

IOWA CITY TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

DRAFT

MONDAY, MAY 24, 2010--5:30 P.M.

CITY CABLE TV OFFICE, 10 S. LINN ST.-TOWER PLACE PARKING FACILITY

MEMBERS PRESENT: Laura Bergus, Hans Hoerschelman, Saul Mekies, Gary Hagen

MEMBERS ABSENT: Robert Kemp

STAFF PRESENT: Mike Brau, Bob Hardy

OTHERS PRESENT: Josh Goding, Lee Grassley, Michael McBride

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CITY COUNCIL

None at this time.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Grassley reported that transmissions in central Iowa are now all digital. Subscribers who need a digital to analog converter are given one free of charge. If they need an additional converter, a rental charge applies. Less than 15% of subscribers require assistance from a technician to install the converter. Subscribers who previously had a converter and were paying a rental fee will no longer be assessed the fee. When the Iowa City area converts to all digital transmission the access channels will remain in their present position. Grassley said that the customer service office on Gilbert Street will be moved to Mediacom's Southgate facility due, in part, to a recent robbery. The public will be notified on their bills and by a newspaper ad. DOCSIS 3.0 Internet service is available and a marketing campaign will begin in June or July. Hardy said the schools appear to be responding to the initiative to assist the schools develop more programming. Funds are available from the local programming fund to help with equipment purchases, if needed. Mekies said the years of efforts by the Commission are paying off. It appears the obstacles to progress have been removed. Hoerschelman said the Commission should assess progress in August.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mekies moved and Bergus seconded a motion to approve the April 26, 2010 minutes as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

ANNOUNCEMENTS OF COMMISSIONERS

Hagen said he watched a lot of local access television while in the hospital and was impressed with the quality.

SHORT PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

CONSUMER ISSUES

Hardy referred to the complaint report in the meeting packet and said that all complaints had been resolved. Mekies noted that complaints about Internet speeds have been common.

MEDIACOM REPORT

Grassley reported that transmissions in central Iowa are now all digital. Subscribers who need a digital to analog converter are given one free of charge. If they need an additional converter, a rental charge applies. Less than 15% of subscribers require assistance from a technician to install the converter. Subscribers who previously had a converter and were paying a rental fee will no longer be assessed the fee. When the Iowa City area converts to all digital transmission the access channels will remain in their present position. Mekies asked about the announced rate increases for some services in light of the fact that inflation is near zero. Grassley said part of the need for increased revenue is to retain and hire highly skilled employees and the costs imposed on Mediacom by other companies for programming costs and other services. Grassley said that actual costs to many subscribers is well below the listed retail cost due to the discounts given for bundled services. Bundled service packages now extend for two years. Mekies noted that the increased rates are for high-end services that subscribers can avoid if they wish. Grassley said that the customer service office on Gilbert Street will be moved to Mediacom's Southgate facility due, in part, to a recent robbery. The public will be notified on their bills and by a newspaper ad. Grassley said that Mediacom has produced a four-minute psa on the conversion to digital transmission. Hardy said the City Channel would be glad to cablecast it when the time comes. Grassley said Mediacom's phone service will be provided in-house by the end of the year. DOCSIS 3.0 Internet service is available and a marketing campaign will begin in June or July. Hoerschelman noted that the FCC is looking at the language used by cable operators advertising their cable modem service speeds as "up to" a certain level and asked if Mediacom is considering changing their ads. Grassley said Mediacom will wait for guidelines from the FCC.

UNIVERSITY OF IOWA REPORT

McBride reported that nine of the ten commencement ceremonies have been shot and are on the air. The last commencement will be shot next week. During the summer staff development will be priority. Developing playback redundancy is in the works.

KIRKWOOD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Kirkwood provided a written report.

PATV REPORT

Goding reported PATV experienced some playback problems related to power outages. The psa supplied to Mediacom for playback has produced good results and generated a large number of intern applicants. The next guidelines workshop will be June 6 at 2:30 p.m. Other workshops

are by appointment. PATV's website has been redesigned. Among the planned productions is Arts Fest, Jazz Fest, and Trek Fest. Plans to upgrade to a digital playback system are under way and will likely be in place by the end of the year. The board of directors will meet June 17 at 7 p.m.

SENIOR CENTER REPORT

No representative was present. Hardy said Susan Rogusky has opted for early retirement.

LIBRARY REPORT

No representative was present.

ICCSO REPORT

Hoyland provided a written report. Hardy said the initiative to assist the schools develop more programming is working well.

CITY CHANNEL REPORT

Hardy reported that the City Channel's web streaming offerings are available on an iPhone and an audio-only option has also been made available. The Community Television Service recently recorded a program for United Action for Youth and the annual awards ceremony for the Alliance for Retarded Citizens. The Friday Night Concert Series is again being recorded. The new IC People program will feature tree surgeon Seth Bihun and Susan Mimms will be on At Home. New Community Voice shorts feature the Regeneration Factory and the Iowa Dance Festival. In the past month 14 public meetings were recorded. Other new programs include the Johnson County Urbanized Area Board, the Youth Human Rights Award ceremony, and Police Beat, the new program for the police department. Five candidates made use of the Meet the Candidate program.

EQUIPMENT CHARGES

Hardy reported that a letter was sent to Mediacom inquiring about charges for converter boxes. Mediacom responded and clarified that the charge includes a remote control and was within the maximum permitted rate.

STATE LEGISLATION

Hardy said he has asked the legal department to determine if Iowa City would be protected from losing its municipal franchise if a competitor indicates an intent to provide service.

ICCSO PROGRAMMING SUPPORT

Hardy said the schools appear to be responding to the initiative to assist the schools develop more programming. Funds are available from the local programming fund to help with

equipment purchases, if needed. Mekies said the years of efforts by the Commission are paying off. It appears the obstacles to progress have been removed. Hoerschelman said the Commission should assess progress in August.

ADJOURNMENT

Mekies moved and Bergus seconded a motion to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:28.

Michael Brau
Cable TV Administrative Aide