

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

**DATE:** October 21, 2009  
4:00 PM

**PLACE:** Urbana City Council Chambers  
400 South Vine Street, Urbana, IL

<b>MEMBERS PRESENT:</b>	<b>CHAMPAIGN</b>	<b>URBANA</b>
	Rick Atterberry Karen Walker Giraldo Rosales	Durl Kruse Peter Resnick David Gehrig Barbara Gladney
	<b>PARKLAND</b>	<b>UNIVERSITY of ILLINOIS</b>
	Chris Foster	Kate Brickman

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Kyle Harrison

**STAFF PRESENT:** Jeff Hamilton – City of Champaign  
Kate Gorman – City of Urbana

<b>OTHERS PRESENT:</b>	<b>COMCAST</b>	<b>AT&amp;T</b>
	Melody Brucker	John Quinn
	Art Svymbersky	Mike Cunningham
	Jim Lee	

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Chair Atterberry asked Kate Gorman to note the attendance.

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

The agenda was approved as presented.

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Minutes from the Regular Quarterly Meeting of July 8<sup>th</sup> were approved as presented.

**5. CORRESPONDENCE**

Jeff Hamilton presented information about the Community Access Preservation Act (CAP Act) that was presented in the US House of Representatives on October 7, 2009. Mr. Hamilton notified the Commission that Champaign Council has extended the franchise negotiations with

Comcast until the negotiations are completed. There were notices from Comcast, including a notice of a price increase for Basic Service, notification of a Customer Guarantee, as well as an updated list of the channels provided. Mr. Hamilton reported that Champaign received 16 cable complaints for Comcast in the last quarter, and Urbana received 6.

## **6. OLD BUSINESS**

### **A. Franchise Renewal**

Chair Atterberry stated that he believed with the new Resolution in Champaign that the pace of the negotiations would pick up. Mr. Hamilton recapped that Champaign had reviewed the formal response of Comcast to the negotiations, and that after the City rejected the offer. Comcast has requested an administrative hearing to assess if the needs of the franchise are met by their offer. Commissioner Gehrig stated that the City of Urbana had extended the franchise negotiations for another 6 months at the October 19<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting.

### **B. PEG Marketing**

Commissioner Walker stated that most of the cucabletv.com website was up and working, however the designer had been experiencing problems with pulling in the scheduling feeds for each station. The project has gone over budget, and the designer needs an additional \$800-\$900 for the work completed so far. Commissioner Walker recommended a single entity take responsibility for maintaining the website. Commissioner Foster stated he has the ability to do basic HTML, and while he is less familiar with more complicated problems, he would be willing to help with the site. Discussion ensued. Mr. Hamilton stated there was \$1500 in the Commission budget which could cover the costs. Chair Atterberry made a motion to designate the necessary funds to pay the web developer. He asked that Commissioner Walker work with the PEG coordinators to finish the site development.

### **C. AT&T U-verse**

Mr. Hamilton stated that CGTV, UPTV and PCTV are now available on U-verse. Commissioner Brickman stated that UI-7 has received approval to give the necessary access to AT&T technicians and she anticipates UI-7 will be available on U-verse by November 2<sup>nd</sup>. Mr. Hamilton stated that a connection between Comcast and AT&T was still needed to make programming from other origination sites (like School Board meetings) available on the U-verse feed, but that issue would probably need to be worked out at the state level by AT&T and Comcast.

## **7. REPORTS**

### **A. Committee Reports**

No report.

### **B. Staff Reports**

#### Urbana

Ms. Gorman reported that UPTV had begun making new studio equipment purchases for furniture, lighting and set backdrops in the new fiscal year. U-verse was installed at UPTV and

went online September 28<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Gorman attended the Alliance for Community Media (ACM) conference in Portland, Oregon July 14<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>. While there, she presented on two panels, one discussing Drupal for Community Media Centers and the other discussing the advances made with the Open Media Project. Ms. Gorman also announced that she would be leaving UPTV to relocate to Washington, D.C. effective October 28<sup>th</sup>.

### Champaign

Mr. Hamilton reported he had been very busy with the formal process of the cable renewal as well as the Broadband Access Committee. CGTV had produced several new shows this quarter including the Champaign-Urbana International Humanitarian Awards, a Fire Department video, and new episodes of *Champaign Connection*. Mr. Hamilton also attended the ACM Conference in Portland, as well as the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors Conference (NATOA) in New Orleans, Louisiana. Mr. Hamilton stated that the Commission's annual memberships for ACM, IL-NATOA, and NATOA were coming due soon, and that the Commissioners should contact him if they had any concerns about renewing those memberships.

### C. System Operator Reports

#### Comcast

Art Svymbersky stated that Comcast has created a new Family Tier of programming making an entry-level digital package that contains family oriented programming in addition to the basic digital package.

Commissioner Rosales asked when the channels would stop floating around so that customers could reliably find the programs they wanted. Melody Brucker responded that Comcast was trying to stabilize the channels, but with additions like the Family Tier, adjustments would need to be made occasionally in the channels' locations.

Commissioner Brickman stated that they had received complaints about the low audio level of a particular satellite feed that UI-7 rebroadcasts live. The feed's audio seemed to be sent out at the correct level from UI-7. Jim Lee stated that the problem may be a change in the input modularity of the feed, and he would come by and check the situation.

Commissioner Peter Resnick asked for clarification on the two separate prices listed for Expanded Basic. Mr. Svymbersky stated that the lower price was a package that Comcast no longer offers, but still lists because many customers were grandfathered in and still use that package.

Commissioner Walker stated a concern about the regular erosion of channels from the Expanded Basic package. Mr. Svymbersky and Ms. Brucker stated that Comcast has a commitment to offer Expanded Basic as long as customers continue to want the package. However, Comcast is focusing on providing digital packages and as digital additions continue, Comcast may no longer offer the analog Expanded Basic to new customers.

Commissioner Walker asked if there was any way to correct the 7-second delay between the cablecast and the radio broadcast of sports programs. Mr. Svymbersky stated that the 7-second delay was standard and could not be altered.

Commissioner Resnick asked when the channel listing is stabilized if a general guide to the channels would be provided to customers with a digital converter box. Mr. Lee stated there were no plans for Comcast to provide a list as a "channel", but that the local office would look into creating a printed document for customers to use.

Commissioner Gladney stated that many customers were unhappy that CSPAN2 was removed from the Basic tier, and wanted to know the process for deciding what channels are removed. Ms. Brucker stated that research is conducted to decide what channels are removed. She added that Basic customers may receive CSPAN2 with a box for an additional \$1.38 a month.

Commissioner Rosales asked how Comcast is helping the 22 employees that Comcast downsized at the local office. Ms. Brucker stated that while the call center positions were closed, employees were offered positions in the door-to-door area, and many employees did relocate. The Urbana office still employs 86 people and there are no plans to close the office.

Chair Atterberry stated the Big Ten Network had a problem with a delay in returning to the programming after local commercial breaks. Often, the delay resulted in missing the first few moments of play. Mr. Lee stated he would look into the timing problem.

Chair Atterberry asked about further information concerning a new small digital box. Ms. Brucker stated that the small digital boxes were with a service called the World and More. This service will eventually be coming to C-U and she stated that customers would be notified about this as soon as it was available. Ms. Brucker did not know if Expanded Basic would be removed when the World and More was launched.

#### AT&T

John Quinn stated that U-verse launched in Champaign, Urbana and Savoy in June 2009. Recently, AT&T made new interactive services available for children's programming and sports programming. The menu system for PEG programming has also improved, reducing the amount of time to load the programs.

Commissioner Rosales asked how many more boxes AT&T would be installing in the rights-of-way around C-U. Mr. Quinn stated he could not provide numbers on how many more would be installed, but there were 60 to 70 in the C-U area currently.

Commissioner Rosales asked when AT&T was planning on expanding service to the northern neighborhoods. Mr. Quinn stated that AT&T would build out when infrastructure and capital became available.

Commissioner Resnick asked what hardware U-verse required inside the home and if PEG programming could be recorded on AT&T's DVR. Mr. Quinn stated that each television

required its own box and the provided DVR did not record PEG programming. He said it was possible to record PEG programs with a VCR connected to the box.

Commissioner Rosales stated that on a recent AT&T bill, he was charged for services provided by a third (unknown) company. Mr. Quinn stated that with long distance charges a third party vendor can be listed, but that he would check into Commissioner Rosales' particular situation.

## **8. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Big Broadband Proposal**

Commissioner Resnick reported that UC2B's proposal for stimulus money was submitted last month, and they had recently been informed that the State of Illinois had approved 10% matching funds for the project if UC2B is funded on the federal level. Also, the State of Illinois has issued recommendations for 18 of the 130 proposals, and UC2B was one of those recommended for federal funding. If UC2B moves on to the next round, they could only have 7 days to answer any questions regarding our proposal. Commissioner Resnick stated that they had received good feedback from the community, and that the Broadband Access Committee would continue to explore C-U's options for broadband expansion, even if the federal money did not come through. Commissioner Gerhig stated that both Urbana and Champaign had agreed to pay a consultant to research various economic models for broadband in C-U. Commissioner Resnick stated that Urbana, Champaign and the University of Illinois have set up an intergovernmental agreement to organize a governing board if UC2B receives funding. He reported that [cuopenaccess.org](http://cuopenaccess.org) has a great deal of information about the process so far, and is a good resource for the community. Mr. Hamilton stated that all of the minutes from the BAC meetings and the complete proposal are available on the City of Champaign's website. Ms. Gorman stated that all four community forums held by the BAC are available for viewing on UPTV's website [urbanapublictelevision.org](http://urbanapublictelevision.org).

### **B. 2009 NATOA Conference**

Mr. Hamilton and Chair Atterberry attended the conference in New Orleans in September. Mr. Hamilton stated that the members spoke a great deal about the importance of social media, how telecommunications would change under the Obama Administration, and the need for municipal broadband. One of the more informative sessions was a tour of Lafayette, LA, which demonstrated how their city is creating a municipally owned and operated fiber-to-the-home broadband system. Lafayette considers itself the 9<sup>th</sup> most conservative city in the country and is about the same size as C-U. Lafayette reported they are building fiber-to-the-home because the local telecom/cable companies won't.

## **9. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

There was no audience participation.

## **10. COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS**

Commissioner Foster stated that a documentary created at PCTV had been nominated for a local Cable ACE Award. Mr. Hamilton stated that CGTV's Champaign Connection had received honorable mention at this year's NATOA Conference. Commissioner Gladney commended UI-7 for its improvement in programming over the last year.

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

The next Study Session was set for January 13<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m. in the Champaign Council Chambers. Commissioner Resnick volunteered to give a detailed presentation about the UC2B project. The next Quarterly Meeting was set for January 20<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m. in the Urbana Council Chambers.

The meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

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