

**City of Lincoln  
Telecommunications/Cable Television Advisory Board  
Meeting Minutes – June 4, 2015**

**Members Present:** Paul Barnett, Andy Beecham, Steve Egglund, Jim Johnson, Laurie Thomas Lee, Helen Meeks, John Neal, Art Zygielbaum

**City Staff:** Diane Gonzales, Steve Huggenberger, Jamie Wenz, David Young

**Time Warner Cable and authorized representatives:** Bill Austin, Robert Deck, Jared Falk, Tyler Hedrick

**Windstream and authorized representatives:** Kevin Fish, Brad Hedrick

**Call to Order**

Meeting was called to order at 4:00 pm by vice-chair Art Zygielbaum. Zygielbaum made note of the copy of the Open Meetings Act at the back of the room. Board members and guests introduced themselves.

**Membership**

Helen Meeks has been appointed to the board; she is filling a position which is scheduled to expire next month but she will be reappointed to a three-year term. Linda Jewson has retired from the board, leaving two vacancies. Rebecca Henderson has been nominated by the Mayor and is currently undergoing Council consideration.

**Minutes**

Minutes from the January 22 meeting were presented. Paul Barnett moved approval, Laurie Thomas Lee seconded; motion passed 8-0.

**Old Business**

***Update on Time Warner merger/ownership***

Steve Huggenberger said that under old business the current state of the merger is probably not what we had expected when we had discussed merger plans earlier.

Jarad Falk reported that the new plan is for Charter Communications, Time-Warner Cable, and Brighthouse Networks to merge into a single company. He cautioned that the remainder of his presentation is from information that he has read in the media, and he doesn't have any information other than the media. Charter hopes to offer faster service and lower prices than TWC does. Charter has indicated they will not offer modem fees. They plan to support digitalization of the service, going all-digital. There should be fewer concerns with this merger than the Comcast merger, as Charter is a smaller company and they don't have the programming resources that Comcast had.

There was a question asked for Steve Huggenberger: Would we expect to go through the same process with this merger as we did with Comcast. Huggenberger said yes; some of the items would carry over but we would probably want to review the previous document.

**New Business**

***Creation of online form for complaints:***

Gonzolas said that item was added due to an email conversation among board members. Beecham and Neal volunteered to help set up the form. Jarad Falk from TWC expressed willingness to work with us; we will be glad to invite both providers.

***Fiber subcommittee***

Zygielbaum reported that the committee is moving forward but there is a lot more to do.

**Time Warner Cable report**

Tyler Hedrick distributed his report. They are getting new interest in the public access studio.

Jarad Falk reported that there is a new channel lineup. They are trying to line up channels above 99 by genre. Channels below 99 are

being left in the same location. Falk reported that TWC and Windstream have worked out a deal to share the cost of their public access studio on a pro rata basis.

Laurie Thomas Lee asked if DVRs adapt to channel changes. Falk didn't know, but Tyler Hedrick said he has the service at home and that it has worked fine for him.

### **Windstream report**

Brad Hedrick reported on Windstream Kinetic service. The service launched on April 15. They have worked out a deal for the PEG channels. The service is fully e-commerce enabled. They are taking walk-in customers at 1440 M Street; there is a call center and sales agents. Multimedia advertising began in May and continues in June.

Responding to a question that had been asked at the last Telecommunications/Cable Television Advisory Board meeting, Hedrick said that the Windstream position on municipal/public networks is that Windstream believes that Lincoln doesn't need them. They believe that there are already multiple privately owned telecommunications companies providing Lincoln with services. Windstream also believes that municipal/public networks are a bad idea

Hedrick reported on the next new service coming to Lincoln: WInterstate (W-Interstate). This will be a long haul fiber optic based transport network, providing up to 80 individual 100 GB service. There is already a connection from Omaha to Lincoln; they will build that up. Huggenberger asked if this would be limited to cable subscribers. Hedrick said that if a business customer wants a 100 GB cycle WS could supply it. The system will use VDSL2 and bonding, with DSL technology. It was described in a FierceTelecom article of February 27, 2015. Windstream will be doing internal user testing on VDSL2 Bonding later this month, with public launch in late August or September. The State of Nebraska and University of Nebraska already have the 10 GB service; there are other large companies but FCC regulations don't allow Hedrick to name them. He says that the Windstream CEO has said that we're ready to deliver 1 GBS FTTP service WS has deployed fiber to the premise (home) in 14 subdivisions and 2 apartment complexes.

Beecham commented that he hopes WS is able to work with "brownfield" as well as "greenfield" developments; by brownfield he means existing development, greenfield is new development.

Laurie Thomas Lee asked if customers would be able to find out immediately whether they can get the service. Hedrick said yes.

Young asked if the 1 GB service would be available anytime soon. Hedrick said yes, by the end of this year.

### **City Report:**

Wenz distributed the PEG report. The hours of new programming are up a little but that's largely due to the delay in scheduling of the committee meeting. Wenz is working with Windstream on getting the connection to 5CityTV. The City would like a connection here so they can monitor for outages etc. Brad Hedrick said that WS will work with the City to get that in place.

5CityTV is working to provide nightly coverage of the State Games of America, end of July and first couple days of August. This will run on the Health & Wellness channel as well as 5CityTV. Anchor talent will be provided by Gray TV; University students will be helping.

Wenz also pointed out that for the second school year in a row they did live broadcast of the University's graduation.

### **Public Comments**

In the absence of any members of the public who wanted to make comments, Laurie Thomas Lee wanted to bring up something. She said that the FCC has taken away local franchise ability to take away the "basic" television rights. Also there was a discussion about different rates in the same viewing area; she hopes that doesn't mean that there would be different rates in different communities. She is not too concerned about it but wanted to bring it up. Meeks is also not too concerned. Huggenberger says that TWC had argued that there was effective competition in Lincoln and it was removed several years ago, so it doesn't apply here anyway.

### **Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jim Johnson, secretary