

URBANA PUBLIC TELEVISION COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

February 9, 2000

MEMBERS PRESENT: UPTV Commission Members:
Ms. Barbara Gladney, Ms. Carolyn Kearns, Ms. Dana Mancuso , Dr. John Peterson

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ms. Angie Kingdon

OTHERS PRESENT: Ms. Amy Rose, UPTV Coordinator; Tom O'Rourke, CU Cable and Telecommunications Commission

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Gladney at 8:00 a.m.

SURVEY RESULTS:

Mr. O'Rourke explained some of the findings from the survey results. He stated with such a low response rate the analysis really just identifies some trends. The results show most people are aware of the access channel. However, awareness of the channel has no correlation to any of the other issues. Many respondents never watched or only watched sporadically. City Council and School Board meetings are the most watched programs. There was some support for more educational seminars and local sports programming. The majority of people are not interested in submitting tapes, but there are a few. A majority of respondents supported public facilities; however, only a few indicated they would use them.

There were many indications that respondents thoroughly read the survey. None of the results showed any significant correlation with age or gender of the respondent. Paying a 50 cent per month fee did not seem to affect viewing or be a problem with the respondents.

Ms. Gladney stated she thought there was interest in the bulletin board, because she gets phone calls from people wanting to put announcements on it. Ms. Rose added she often gets positive feedback from users about people saying they saw their announcement on UPTV.

Ms. Kearns stated it may not seem like there is a lot of viewership for UPTV, but there would be opposition if it were taken off the cable system.

Ms. Gladney stated a benefit of the survey was to also make more people aware of UPTV and what it has to offer.

Dr. Peterson said many people tell him they have seen him on television.

Mr. O'Rourke suggested approaching more organizations to join UPTV and submit programming. They are the most potential users.

Ms. Gladney stated it would be a good idea for Ms. Rose or others to approach organizations about making a presentation explaining UPTV to their local non-profit group. She also suggested using one free use of the Council Chambers as an incentive to get a group started.

Ms. Kearns said the Commission needs to be mindful of the effects this might have on the budget and staff time.

Ms. Gladney said she thought the biggest barrier was awareness of what is available and how easy producing a program could be.

Ms. Rose also distributed a summary of answers to the survey question about what would make UPTV more beneficial. She reported that the cover letter was printed on City letterhead and signed by the Mayor to lend credibility.

Ms. Gladney suggested reporting the finding to the Joint Champaign-Urbana Cable and Telecommunications Commission. She hopes this would encourage Champaign to also conduct a survey for their access channel.

Mr. O'Rourke stated the response rate for the first mailing was actually pretty good. A follow-up call or mailing would have produced some more responses. Ms. Rose explained that the surveys were mailed by the cable company and she was unsure of how cooperative they would be to participate in any follow-up mailings.

Ms. Gladney stated she thought the Commission should try to get some press coverage on the survey results.

Ms. Kearns stated we should be careful about how this is released. In her opinion, the press seems to accentuate the negative aspects.

Ms. Rose said she would be more comfortable if the results had been more overwhelmingly in favor of the channel and its programming. There are some positive indications in the survey results, but everything is opened to negative interpretation.

Ms. Mancuso stated a better story would be if the survey results prompted the Commission to take a specific action. If this is not the case, it should probably not be used as a press release.

UPTV UPDATE

Ms. Rose distributed a new policy and procedures book. The new book contains a check-out procedure for the field equipment and forms for use of the Council Chambers. There were no changes to government member policies.

Ms. Rose summarized some of the options available to UPTV for future development. She also reported that during discussion with Melody Brucker, AT&T Cable Services, they had talked about the possibility of using the former studio space at the AT&T offices for PEG access. Since this discussion, the studio has been converted into a regional training center for customer service.

Ms. Rose reported she was expecting delivery on a new non-linear editing system, the Casablanca. It is a self-contained digital non-linear editing system, which will enhance UPTV's program production.

Ms. Kearns stated she had spoken with the Mayor about the appointment of a new Urbana Cable Commissioner. Mayor Satterthwaite has interviewed a couple of candidates, but has not made a final decision.

Ms. Rose stated she would check into the possibility of offering one free program from the Council Chambers to new UPTV members. She added that we would want to make sure they organize a special event, instead of just televising a regular meeting. There is also the issue of creating subsequent programs and not just the free one. She also suggested contacting current bulletin board users to get more involved.

Ms. Rose stated she will develop and mail an informational flyer and a cover letter explaining UPTV to Champaign-Urbana non-profit organizations. This would include an offer to attend a meeting and make a presentation to interested groups.

The Commission discussed possible ways to increase public access participation.

The meeting was adjourned 9:15 a.m.

Next meeting was set for Wednesday, May 17th at 8 a.m.