

**CITY OF LINCOLN**  
**Cable TV Advisory Board Minutes**  
**April 29, 2010**

**Members Present:** Mary Herres, Laurie Lee, Jerrod Jaeger, Jim Johnson, Stuart Long, Jon Rehm, Art Zygielbaum

**Members Absent:** Donna Behlen (excused), Herb Friedman (excused), Herb Schimek (unexcused).

**City Staff:** Steve Huggenberger, Diane Gonzolas

**Representatives of Time Warner:** Brandy Johnson, Jamie Wenz

Meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m. by chair Art Zygielbaum.

Minutes from the January 2010 meeting were read and approved.

Connie Guillaume had noticed a couple of discrepancies in the attendance for the minutes from the July 2009 meeting: Barb Bartle and Jerrod Jaeger had each been listed twice in the list of those present, while Jon Rehm was listed as both "present" and "absent (excused)." After being told about the discrepancies, the secretary had checked the records, and moved that the minutes from July 23, 2009 be modified to read only one occurrence each for Bartle and Jaeger, and that Rehm be listed as "present" and removed from the "absent (excused)" section.

### **STATUS OF PEG CHANNELS**

We discussed the status of Channel 10. Gonzolas said that the City isn't able to do as much of the events programming on that channel now, because the staff person who does that has had her hours with the Citizen Information Center cut in half due to budget cuts. There is some on-air programming about local events running; Gonzolas said that's running on Channel 5, Herres said that she's also seen it running on Channel 10 sometimes.

Rehm commented that Channel 5 is an important source of information to Lincoln's citizens, kind of our local C-SPAN. On being asked, Gonzolas said that some City funding goes to programming of channels 5 and 10. She said that they work with other local media to get news out to citizens. Zygielbaum asked if the City's programs were able to keep airing when the Windstream system was knocked out for most of a day earlier this year; Gonzolas said yes.

Zygielbaum asked what the City needs. Gonzolas said that we can give her ideas on what kinds of things might work on Channel 10. Zygielbaum asked if there is a text notification service; Gonzolas said not right now. Rehm would like to see Channel 10 used as sort of an "L-SPAN," like C-SPAN only Lincoln-based. Gonzolas said that Bill Luxford gets some outside funding, which helps with programming. Herres said that the City could look into going after grants; Gonzolas said that the City's Grants Coordinator has already given her some ideas. Jaeger commented that there is no particular person to take these ideas and run with them. Zygielbaum said that we should just keep coming up with ideas and let Gonzolas know.

Jaeger said that he doesn't really know where the PEG channel subcommittee should go from here. Gonzolas said that the City is trying new things on Channel 10 all the time. We need to evaluate all the possibilities. Zygielbaum said that there might be a volunteer organization that would be willing to take charge of programming. Lee asked where the funding for channels 5 and 10 comes from. Gonzolas said that most of the Time Warner Cable franchise money goes into equipment purchase; funding for programs comes from several sources: a Revolving Fund; shows that have underwriters; money from the City's General Fund when approved by the Council and the Mayor.

Herres said that there should be more programming for people with needs. For example, Urban Development might put on a show about where people can go for services.

Zygielbaum suggested Interactive TV. On that note, Gonzolas commented that part of this year's budget will be an expanded public budget discussion in June.

Lee asked what could be done if we have concerns about future budget cuts to the CIC budget. Should we contact the Mayor or the Council? Rehm commented that Lincoln is lucky to still have a daily newspaper. Zygielbaum asked what we should do now. Jaeger said that he doesn't think brainstorming would work here; if someone has a good idea that should be passed along to Gonzolas, but it doesn't help to keep brainstorming in meetings.

Jaeger suggested that we could look into someone, say an "information czar" who would try to coordinate Facebook with Channel 5 and 10. Rehm asked how this could be funded; could that come from TWC? Jaeger said no; there is already an agreement specifying where their money is to go.

Lee asked if we might want to write a report to the City on the status of the PEG channels. Jaeger said that we might consider lobbying for an exploratory committee with a budget, including one or more employees to do the work. Huggenberger suggested that grants might be used for a position. Gonzolas said that it's expensive to hire an FTE. Long said that if anyone has ideas, we need to send them to Gonzolas while she's preparing for the budget. Gonzolas said she'll be glad to listen to ideas. She said that if we want to lobby for more General Fund dollars, we need to know that we're in competition with a lot of other groups.

Zygielbaum suggested that we discontinue the PEG committee and just have the board or specific members work on these issues as needed. Gonzolas said that surveys cost money, but it might be good to look at how to gauge public opinion. There will be an interactive program on May 15<sup>th</sup> called "Taking Charge."

PEG committee was formally dissolved by Zygielbaum, as the CAB Chair.

**LIFE-LINE CABLE TV**

Zygielbaum led a discussion of what would happen if the country does away with over the air television. He said that over 85% get their information from cable. If 10% to 15% are relying on over the air TV to get their information, would it make sense to offer a "lifeline" tier?

Huggenberger said that TWC would probably call their Broadcast Basic tier the lifeline. Zygielbaum said that he's looking for something more restrictive than that. Lee said that it would probably require a government subsidy to set up a tier like that. Gonzolas commented that some utilities offer services where customers can donate to others who are in need; perhaps we could look at something like that for cable.

Zygielbaum said that he would like to propose that Brandy Johnson take the question back to TWC and ask it. Johnson said that she will but she needs to know exactly what we're asking. After discussion, the question posed was "Does it make sense financially and technically for Time Warner Cable to offer this service, just stick channels plus PEG channels, to low income persons?" Johnson said that she would ask.

**REPORTS FROM THE CITY**

Gonzolas passed around her report.

**REPORTS FROM TIME WARNER**

Wenz distributed copies of TWC Report

**PUBLIC COMMENTS** None

**ADJOURNMENT**

Herres moved adjournment, Behlen seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Next meeting scheduled for July 29

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

**NEXT MEETING**

Scheduled for **July 22 at Time Warner Cable**, on 16<sup>th</sup> Street just a couple of blocks north of Old Cheney.

Gonzolas noted that this meeting must be open to the public, TWC people said that they can do that. If there is interest they would be glad to follow the meeting with an informal tour of their public access facilities.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

*Jim Johnson, secretary*