

City of Lincoln
Telecommunications/Cable Television Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes – December 1, 2016

Members Present: Steve Egglund, Rebecca Henderson, Ed Hoffman, Jim Johnson, Laurie Thomas Lee, Helen Meeks

Members Absent (excused): Trent Fellers, John Neal, Art Zygielbaum

City Staff: Diane Gonzolas, Steve Huggenberger, Jamie Wenz, David Young

Allo/NelNet: Brad Moline, Ben Kiser

Charter/Spectrum: Jarad Falk, Tyler Hedrick

WindStream/Kinetic: Scott Barnett, Brad Hedrick

Other: Kate Engel (Nebraska Innovation Campus), Nancy Hicks (Lincoln Journal-Star)

Call to Order

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

Hoffman noted that Paul Barnett has resigned from the board, leaving a second vacancy. The Mayor has appointed Kate Engel to the board, but the appointment is awaiting approval by the City Council.

Review of Agenda

Agenda was presented. Hoffman mentioned a request to have Items 9 and 10 (Charter/Spectrum report and City report) moved earlier in the agenda to just after Item 4 (Old Business), to accommodate a schedule issue for one of the participants. Lee moved approval of the agenda with that modification, Henderson seconded, motion passed 6-0.

Minutes

Minutes of the August 25 meeting were presented. Egglund moved approval; Lee seconded; motion passed 6-0.

Old Business

Revision of Bylaws

Huggenberger has worked on draft changes.

Board members were given an opportunity to read through the tracked copy of the changes.

Hoffman asked Huggenberger, regarding the removal of paragraph (e) and the modifications to paragraph (d) and (F), to say something about why these changes were being proposed. Huggenberger said that the changes were made due to the modification of board duties made by the City Council when we transitioned from the Cable Advisory Board the Telecommunications/Cable Advisory Board. Item (e) was removed because that duty had previously been given to Time-Warner Cable (now Charter/Spectrum).

Lee said that the franchise requires franchisees to provide those channels; we don't want to give up oversight. Huggenberger said that we are not giving up the oversight, just the rules governing the channels. Lee still wondered if this allows us to have oversight on public access. Hoffman said that we could add in text that would give us advisory power over public access. Huggenberger said that the City has never given TCTAB oversight over the access rules. Meeks asked Lee if paragraphs (d) and (f) would be enough to allow for the oversight that she thinks we need. Huggenberger still thinks that if Charter/Spectrum wants to change the rules they would have to bring them to the board. Huggenberger said that it may be appropriate for the board to look at the rules at some point and see if they're still appropriate, and perhaps allow other providers to weigh in on this.

Hoffman led discussion on the specific changes.

Meeks commented that we need to add a comma before "and wireless services" in item (f); board members agreed.

Meeks said that in Article III section 3, the phrase "by appointment of the Mayor" is redundant because that sentence begins with "Appointments"; she recommended we just change it to read "by the Mayor". Consensus was to make the change.

Hoffman moved to approve the document as amended; Johnson seconded, motion passed 6-0.

Internet Provider Speeds

Hoffman asked that we put off discussion regarding David Young's research on Internet Provider speeds until the January meeting.

City report

Jamie Wenz provided a written City Access Channel report. He said that all servers in the 5CityTV studio have been switched to HD output. We are still down-converting our feed to Charter/Spectrum, but the website version and other streaming is HD. It can be watched on the Facebook and YouTube channels. Allo has installed equipment so that the channels are up and running, that will be covered in more detail during the Allo report.

Jacob Imig has moved from the City to the Access Studio.

Gonzolas said regarding a question that had come up at last meeting about backup power for the studio that they have checked into it with the Public Building Commission, and PBC had told them that there is an arrangement to have backup power in the case of an emergency.

Hoffman thinks that we could talk to LPS about programming local sports. Perhaps we can discuss at the next meeting; John Neal may want to weigh in on it.

Gonzolas said regarding promotion of the PEG channels that she is working on a strategic communication plan with the city; the PEG channels could be part of that. She will try to put together a short presentation for the January meeting.

Charter/Spectrum report (Access studio)

Tyler Hedrick distributed a written report on the Access Studio activities. He said that there was nothing out of the ordinary during the reporting period.

New Business

Hoffman suggested that we should send a letter to the UNL Journalism department thanking them for the product they put out. Lee said that the correct name is the College of Journalism and Mass Communications, and the appropriate recipient of a letter would be the Dean of the College. There was consensus that we should send it.

Subcommittee Reports

Online complaint form

No report at this time.

ALLO nonprofits and wifi zones

No report at this time.

Website Review

Gonzolas said that the information on the website is current; committee will need to meet to discuss the structure.

Windstream/Kinetic report

Brad Hedrick reported that their products continue to be very well received. The GFast service provides very fast broadband services to citizens in Lincoln. For apartment complexes, they take fiber to the outside of an apartment complex; then from there they connect to individual apartments. Up to 925 MB service for the individual apartments. This has been tested at Skyline Apts near 14th & Old Cheney, will roll out to a different complex next week up in the Highlands. Hedrick said that if we look at the 100,000 households in Lincoln, about 60,000 are single family, and 40,000 multiple unit apartments.

Hoffman asked if Windstream/Kinetic is doing Triple Play; Hedrick said yes.

Allo report

Brad Moline reported for Allo. He introduced Ben Kiser from NelNet, which is partnering with Allo to get this going.

Moline said that the Public Access channel is now available in HD on their channels. The easiest to get channels are in HD, others are SD. All channels are available to everyone, regardless of whether their TV is SD or HD.

They had an open house at their new office in the Telegraph District. Moline is excited that there will be about 1000 people working on that corner in June 2017. (That number includes both NelNet and ALLO.) They continue to add customers; getting a great response. They will not be changing cable pricing this year.

Hoffman asked how the rollout is going. Moline said that they will be finishing Lincoln much faster than they had projected. There was a time in the summer that they had a locate problem, but they've caught up. They are getting a lot of service into downtown. They're sticking to a rollout plan in order to ensure quality. Moline said that reception is terrific; he hasn't heard of any churn yet. He said that it's turning the tables from "what can I do with this bandwidth" to "what can I do with my excess bandwidth." He lives near

the Railyard and when he goes out to the venues there he has heard nothing but good comments about the service from people when they see his ALLO shirt. He said it feels like ALLO has been working on this for his entire career, but ALLO hasn't even reached their first anniversary in Lincoln.

Charter/Spectrum report

Jarad Falk reported on Charter/Spectrum. The name was changed to Spectrum on November 15. Customers in Lincoln area have the ability to switch to the new pricing. Three products: Internet, Phone, Video.

Base Internet speed is 60 MB, bumps up to 100 MB.

Hoffman: asked about the email that the board had received from a customer regarding lower tier service. Falk said that the lower tier is still available; they don't advertise it well.

Falk believes that Charter is priced pretty well; they are still going through an integration process in Nebraska.

Hoffman said that last time we talked about this there were about 250 Nebraska employees, and asked if that has changed. Falk said that if anything, he believes that there will be more local employees under Spectrum. Lee asked if the Call Center will stay here; Falk said he believes so. Henderson asked if the speed is available everywhere, or just parts of the city. Falk said that it applies everywhere. Henderson asked if there is a fee to switch tiers, other than the obvious price differences. Falk said he doesn't think so.

Public Comments

None.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m. Next meeting will be January 26, 2017,

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Johnson, secretary