils in mid-December.

Chair Atterberry stated that Mr. Hamilton had consulted with him regarding this schedule and that this will provide the Commission the opportunity to provide feedback to Council on the contents of the final report.

Commissioner Chynoweth asked if the Refranchising Committee is a committee of the Commission. Chair Atterberry answered that it is a City committee made up of staff from both cities and himself (as the Cable Commission's representative).

## **7. REPORTS**

### **A. Committee Reports**

There were no Committee Reports

### **B. Staff Reports**

#### *UPTV*

Douglass Miller stated that the City received 29 applications for the UPTV Station Manager position, of which 20 applicants met the civil service requirements. He said that they also received 46 applications for the UPTV Production Coordinator position, of which 36 applicants passed the civil service requirements.

He stated that UPTV as received new cameras available for Public Access use. He stated they recently received 112 hours of NASA educational programming they will soon schedule. UPTV has also ordered telephone hybrid equipment to help with Council meetings and live call-in shows.

#### *CGTV*

Mr. Hamilton stated that CGTV has hired a part-time, temporary intern. Dan Cramer will produce programming on City services and events. Mr. Cramer has already completed a CGTV promo and program on yard waste recycling. Several other programs are also being developed.

### **C. CATV System Operator Report**

Art Svymbersky presented Insight's quarterly report. He reported that August and September were again very busy. He pointed to a growth in digital customers too. He reviewed the customer service levels, and said the goals weren't met in August.

Chair Atterberry asked for an update on the Big 10 Network. Mr. Svymbersky advised that Comcast is negotiating this issue, not Insight. He said that Insight is passing along customer concerns to Comcast.

Commissioner Gladney questioned a cable complaint regarding two missed installation appointments. Mr. Svymbersky acknowledged the missed appointments and said he apologized to the customer and they addressed the problem right away.

Commissioner McDonnell asked if there were any plans to carry the NFL Network. Mr. Svymbersky replied that it's already on the digital tier.

Commissioner Rosales stated that Melody Brucker has been on TV a lot lately. Mr. Svymbersky advised Insight is marketing itself as a local firm and these promos help show that.

## 8. NEW BUSINESS

### A. Big 10 Network

Chair Atterberry stated that Mr. Svymbersky had just addressed this topic. He stated that at the NATOA Conference, he learned that Comcast, Cox, and the Big 10 Network don't appear to be making any progress. This could be a big local concern during Illinois basketball season.

### B. ACM Conference Report

Commissioner Kruse reported that he and Commissioner Chynoweth attended the Alliance for Community Media (ACM) Conference in Minneapolis. He provided some handouts and presented a PowerPoint show. He toured three PEG centers just before the conference. Two of these centers were run cooperatively by multiple communities. All three are non-profit organizations run by independent boards. Each rents their own office space, separate from government buildings. Each center has 14-17 full time and part time staff members with an annual budget of \$1 million - \$1.4 million. Each center runs multiple PEG Channels. They are funded by PEG fees, cable grants, franchise fees, etc. Each station stressed that good training classes are necessary and offered to members. Each station has a fully equipped mobile production truck as well.

Commissioner Kruse questioned why Champaign-Urbana cannot do this too, as our community has similar needs.

Commissioner Kruse reviewed cable TV revenue and subscriber costs and reported that Urbana residents only pay 7 cents a day more than Champaign residents. He also said that 1% of cable fees in Urbana adds up to \$57,000 and 1% of cable fees in Champaign totals \$121,000.

Commissioner Kruse presented some possible cable fee adjustments the cities could consider. He suggested both cities pay an equal percentage and generate \$445,000 per year to operate a joint public access channel. He provided a sample budget and reviewed possible management models. He also reviewed a number of positive benefits community TV center would create.

Commissioner Walker stated the report detail is impressive. She stated that she too had researched PEG channels in the past and found million dollar budgets were surprisingly common. She hopes we are aggressive during renewal and demand what we need to operate and improve our PEG channels.

Commissioner McDonald asked if these were single media centers running multiple PEG Channels combined, as opposed to separate facilities like in C-U. Commissioner Kruse said they are combined, but each community has to make that decision on its own.

Commissioner Chynoweth pointed out that government agencies do retain production staff to make sure government meetings and productions continue. They then feed their signal through the media center. She stated that collaboration is powerful and makes this work. Hundreds of volunteers help out and the community is behind the media centers.

### **C. NATOA Conference Report**

Commissioner Pirok highly recommended new Commission members attend the NATOA conference. He attended sessions on legislation and court rulings. Several NATOA panels stated that Illinois' state franchising legislation is better than that in most other states and protects the rights of municipalities and citizens. He stated that Illinois municipalities have good relationships with the State legislature, which probably helped. He stated that he hadn't realized that several municipalities have bad relationships with their state legislatures. He said that overall most municipalities seemed to have good relationships with Comcast. He stated that AT&T was not represented at the conference. He thanked the Commission for the opportunity to attend the conference.

Chair Atterberry also attended the conference and agreed that conference attendees were envious of the Illinois legislation. He said the unofficial theme of the conference appeared to be broadband deployment. He stated that municipalities have some friends in the Federal Trade Commission. There was no Illinois Comcast representative at the conference but he attended the session with Michigan representatives.

He also informed the Commission of a new billion dollar promotion campaign to educate the public about the conversion to digital broadcast television. He encouraged the Commission to address this again in the near future.

### **D. AT&T U-Verse Application**

Mr. Hamilton informed the Commission that the City of Champaign had received a copy of AT&T's application for a state cable franchise, indicating that AT&T has formally stated they intend to provide service in Champaign. Mr. Hamilton said he was unsure if Urbana had received a similar notice. Mr. Hamilton reviewed the status of the application to the ICC. He reported that the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) has found AT&T's application to be complete, but they had not yet taken action on the application. The ICC has until October 24, 2007 to act on the application. He said that once AT&T upgrades their system, they will have to provide the City with 10 days notice before they begin offering service. He stated that Champaign staff doesn't anticipate AT&T providing service anytime soon, but that the City will be updating its ROW ordinance in the near future, addressing issues like location, size, and landscaping of boxes in the ROW.

Chair Atterberry stated that in Chicago, AT&T has offered to reimburse the cities for putting up landscaping around the boxes. This could be a good opportunity for the cities.

Commissioner Yagi asked how much can be collected in franchise fees from AT&T. Mr. Hamilton answered the franchise fee will be the same as that paid by the incumbent cable operator.

Commissioner McDonnell asked if UPTV would be carried on AT&T's system – especially if they only build out in Champaign. Mr. Hamilton replied that this would have to be researched. Chair Atterberry said that could be a question for our consultant to consider.

## **E. Creation of the Broadband Access Committee**

Commissioner Chynoweth moved to establish a Broadband Access Committee, tasked with researching broadband planning and policies. The Committee would provide answers to the following questions:

- What should our broadband access goals in the twin cities be?
- What are the challenges to broadband access in CU?
- What is the current broadband infrastructure in CU?
- How well is the current infrastructure meeting our goals?
- What are the alternative models to meet our goals?
- What is the preferred model for the cities to meet our broadband access goals?

Motion seconded by Commissioner Yagi. Motion passed unanimously.

Chair Atterberry asked Commissioners Chynoweth and Resnick to co-chair the Committee for now and come back with a suggested membership in January.

## **9. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

There was no audience participation.

## **10. COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS**

Commissioner McDonnell informed the Commission that he will moderate a panel discussion at Broadcast Educators on the impact of cable franchising legislation on education access channels. The panel will be in Las Vegas next April.

Mr. Hamilton asked if the Commission had set a Study Session topic for January. Commissioner Gladney said that they may need the study session to discuss the cable refranchising. Chair Atterberry agreed and offered that he might do a presentation on the analog to digital conversion at the April Study Session meeting.

## **11. SET FUTURE MEETING DATE AND ADJOURNMENT**

A special meeting was scheduled for November 14, 2007 at 4:00 p.m. in Champaign. The next study session was scheduled for January 9, 2008 at 4:00 p.m. in Champaign. The next regular meeting was scheduled for January 16, 2008 at 4:30 p.m. in Urbana.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:12 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeff Hamilton  
Telecommunications AV Technician  
City of Champaign