

**City of Lincoln  
Cable TV Advisory Board  
Meeting Minutes – July 25, 2013**

**Members Present:** Matt Hansen, Ed Hoffman, Linda Jewson, Jim Johnson, Dara Troutman

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

**Representatives of Time Warner Cable:** Ann Teget, Jamie Wenz

**Others:** John Neal (appointed to the Cable Advisory Board, but not yet confirmed by Council)

**Call to Order**

Meeting was called to order at 4:10 p.m. by chair Ed Hoffman. Board members and guests introduced themselves.

Hoffman announced that there had been a request to move Ann Teget's portion of the Time Warner Cable Report and the first item under New Business up to as early as possible in the meeting, as Teget needs to leave early. There being no objection, the agenda changes were made.

**Reports from Time Warner Cable (part 1)**

Teget said that due to contract differences, Time Warner Cable no longer has permission to carry KMTV channel 3, Omaha's CBS affiliate, as of midnight last night.

In a separate matter, Teget said that there are ongoing contractual negotiations between the national office of Time Warner Cable and CBS which may cause problems; CBS has threatened to remove Showtime, CBS Prime Time on Demand, and Smithsonian HD from the TWC lineup if negotiations are unsuccessful by Monday at 5:00.

**New Business**

***Time Warner moving Public Education and Government (PEG) access channels to digital format.***

Teget said that TWC is trying to move the PEG channels to digital format. They will still be on the same channel as before, but users will need a digital TV or a digital box. They will try to offer a digital box if you request it by November 25 2013, free until the end of 2014 and 99 cents per month after that. They will make the change to digital on September 25. They will notify customers 30 days in advance. Teget said that the boxes are very easy to install; if we have questions, we can email her.

Huggenberger said that he thought he had been told that users would see a blank screen on Channel 5. Teget said that if they had a digital TV with a QAM tuner then it would map to channel 5. Some users will see blank. Quality will be much higher with the digital format.

Troutman asked about the government-issued digital adapters that people were offered when digital standards were adopted nationally; will this work? Teget was unsure; she will check.

Hoffman asked the reason for the change? Teget said that it will give users the best picture possible, and it will give more bandwidth. Hoffman thinks that subscribers might ask "if TWC is getting extra benefit and can use that space, why should I pay for it?"

Troutman would like a list of what channel to use for which equipment. Luxford asked what would happen for users that have a digital TV without a QAM tuner

TWC will be notifying customers 30 days before the change; however they will inform the board ahead of time.

Hoffman asked what people who just have basic will they see on channel 10; will they see a blank screen or will they see alternate programming of some kind. Teget said they won't see anything.

Luxford said that rather than the random shifting of channels, he would prefer to see Channel 5 moved to 5.1, 10 moved to 10.1 etc.

Johnson asked if users will be able to test this ahead of time to see if their equipment will work. Teget said no.

Teget had to leave, due to a family emergency, but she wanted the board to know that TWC has done this before; they know how to do it right. Hoffman said that the Board may consider calling a special meeting on this topic, before the change happens.

Hoffman asked Huggenberger if there are any contractual issues with the change. Huggenberger said he believes that the PEG channels are required on the lowest tier, but when he thinks about whether channel mapping meets this requirement, it probably would.

Huggenberger says that this will have different impacts on different customers; some will think that they're paying for something that was free before.

Hoffman asked what is the breakdown between digital users vs lower tier. TWC did not have an answer. John Neal said that in his work with the Lincoln Public Schools, he had been given an estimate that 75% of people are on tiered service and 25% basic cable. However the tracking of tiered users didn't include whether or not they have a digital box.

Huggenberger said that the low cost of boxes (free until end of 2014, 99 cents per month after that) doesn't include installation cost.

Wenz was asked if this will really make that much of a positive impact on TWC bandwidth. He said yes; we can only get so much bandwidth, so as analog channels move to digital it frees up more. It should affect internet connection speed as well.

Hoffman asked if there were any other questions. No one had any. Hoffman asked Wenz to take back the message that the sooner the Board can see the rollout information, the better.

### **Minutes from April meeting**

Minutes from the meeting of April 25, 2013 were read. Troutman moved approval, Jewson seconded, minutes approved as read.

### **Election of Vice Chair**

Due to resignation of the board's Vice Chair, that position was vacant. Hoffman nominated Troutman, Johnson seconded. There were no other nominations; motion to elect Troutman as Vice Chair passed 5-0.

### **New Business (continued)**

#### ***Educational access on second public access channel.***

Huggenberger said that TWC is interested in discussing whether they can eliminate the second public access channel. This would be a franchise change, as the franchise requires 5 access channels and this would take the number down to 4. He said that he has discussed with Ann Teget, and she recognizes that we would need to get that on the schedule. Will report back to the board, but if someone wants to sit in on the meetings.

#### Issues

- Franchise requires 5 access channels, we would go to 4
- TWC currently pays capital support for the public access channel, not the community access channel. Need to figure out what happens to that.
- Provision in the franchise that when TWC goes all-digital, City gets the bandwidth. Teget doesn't feel that the system has gone all-digital yet. Huggenberger suggested that we might agree to a specific time that we could have bandwidth.

Hoffman asks if there would there be a negotiation? Huggenberger said that there could be, but he thinks TWC may not want to have a negotiation, they may just want to get it behind them.

Huggenberger said that the City would not want to give up anything for nothing. The negotiations on the current franchise went so slow that there were never any decisions made on the fly. The PEG transition issue will go fast. Amendment to the franchise issue might be made by the end of the year. Thinks we might delegate someone from the board to be a representative. Hoffman: Not sure if a representative would be able to make a recommendation on behalf of the board. Troutman said that she would volunteer to sit in on the discussions, or we can also consider board members who were not able to make it to the meeting today.

## **Old Business**

### ***Website***

Gonzolas distributed copies of the website, newly reformatted. We will have more changes, both in content and in format.

### ***Board Vacancies***

The appointment of John Neal to fill one of the vacancies is on track. This leaves two more; the Mayor's office is working on those.

### ***Board Duties***

The Mayor's office has expressed interest in considering expanding the duties of the board, and the Mayor has asked Huggenberger to give him a draft of what that may look like. Huggenberger has given him a draft, expects it will be cut back. Mayor will get back to Huggenberger. Telecommunications flavor. Hoffman said that may affect whether we can get people to serve on the board; for instance Art Zygielbaum may be interested in getting back on the board if we move into telecommunications.

### **Reports from Time Warner Cable (part 2)**

Wenz submitted a written report.

They switched over to new servers on Friday. The old servers get to go put in boxes and hopefully never used again.

Educational access now on Channel 82.

There was an outage on Tuesday afternoon which affected PEG channels. A networking router malfunctioned. Service was restored by 5:30 p.m. that day.

### **Reports from the City**

Gonzolas will get the City's report to us at the next meeting.

### **Planning for Special Meeting**

We looked at calendars in order to set up a special meeting with Time Warner on the subject of the PEG channel move to digital. Decided to try for either August 15 or August 22; Gonzolas will send out a note asking people to let her know which date works better.

### **Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jim Johnson, secretary