



AGENDA

CABLE COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Regular Meeting
October 7, 2015

Meridian Township Municipal Building
5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI
Administrative Conference Room

- A. Call Meeting to Order at 6:00 pm
- B. Public Remarks
- C. Approval of Agenda
- D. Approval of Minutes – September 2, 2015
- E. Communications/Announcements
 - 1. Township Citizen Survey
 - 2. Advertising on HOMTV
- F. Old Business
 - 1. Extension of Services – Meridian Road (materials provided at meeting)
 - 2. CCC Rules & Responsibilities – Broadband Clarification Memo
 - 3. Communication Needs Assessment Memo
- G. New Business
- H. Reports
 - 1. Complaints/Compliments: Deborah Guthrie
 - 2. Video Service Provider(s):
 - a) Comcast service for state-accredited K-12 schools
 - 3. Communications Director Report: Deborah Guthrie
 - a) Website & Branding Update
 - b) Staffing Update
 - c) Audio Project Update
 - 4. Chair's Report: Walter Benenson
 - 5. Township Information: Ron Styka
 - 6. Programming: Deborah Guthrie
 - 7. Viewership/Promotions: Deborah Guthrie
 - a) Certified Tourism Ambassadors
 - b) HOMTV as Media Sponsors – Parkinson Foundation
 - 8. Finance: Deborah Guthrie
- I. Other Business & Announcements
- J. Public Remarks
- K. Adjournment

Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact Meridian Township by writing or calling the following:
Frank Walsh, Township Manager, 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198 (517-349-1200, Ext. 308). Ten days notice required.

Cable Communications Commission Regular Meeting Minutes

Administrative Conference Room
Meridian Municipal Building, Okemos, MI

September 2, 2015

DRAFT

Present: Commissioners: Chair, Walter Benenson; Commissioner, Tunga Kiyak;
Commissioner, Brian Seipel
Staff: Deborah Guthrie, Communications Director and
Andrea Smiley, Administrative Assistant
Township: Trustee, Ron Styka
Comcast: None
AT&T: None
Haslett Schools: None
Okemos Schools: None

Call Meeting to Order: Chair, Benenson called the meeting to order at **6:02 pm.**

Public Remarks: Mr. Wayne Beyea - 5273 Meridian Rd.

At the September 2, 2015 Cable Commission meeting, Mr. Wayne Beyea voiced a concern about extending Comcast services in Meridian Township. Mr. Beyea lives at 5273 Meridian Rd., north of North Meridian Park. Mr. Beyea made contact with Communications Director, Deborah Guthrie regarding not being able to have internet service at his home address. He first approached the township on the topic back in February trying to seek out some of the options available through Comcast. Comcast informed Mr. Beyea that it would cost about \$5,000 to be able to get internet access. Mr. Beyea contacted the Township to try and figure out some solutions.

It was explained to Mr. Beyea that his home is outside of the 150 foot policy for Comcast to extend services. Mr. Beyea measured and discovered his home is actually 195 feet. He also doesn't understand the 150ft rule or policy.

Mr. Beyea wants to work with the commission on coming up with a solution. He has been a resident for 15 years and has been at the same address with two children currently at Haslett High School and two children attending MSU, also graduates of Haslett High School; without internet access, it's like being in a third world. He explained that it's gotten to the point that literally his kids can't come home for the summer because they need internet access for online courses. He compared it to being without water or sewer. He's been patient working with Comcast and waiting to hear back from them. Every time they say they will provide a written estimate, he never receives it.

Mr. Beyea also provided information on a federal program for communities to apply for loans to cover costs of providing internet service to the community. He feels as a resident and a citizen of Meridian Township, he deserves to have internet cable access, beyond reasonable hookup fees. Everyone has to pay \$100 or around there, but to say that you can't have it unless you put \$5,000 is ridiculous.

Again, Mr. Beyea is looking to the commission for help. He has taken it as far as he can. He would like the Township Manager or the Director, Deborah Guthrie to set up a meeting to make things happen. He doesn't want to have to keep calling customer service and not getting a response. Not having internet

service is impacting the children and the family because everything is online now. He just can't have everyone hanging out at the library all night in order to have internet service.

Director Guthrie provided an update. She had communications with John Gardner, Comcast representative, and he thinks that the letters were sent to the wrong address. The Township assessment has Mr. Beyea listed as Haslett, but it also showed Williamston. Mr. Gardner took a look at the cost for extending services and confirmed the \$5,000 would pay for the extension down Meridian road to both Mr. Beyea and his neighbor. Mr. Gardner is also resending the letter with the cost estimates. Director Guthrie also spoke with Township Assistant Manager, Derek Perry and discussed some options for the Township to help out because it isn't a public utility, it's a private company. There was also discussion on doing an assessment or doing a loan or other options that would be feasible for the Township. Mr. Perry is also meeting with Mark Kieselbach, the Director of Planning & Development, about the extension of services, as well as looking at the Township for other holes. It's not a short term solution, but the Township is looking at options.

Currently, Mr. Beyea is using a hot spot through Verizon, but it gets expensive because of data and the number of devices in the household. Chair Benenson asked if there was any law that states since the Township has a franchise agreement with Comcast, should they provide services to all the residents.

Mr. Beyea confirmed that Comcast has the correct address. He is looking for a letter that states an equitable solution. If Comcast has flexibility on the 150 feet policy, then it would show that they really wanted to work on this issue. He is looking for a solution this year, before Christmas. He requested a meeting with Comcast and the Township Manager or Assistant Township Manager.

Commissioner Kiyak commented that one of the items on the agenda was to discuss broadband within the Township.

In order for a cable provider to have service within the Township they have to apply for service. The Township has no exclusivity, they favor competition. Director Guthrie stated that she will speak with Derek Perry and set up a meeting with John Gardner from Comcast, as well as email his information to Mr. Beyea. That way Mr. Beyea can contact Mr. Gardner directly. She will also ask Mr. Gardner to send a copy of the letter that was sent to Mr. Beyea for the commission to review.

Mr. Beyea brought up the loan option again and Commissioner Tunga stated that after reading the information about the loan, it only pertains to whether there is 15% of the Township not receiving internet access. Commissioner Seipel brought up the point that if Comcast is willing to pay up to 150 feet, then how much would it cost the consumer to pay the additional 45 feet? The cost is all about extending the service from Piper Road down Meridian Road.

Commissioner Kiyak summarized the public comments provided by Mr. Beyea and stated a copy of the estimate to extend services would be provided to commission, a meeting would be scheduled to discuss the option of extending services and if the cable commission is needed to sit in on meeting, then Tunga would be willing to sit in on that meeting.

Public Remarks: Mr. Neil Bowldy - 6202 Beachwood

Mr. Bowldy stated that he wanted to speak with the commission and have a discussion in regards to a handout that he presented to the commission (Attachment A). The handout titled, "Appointment Processes for Boards and Commissions", outlines how members of the various commissions are appointed. Mr. Bowldy stated that there are many different ways, written into the ordinances, that commissioners are appointed. The written rule for the Cable Communications Commission states that

“the commission consists of five residents of the Township appointed by the Township Board”. Mr. Bowldy stated that the custom has always been, and verified in the December Township Board packet, that the supervisor makes the appointments and board either accepts or rejects to select their own people. Mr. Bowldy stated that he underlined the way each commission handles the process in the handout and he was asking or suggesting when the discussion comes up during the meeting that the commission discuss the method of the appointment process. He also stated, in order to remain uniform, that he would also bring the topic up to the Township Board and other commissions. All the appointment ordinances should be uniform and written down so the process can't be changed. Mr. Bowldy stated that he was asking the commission to take this simple step to get in line and then the other commissions could follow.

Mr. Bowldy stated he had a second comment concerning the itemized PEG fees appearing on his most recent Comcast bill. Director Guthrie stated that Comcast is now required to pay 1% PEG fees to Meridian Township with the new uniform agreement. Mr. Bowldy asked the question about Comcast passing those fees down to the customers. Director Guthrie commented that Comcast could pay or pass along to customers as a fee, but the money is being paid to Meridian Township.

Director Guthrie asked to go back to Mr. Bowldy's first comment about the appointment process ordinances and explained that the Cable Communications Commission approves all programming, not the Township Board. The CCC makes a recommendation to the Board and the supervisor and then the supervisor appoints the commissioners so that the elected officials aren't approving programming and using as an election platform. Director Guthrie stated that there are a few steps missing from the information presented. Mr. Bowldy stated that the information came from the December packet when the Board appointments are done. Director Guthrie stated that in November or December, the Commission will look at the appointments and make a recommendation to the Board and those recommendations will appear in that memo. All recommendations are funneled through the supervisor. Mr. Bowldy clarified by saying that “customarily” the supervisor makes the appointment and the Township Board ratifies. If the commission recommends someone and the supervisor actually makes the appointment, then that statement should be reflected in the rules and procedures. Director Guthrie stated that she was glad Mr. Bowldy pointed that out to the commission attention and thanked him. Mr. Bowldy stated that the ordinance should read, “Appointed by the Supervisor with approval by the Township Board”.

Commissioner Seipel asked the question if “custom” was in writing somewhere and is “custom” the official language and if so, he asked for a copy of the verbiage. Mr. Bowldy responded that “custom” is just “the way business is done”. Commissioner Seipel stated that if “custom” defined was in writing then it would be a lot easier to have uniformity with the ordinances. Mr. Bowldy responded that it's not in writing but “custom” is how it's always been done in the past. Commissioner Seipel stated that he wasn't really concerned with how processes have been done in the past but that the processes are done by the rules and follow the ordinances. Commissioner Seipel then asked the question, “What is custom?” “How do we know what's custom if we don't have the history?” Mr. Bowldy responded again that “custom” isn't written, it's just the way things are done. And this is the way things have been done, appointments, as long as I can remember and that's only been a couple years. Commissioner Seipel summarized by stating that it was Mr. Bowldy's recommendation to make all ordinances in regards to the appointment process the same and the way that Mr. Bowldy understood them to be. Commissioner Seipel stated that ordinances are in writing and you can't compare them to “custom” because that is not in writing. Mr. Bowldy stated that if “custom” is contrary to what's in writing then writing only takes precedence if someone raises a concern or objects. Commissioner Seipel stated that it was his understanding that the ordinance, what's in writing, should always be followed. Mr. Bowldy just wanted to make a point in hopes of creating a uniform appointment process. Commissioner Kiyak commented that this topic is more of a Board issue.

Approval of Agenda:

Commissioner Kiyak **MOVED TO APPROVE**, Seconded by Chair Benenson .

Voice vote: Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes:

Commissioner Seipel moved **TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF July 1, 2015.**
Seconded by Chair, Benenson.

Voice vote: Motion carried unanimously.

Communications/Announcements: None

Old Business:**1. Township Website Redesign Update**

Director Guthrie commented that the RFPs were narrowed down to two (2) companies, Civic Plus and Vision Internet. Discussions were held after the presentations to learn more about some of the backend features and how it functions. Director Guthrie commented that she and Commissioner Kiyak had spoken about the two companies and that he provided some recommendations. Chair Benenson asked the question about whether the website redesign was tabled, as announced at the leadership meeting because the money needed wasn't available. Director Guthrie responded that she spoke with Township Manager, Frank Walsh and discussed the option of doing the Township Branding and Website Redesign at the same time. Trustee Styka commented that the Township Board members were told that the branding would be done first. Director Guthrie stated that from their conversation, it was decided to send out an RFP for Branding and that the RFPs were narrowed down to two (2) companies out of the four (4) submitted. Those two (2) companies will give a presentation to the branding selection committee. Director Guthrie also announced the people on the selection committee; Brandie Yates, Communications Specialist, Frank Walsh, Township Manager, LuAnn Maisner, Director of Parks and Recreation, Peter Menser, Associate Planner and herself.

Director Guthrie commented that her conversation with Township Manager, Frank Walsh was that there was no reason to hold off on the website because of the amount changes that are needed on the backend, as well as all of the information that has to be transferred. While all of the phases of the branding process are happening, the Township could possibly launch the new website and brand campaign at the same time. Commissioner Kiyak explained that all the data merging from the old system to the new system, as well as training the staff would take some time and could occur while the new brand is being decided.

Chair Benenson commented that it is very important to have a good website, for instance people choose colleges based on the website design. Trustee Styka commented that the website has become like a window or a welcome center.

Trustee Styka announced that the board approved \$30,000 last year for the new website and now there is an additional \$50,000 in the budget, bringing the total to \$80,000. Director Guthrie announced that the website proposal came in at around \$20,000-\$30,000 and the branding proposals have come in at around \$60,000. The plan is to meet with the City of East Lansing because one of the companies being looked at worked on their website.

2. CTC Audit – Final Report**3. Equipment Budget: Reallocation of 2015 Cable TV Funds**

Third quarter budget amendments are due and I will be submitting the Cable Commissions recommendation to the Finance Director concerning reallocation of funds to purchase equipment.

New Business:

1. 5 Year Equipment Plan & Long Term Vision

Directed Guthrie commented that the HD Camera purchases will be the final conversion for HOMTV going from analog to digital. Chair Benenson asked the question/comment whether Director Guthrie is satisfied with the budget and the equipment purchases. Director Guthrie commented that she never had the opportunity to speak with Township Manager Walsh about increasing the part time staff to full time. She stated that she still needs to have that conversation because it's really a burden not having the additional help within the department. Chair Benenson asked Director Guthrie what the commission could do to help with the staffing issues. She stated that possibly encouraging the Township Manager to have an open mind and have healthy discussions with her about the expectations of the Communications Department and the staffing necessary to meet those expectations. Trustee Styka commented that the budget is now at the stage where the Township Board offers input so that the budget could be approved in the next couple weeks. Trustee Styka commented that he wasn't aware of the issues and if Director Guthrie wanted a statement made at the Township meeting then she would need to present him with the staffing needs, supported by facts, numbers and reasons to back up those needs. Trustee Styka clarified that the information has already been discussed by the commission and everyone was in agreement about the staffing recommendations. Commissioner Kiyak commented that you lose out on training and expertise with part time employees. Director Guthrie commented that the two (2) part time positions continue to have turnover.

Chair Benenson asked the question as to whether HOMTV could ask for a millage for funding, similar to the Parks Department. Commissioner Kiyak stated that maybe if it was tied to internet then there may be a possibility but not on its own. Director Guthrie stated that the topic would be great for long term vision and a possible separate meeting.

Commissioner Kiyak commented back to the budget that he feels the budget needs to include unexpected purchases, contingency plans. Director Guthrie commented that there is an equipment repair line item that funds are allocated to for unexpected repairs. She also commented that typically at the end of the year there is money left over that is transferred into the fund balance. This year she and Brandie Yates, Communications Specialist are looking at a new website for HOMTV and utilizing some of that funding.

Director Guthrie commented that, in regards to long term vision, Brandie Yates, Communications specialist will be working with the consultants on the communication needs assessment. The Communication Needs Assessment can now be repurposed and not be focused so much on the Franchise Renewal.

2. CCC Rules and Responsibilities

Trustee Styka asked the intention of adding this section to the meeting. Director Guthrie commented that one of the commissioners requested the current rules and responsibilities of the commission. Commissioner Kiyak stated that the issue came up because he asked the question as to whether internet access fell under the commission's authority. The language under the current rules and responsibilities doesn't include municipal broadband service. Chair Benenson stated that he feels in the future every city will have broadband and Meridian Township doesn't want to be the last one. All agreed that a discussion about the current rules and responsibilities should occur to include current verbiage and then proceed with a recommendation to the board. Director Guthrie asked the question whether she should email some optional language that could be forwarded to the Township Board explaining the responsibilities of the Cable Commission by the next meeting.

3. Township Branding RFP

Reports:

1. Cable Compliments/Complaints:
2. Video Service Provider(s):
3. Communications Director's Report: Nothing to Report
4. Chair's Report: Budget Approval for 2016
5. Township Information: Nothing to Report
6. Programming: No discussion
7. Viewership/Promotions: No discussion
8. Finance: No discussion

Other Business & Announcements:

Public Remarks: Nothing new to report

Adjournment:

Commissioner Kiyak moved **TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**. Seconded by Commissioner Seipel.

Hearing no objections, Chair Benenson **ADJOURNED THE MEETING AT 7:24 pm.**

NEXT MEETING:

The next scheduled meeting is **October 7, 2015 in the Administrative Conference Room.**

Appointment Processes for Boards and Commissions

Building Board of Appeals: “Unless otherwise provided by local law or ordinance, the members of the board of appeals shall be appointed for 2-year terms by the chief executive officer of a city, village, or township and the chairperson of the county board of commissioners of a county.” (MCL 125.1514 (1))
 “...consists of three members appointed by the Township Supervisor that have experience and training in building construction and property maintenance. (Township Website)

Board of Review: “Those electors of the township appointed by the township board shall constitute a board of review for the township.” (MCL 21.28 (1))
 “...an appointed six-member board made up of Meridian Township citizens. (Website)

Cable Communications Commission: “The commission consists of five residents of the Township appointed by the Township Board.” (MT Ord. - Sec. 70-28 (b))

Community Resources Commission: “The community resources commission shall consist of not less than seven nor more than nine members, to be appointed by the township supervisor upon the recommendation of the township board.” (MT Ord. - Sec. 2-197)

Downtown Development Authority: “The authority shall be under the supervision and control of the authority board consisting of the supervisor of the Charter Township of Meridian and not less than eight or more than 12 members appointed by the supervisor, subject to the approval of the township board.” (MT Ord. - Sec. 2-303)

Economic Development Corporation: “The chief executive officer of a municipality, with the advice and consent of the governing body, or in the case of a county where there is not an elected chief executive officer, the chairperson of the county board of commissioners, with the advice and consent of the county board of commissioners, shall appoint the members of the board of directors.” (MCL 125.1604)

Environmental Commission: “The environmental commission shall consist of seven members, to be appointed by the township board.” (MT Ord. - Sec. 2-228)

Fire Board of Appeals: Served by Building Board of Appeals.

Land Preservation Advisory Board: “The eight (8) member Land Preservation Advisory Board is appointed by the Meridian Township Board.” (Township Website)

Local Officials Compensation Commission: “The commission shall consist of five members, who are registered electors of the township, appointed by the supervisor subject to confirmation by a majority of the members elected and serving on the township board.” (MT Ord. - Sec. 2-257)

Pension Board: “The Pension Board is made up of five members; the Township Treasurer, an employee representative and three residents.” (Township Website)

Planning Commission: “The planning commission shall consist of nine members who shall be appointed by the township supervisor, subject to the approval by a majority vote of the township board, elected and serving.” (MT Ord. - Sec. 2-287)

Zoning Board of Appeals: “The zoning board of appeals shall consist of five regular members and two alternate members appointed by the township board.” (MT Ord. - Sec. 86-62(c)(1))

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN

**CABLE COMMUNICATIONS
COMMISSION**

COMMUNICATIONS

Andrea Smiley

From: Deborah Guthrie
Sent: Thursday, September 17, 2015 1:35 PM
To: Andrew Lathrop; Brian Seipel; Deborah Guthrie; Patrick Crowley; Ron Styka; Tunga Kiyak; Walter Benenson
Cc: Andrea Smiley
Subject: Township Board meeting: Citizen Survey

At the Township Board meeting this past Tuesday, Assistant Township Manager Derek Perry brought a motion before the board to approve the national research center annual survey. Included in that motion was the 5 questions the township is allowed to include as part of that survey. One of the questions included is how information is obtained by the residents. The motion was passed by the board.

To watch the video portion of this meeting choose item 10. B. 2015 Township Citizen Survey
http://meridian.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=24&clip_id=8143&meta_id=70984

To read the information from the board packet:

Page 86: Proposed question

http://www.meridian.mi.us/vertical/sites/%7B1800D46E-0900-43BD-B3FA-10A5660870B1%7D/uploads/September_15_2015_TB_Packet.pdf

The question submitted by Mr. Perry:

C. Please indicate how much of a source, if at all, you consider each of the following to be for obtaining information about the Township government and its activities, events and services:

[Scale: Major source, Minor source, Not a source]

- Township Web site (www.meridian.mi.us)
- Local media outlets (newspapers, radio, local television stations)
- The local government cable Channel HOMtv
- Township newsletter (Meridian Monitor)
- Township Board meetings and other public meetings
- Talking with Township officials
- Township communications via social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter or YouTube)
- Word-of-mouth



Deborah Guthrie

Communications Director/PIO, Meridian Township
517.853.4380 | guthrie@meridian.mi.us | www.meridian.mi.us |
5151 Marsh Rd. Okemos, MI. 48864



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📧 Subscribe for free: [Meridian Weekly Update](#)

Andrea Smiley

From: Deborah Guthrie
Sent: Friday, September 04, 2015 9:30 AM
To: Andrea Smiley
Subject: FW: Advertising on Homtv.net

Please place in ccc packet for next month. communication

From: Hannah [<mailto:hannah accuratemedia@outlook.com>]
Sent: Friday, September 04, 2015 6:40 AM
To: HOMTV <homtv@meridian.mi.us>
Subject: Advertising on Homtv.net

Hi there,

We're interested in advertising on Homtv.net. Let us know if you wish to discuss further about this proposal.

Thanks!

Note: Our team has manually researched your website and shortlisted it as Potential Advertising destination. However, in case we've misjudged your website and you're not interested or do not offer advertising at all, kindly respond with "NOT INTERESTED" or "UNSUBSCRIBE" and our team will NEVER contact you again.

--

Rgds
Hannah
Accu-rate Media

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN

**CABLE COMMUNICATIONS
COMMISSION**

**OLD
BUSINESS**

MEMORANDUM

TO: Cable Communications Commission



FROM: _____

Deborah Guthrie, Communications Director

DATE: October 2, 2015

SUBJECT: Cable Commission Rules and Responsibilities

At the September 2, 2015 meeting, the commission discussed the responsibilities and authority of the commission pursuant to Title XV, Chapter 115, Section 115 – 20, Rule 5. The commission requested staff develop sample language for the commission to consider in regards to broadband within the Township.

Staff recommends the commission discuss the following language to be considered as part of the rules and authority of the commission:

12. Encourage the expansion of broadband in the township

This suggested language will be in accordance with Goal #4aa of the 2015 Communications Department Goals.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Cable Communications Commission



FROM:

Deborah Guthrie, Communications Director

DATE: October 2, 2015

SUBJECT: Communication Needs Assessment

In 2014, the Township Board approved a Communication Needs Assessment and awarded the proposal to Holly Hansen Consulting, an experienced cable consultant, to meet the Comcast Franchise Agreement renewal process.

Since the Comcast Uniform Agreement was approved in June, 2015, I am requesting that the Cable Commission reevaluate the scope of work initially proposed by Holly Hansen Consulting and provide new direction for the assessment.

We previously supplied information that included the original needs assessment proposal (Attachment B), future funding needs for the Communications Department (Attachment C) and the 2015 Communications Department Goals approved by the Township Board (Attachment D). In reference to those attachments, the Cable Commission should consider services to be provided, staffing, the current facility, future needs and whether the services provided will be strictly limited to HOMTV or services that the Communications Department provides to the Township.

I am asking for the commissioners to be prepared to discuss, at the October 7 meeting, their top three goals and whether the original proposal will meet those goals or will a new request for proposal need to be developed to bid out.

Brandie Yates, Communications Specialist, will be heading up the Communications Needs Assessment and is prepared to move forward once the Commission has decided on the appropriate action.

PROPOSAL

Cable Communications Needs Assessment

Charter Township of Meridian, MI

Submitted:

July 17, 2014

Holly Hansen Consulting

612.207.8709

HollyMHansen@comcast.net

INTRODUCTION

Holly Hansen is an experienced cable consultant who is familiar with the issues facing local franchise authorities (LFAs) in the cable franchise renewal process. She has performed PEG (Public, Educational and Governmental) access needs assessments for small and large communities and commissions representing multiple communities. These assessments have included franchise compliance reviews, PEG needs and interests, community needs and interests, and I-Net needs and interests. These assessments have provided documentation for the client community that has helped ensure that they were negotiating their franchise renewal from a solid, informed basis.

Ms. Hansen has also assisted communities and PEG access facilities with strategic and long-range planning on the board and staff levels and conducted organizational assessments and re-design of staffing and services based on needs, funding changes, and trends. Clients have also retained Ms. Hansen to advise them on issues related to administration of their franchises.

Prior to beginning her consulting practice, Ms. Hansen served for over 20 years as an executive director for small and large cable commissions in the Twin Cities area, and as the cable officer for the City of St. Paul. In these positions she was responsible for managing PEG operations, I-Net development, franchise negotiations, budgets, and organizational planning, and planning and overseeing the construction of two PEG studios.

Her cable consulting practice has been solely dedicated to serving the public interest and her client base is local governments and PEG access facilities. Ms. Hansen has a solid understanding of internal and external city communications and dynamics involving local franchising authorities (LFAs), PEG stakeholders, and cable operators. She understands that while the technical and legal landscapes are in constant flux, community needs are specific to each community and ways to meet those needs must be creatively and realistically approached in the 21st century.

Cable franchises are essentially long-term contracts and decisions made in the renewal process have lasting effects on the community. The renewal process challenge LFAs to forecast their community's future cable communications needs and interests in an ever-changing legal, technical, and political environment. A well-designed needs assessment ensures that the process is representative of the community, examines and documents the community's needs and interests using sound research methods, anticipates the future, and provides a solid basis for franchise renewal negotiations.

Holly Hansen has the knowledge, experience, skills and desire to design and conduct a needs assessment that Meridian Township will be able to rely upon as it prepares for its franchise renewal.

PROPOSED PROJECT

It is the understanding of Holly Hansen (Consultant) that the Charter Township of Meridian (Township) is seeking to have a Cable Communications Needs Assessment conducted to assist it in preparing for franchise renewal. The RFP did not state whether this renewal was with Comcast Communications or AT&T, or both companies. Whether it is one or both of the companies, it is not anticipated that will have a substantive impact on the Needs Assessment. The Consultant also understands that the Township is or will be conducting a Technical Audit and a Franchise Fee Audit as separate projects in preparing for its franchise renewal.

In its Request for Proposals dated July 2, 2014, the Township listed several items in a Scope of Work for its cable communications needs assessment. These items included:

- Meetings with stakeholders
- Focus group sessions
- Telephone survey
- On-line survey
- On-line I-Net survey (if applicable)
- Inspection and review of PEG access facility, equipment, and services
- Prepare and present report with findings and recommendations

The Consultant is not recommending a telephone survey at this time and advises the Township that if it wishes to conduct a telephone survey that this be undertaken as a separate project. Historically, telephone surveys have been conducted primarily using RDD (Random Digital Dialing) and landline telephones. This resulted in a random sample and results could be applied to the larger universe with a confidence level of 93% or 95%, depending upon the sample size.

Due to cell phones, this type of research has changed significantly. In a report issued in December 2013 the Center for Disease Control, an agency of the National Institute of Health, reported that 39.5% of Michigan households are wireless phones only. Today, if telephone surveys do not include cell phone users the results will be biased because a large segment of the population is being excluded and the sample is no longer random. Unfortunately for the budget conscious, cell phone surveys cost two to three times as much per respondent than landline phone surveys. This is due to issues such as higher non-response rates, safety and/or privacy issues that require callbacks, etc. The Consultant estimates that a telephone survey that would include landline and cell phones would cost approximately \$30,000 - \$40,000 depending on the length of the survey (e.g. 10 minutes or 15 minutes). This would be for a random sample of 400 respondents, which would result in a 95% confidence level. If the Township wishes to pursue a telephone survey, the Consultant would be happy to participate in such a project with the Township and an experienced research company.

The Consultant does propose an on-line survey of residents; this is a cost effective survey approach similar in many respects to mail surveys. The results are not “scientific” as there is a response bias, but when this type of Quantitative research is combined with the proposed Qualitative methods, the resulting data can be convincing.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Overall Project Design

The Consultant will conduct all phases of the needs assessment including project design, document review and evaluation, interviews, focus groups, IDIs (In-Depth Interviews) and the facility/equipment review. She will work closely with the Township liaison throughout all phases of the project to ensure that the needs and interests of the Township, its stakeholders, organizations, and institutions are accurately identified and represented in the process and final written report.

At the beginning of the project, Ms. Hansen will meet via telephone with the designated Township representatives to identify franchise renewal priorities and issues of concern, as well as gain an understanding of the background and operations of the Township's access channels and franchises with Comcast and AT&T. The project is proposed in the following phases:

Phase One:

Conduct initial phone meetings and e-mail communications with Township staff to gather information regarding the franchise, issues, renewal goals, etc. Request and review documents related to the franchise(s), PEG access, I-Net (optional), etc. Identify stakeholders to invite to focus groups and interviews. Finalize project timeline and dates for in-person visit to conduct focus groups, interviews, and facility/equipment review.

In Qualitative Research methods such as focus groups and IDIs (In-Depth Interviews) it is extremely important to ensure that the right people participate and that a wide spectrum of community organizations is involved. This ensures that participants are knowledgeable about the community and have insights into current and future needs and wants of the community. Focus groups should be homogenous to the extent possible and small enough to foster meaningful discussion and participation from each member. Each focus group would be scheduled for two hours and would include a brief presentation by the Consultant regarding the cable franchise renewal process.

IDIs would be conducted with a single organization and could involve a cross-section of that organization. For example, in an educational organization participants could include represent administration, curriculum, IT, media specialists, and instructors. The IDIs would be scheduled for one and one-half to two hours, depending upon the number of participants. The Township would need to identify the appropriate people to invite to the groups and interviews. To reduce project costs and encourage participation, the Township would also be responsible for inviting and confirming attendance at the groups and interviews. Examples of focus groups and IDIs are listed below; the number of groups and interviews would be confirmed during this phase, as well as who to include as participants.

Examples of Focus Groups

- Local government (police, fire, parks & rec, IT, etc.)
- CAMTV access users/producers
- Arts and cultural organizations
- Youth organizations
- Senior organizations
- Healthcare organizations
- Recreational organizations
- Social services organizations
- League of Women Voters
- I-Net Users (optional)

Examples of IDI Interviews

- Cable Communications Commission
- CAMTV Programming Content Oversight Committee
- HOMTV Staff
- CAMTV Staff
- Okemos Schools
- Haslett Schools
- East Lansing Government and Schools
- Lansing Community College
- MSU

The number of groups and IDIs would ultimately be determined by the Township's budget for this project. Different combinations of focus groups and IDIs can be developed to accommodate the Township's budget while maintaining a goal of involving stakeholders and a wide cross section of the community. Options are included in the cost section of this proposal.

Phase Two: Continue ongoing communications with Township regarding the project. Prepare discussion guides for the focus groups and interviews. Prepare the on-line resident survey. Prepare materials for the facility/equipment review. Launch the on-line survey.

The Consultant will develop an on-line survey based on goals, issues, and desired community input identified by the Township. On-line surveys are similar to mail surveys in that there is a non-respondent bias. Despite a potential for bias, on-line surveys provide valuable data and an opportunity for community residents to express their views. Additionally, these surveys are Quantitative and provide measurable data that when combined with Qualitative data gathered from focus groups and IDIs, can present a fairly complete and compelling picture, especially when the data are complementary. The Township would be responsible for posting the survey on its website and providing links to other organizations as it deemed appropriate. The Township would also be responsible for downloading the data at the end of the survey time period and providing the data to the Consultant analysis, formatting, and inclusion in the final written report.

Phase Three: Conduct in-person focus groups and IDIs. Conduct facility/equipment review of HOMTV and CAMTV. Conduct phone interviews as appropriate. Conclude on-line survey.

As noted under Phase One, options will be presented in the cost section that will determine the number of interviews

Phase Four: Compile and analyze data from the focus groups and IDIs. Review and analyze equipment and facility data. Conduct equipment research regarding trends and costs based on access services and programming. Format and organize data. Review results from completed on-line survey; analyze and format results.

Phase Five: Complete analysis and formatting of all data. Prepare written report. Present report to Township (optional).

Report Contents to Include:

- Findings from the document review
- Summaries of all focus groups and interviews
- Findings and summary of PEG access facility/equipment review
- Results of on-line survey
- Estimates for access capital needs in a renewed franchise
- Identified community needs and interests
- Recommendations

Proposal: Cable Communications Needs Assessment
Charter Township of Meridian, MI

PROJECT TASKS AND COSTS

DESCRIPTION	HOURS	COST
Phase One <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial planning meetings (via telephone) with Township to finalize project details, identify priorities and issues, etc. Prepare document request and submit to Township. Prepare PEG Questionnaire for Township to complete. Review documents from Township. Finalize number of focus groups and IDIs. Assist Township in identifying participants for groups and IDIs. Identify key question areas for focus groups and IDIs. Identify participants to invite to focus groups and interviews. 	30	\$3,000
Phase Two <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop questions for resident on-line survey. Format skip pattern for resident on-line survey. Launch on-line survey. Finalize discussion guides for focus groups and IDIs. 	26 - 30	\$2,600 - \$3,000*
Phase Three <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct 9 or 13 in-person focus groups and IDIs (<i>see options 1 & 2 on the following page</i>). Conduct facility//equipment review for HOMTV and CAMTV. Conclude on-line survey. 	30 - 40	\$3,000 - \$4,000*
Phase Four <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compile, analyze and format data from focus groups and IDIs. Analyze and format results from facility/equipment review. Conduct equipment research. Analyze and format on-line survey data. 	33 - 37	\$3,300 - \$3,700*
Phase Five <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete analysis and data formatting. Draft written report. 	32 - 36	\$3,200 - \$3,600*
Estimated Expenses RT Coach airfare, car rental, travel time 3 to4 nights hotel (<i>depending on option chosen</i>) Meals (<i>depending on option chosen</i>) Printing, postage, misc. supplies		\$900 \$600 - \$800* \$150 - \$200* 125
	151 - 173	\$16,875 - \$19,325

* Cost range depends on whether Option 1 or Option 2 is selected (see nest page).

Proposal: Cable Communications Needs Assessment
Charter Township of Meridian, MI

To provide the Township with flexibility, two options are presented below for the Needs Assessment. Option One involves a three day/three night visit to conduct a combination of up to nine focus groups, IDIs, and the HOMTV/CAMTV facility/equipment review. This option is lower in cost because it involves fewer groups and a reduced work load in tasks related to the groups such as preparing discussion guides, facilitating the groups, analyzing and formatting data, and writing the report.

Option Two involves more focus groups and IDIs and an extra day of on-site work as well as additional time in preparing discussion guides, analyzing and formatting the data, and writing the report. Option 2 is being presented for consideration as it appears there are many stakeholders who are currently operating PEG channels to include in focus groups and IDIs in addition to other community-based organizations, local government, and HOMTV and CAMTV staff and commission/board members.

Option Three may be added to either Option One or Option Two or not pursued at all. This option of an I-Net survey is presented in case the Township wishes to pursue and I-Net in a renewed franchise and would provide data regarding the needs and interests of potential users.

OPTIONS	TOTAL COST
<p>Option One</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 day – 3 night trip to Okemos to conduct focus groups, IDIs, and facility/equipment review. This option represents a total of up to a combination of 9 focus groups and IDIs. 	<p>\$16,875</p>
<p>Option Two</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 day – 4 night trip to Okemos to conduct focus groups, IDIs, and facility/equipment review. This option represents a total of up to a combination of 13 focus groups and IDIs. 	<p>\$19,325</p>
<p>Option Three</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-line survey of potential I-Net users to identify needs and interests. 	<p>\$2,400</p>

TIMELINE:

The project is estimated to take approximately four months to complete. A detailed schedule will be developed with the Township during Phase One.

CONCLUSION

Holly Hansen Consulting appreciates the opportunity to respond to the Request for Proposals for a Cable Communications Needs Assessment issued by the Township of Meridian, MI.

Ms. Hansen has the experience and expertise to competently assist the Township in its Needs Assessment: she has experience in Qualitative and Quantitative research methods and is knowledgeable about PEG access, cable franchises, operator compliance, and I-Nets. She will provide a solid basis the Charter Township of Meridian can rely upon in its franchise renewal negotiations. Ms. Hansen is available to work on this project at the Township's convenience, and looks forward to being of service to the Meridian Township.

QUALIFICATIONS AND BACKGROUND

Holly Hansen is the principal of Holly Hansen Consulting, which is a sole proprietorship. She has been involved in cable television franchise administration since 1985. In her management positions, she negotiated transfers of ownership, franchise renewal, and settlement agreements for franchise non-compliance. Holly also managed PEG operations, oversaw PEG contracts, and developed three PEG facilities. She negotiated a rebuild of the institutional network (I-Net) for the City of St. Paul and transformed it from an abandoned, poorly functioning network into the network of choice for over 100 city facility locations. She also developed a fiber I-Net which interconnected city locations with the State of Minnesota, two counties, and several cities.

Ms. Hansen began her consulting practice in 2005 and has focused on serving the public sector in cable communications issues such as community/PEG needs ascertainment for franchise renewals and community fiber networks, franchise consulting, and strategic planning. This work has involved qualitative research methods including conducting focus groups and in-depth interviews with community leaders, stakeholders, and citizens. In quantitative research, she has developed questionnaires for on-line, in-person and telephone surveys, analyzed data, and written extensive and summary reports.

Holly has assessed PEG facility and equipment needs and developed financial projections for equipment replacement schedules for large and small organizations. She has also developed cost models for the provision of various PEG services to assist organizations in analyzing their costs/benefits and developing new revenue streams.

Ms. Hansen served for nine years on the board for MACTA (Minnesota Association of Community Telecommunications Advisors), including five years as president and vice president. She was the co-chair of the Minnesota Chapter of QRCA (Qualitative Research Consultant's Association) for two years and a member of the national Technical Committee.

Education

B.A. cum laude, Organizational Management and Business Communications
Concordia University - St. Paul, MN

Employment Background

<i>Holly Hansen Consulting</i> Minneapolis, MN	2005 – Present
<i>Cable Communications Officer</i> City of St. Paul, MN	1993 – 2005
<i>Executive Director</i> Northern Dakota County Cable Communications Commission (NDC4) Northern Dakota County Community Television (NDCTV) Inver Grove Heights, MN (7 city commission)	1989 - 1993

CLIENTS

NEEDS ASSESSMENTS FOR FRANCHISE RENEWALS

Minnesota:

- Apple Valley, Farmington, Rosemount Cable Communications Commission
- Bloomington
- Central St. Croix Valley Cable Commission (Bayport, Baytown Township, Oak Park Heights, Stillwater, and Stillwater Township)
- East Bethel
- Forest Lake Cable Commission (Forest Lake, Columbus, and Scandia)
- Lakeville
- Red Wing
- Rochester
- St. Cloud
- Sartell
- Sauk Rapids
- Southwest Cable Commission (Eden Prairie, Edina, Hopkins, Minnetonka and Richfield)
- Waite Park
- Wayzata
- Worthington

Other States:

- Bismarck, ND
- Gardiner, ME
- Orange Beach, AL
- Tucson, AZ

FRANCHISE CONSULTING/ORGANIZATIONAL PLANNING

- Columbus, Ohio
- Eagan, MN
- North Metro Cable Commission, MN (Blaine, Centerville, Circle Pines, Ham Lake, Lexington, Lino Lakes, Spring Lake Park)
- North Suburban Cable Commission, MN (Arden Hills, Falcon Heights, Lauderdale, Little Canada, Mounds View, New Brighton, North Oaks, Roseville, St. Anthony, Shoreview)
- Quad Cities Cable Commission , MN (Andover, Anoka, Champlin, Ramsey)

Proposal: Cable Communications Needs Assessment
Charter Township of Meridian, MI

CONTACT INFORMATION

Holly Hansen Consulting (sole proprietorship)
5440 Vernon Avenue South #131
Minneapolis, MN 55436

Phone: 612-207-8709

E-mail: HollyMHansen@comcast.net

CLIENT REFERENCES

Karen George
Executive Director
Quad Cities Cable Communications Commission
763-427-1411
karen.george@qctv.org

Janine Hill
Communications Coordinator
City of Bloomington, MN
952-563-8819
jhill@ci.bloomington.mn.us

Mark Moore
Cable Manager
Apple Valley, Farmington, Rosemount Cable Commission
952-953-2502
mmoore@ci.applevalley.mn.us

2015 HOMTV Future Funding Needs

Equipment

- Dubbing station including Archival System
- Audio Recording Room
- Multi Media Lecturns for all Live Remote Locations
- Remote Truck/Production Capabilities
- Additional Remote equipment for multi camera events
- Wireless Microphones for use on remotes
- HD Studio Cameras
- HD Playback system(s)
- Smart Board systems for training
- Graphic Design Software & Licenses
- Closed Captioning
- Video On Demand

Facility Improvements

- Control Room reengineered
- All production rooms interconnected and interfaced together (intercom system, smart boards, projectors)
- Color Laser Printer
- New camera cable runs for HD capability
- Interconnect Police, Fire, and Service Center buildings to control room for live shoots
- Upgrade system to simultaneously broadcast two different live programs from CAMTV and HOMTV channels

Municipal Building Improvements/Additions

- Upgrade Audio/PA System in Town Hall Room
- Computer Presentation Equipment and Monitors in dias in THR
- AV technology for all conference rooms in Municipal Building
- Smart boards in Municipal lobby
- Community Multi Media Center

Franchise Related Issues

- Consultant for Franchise Renewal & Negotiations
- Attorney fees for Franchise Renewal & related issues
- Community Communications Needs Surveys
- Cost Analysis and Tech Surveys for Rights of Way

Programming Improvements

- Diversity in Programming; cultural arts programs
- Community Human Interest Programs
- Business Programs
- Democracy Programs; community engagement call in programs
- Being Good Citizens and Advocacy programs

Staff Needs

- IT Technical Specialist
- Engineer
- 2 Part time Production Managers increase to 2 full time Production Managers
- 2 additional Production Managers
- 1 Freelance Graphic Artist increase to full time graphic artist

2015 Communications Department Goals: Highlighted goals reflect programming and equipment

Goal #2 Meridian Township shall sustain and enhance public safety

a. Increase information shared with the public through social media regarding public safety tips, PSAs (Public Service Announcements), emergency communications, and police and fire services

b. Provide Beyond the Badge police and fire programs and stories

c. Strengthen communication and educate developers/builders, business owners, and neighborhood associations regarding the planning process in an effort to minimize violations and negative impacts

Goal #4 Meridian Township shall provide exemplary public services and facilities

b. Finalize the Comcast franchise agreement to include high definition (HD) PEG (Public, Education & Government) channels, VOD (Video on Demand), and PEG on the program guide system

c. Develop a 5-year equipment purchase plan to be adopted by the Cable Communications Commission (CCC) that includes HD studio cameras and playback

d. Improve communication and educate the public on the Rental Housing Program and continue to improve the process for rental housing inspections

m. Update the patrol car graphic design

aa. Investigate options for establishing Meridian Township as a smart community and explore viable plans for expanding municipal fiber, broadband, and public Wi-Fi in Meridian Township

Goal #5 Meridian Township shall sustain and enhance our economic prosperity for all residents

b. Develop a branding campaign and marketing strategy and propose a 2016 budget to the Township Board to include branding campaign, imaging, print, design, and marketing

o. Sustain and enhance our positive working relationship with Michigan State University

Goal #6 Meridian Township shall promote and enhance diversity across the Township

- a. Promote cultural diversity with our community programs and celebrations
- b. Explore closed captioning costs for HOMTV programs
- c. Investigate and possibly launch a Chinese version of HOMTV news programs
- g. Strengthen community pride through such activities as downtown events and expanded outdoor sculpture displays
- h. Seek diversity in hiring and promoting
- k. Promote Nokomis Learning Center activities
- m. Utilize additional recruiting outlets and resources such as on-line job boards, advertisements, and professional organizations to attract qualified minorities to apply for job openings
- n. Provide professional training and development to staff

Goal #8 Meridian Township shall sustain and enhance constituent communications

- a. Continue to respond to all citizen inquiries in a timely, professional, and efficient manner
- c. Replace the Town Hall microphones and bases
- d. Investigate replacement of Township hall video imager
- e. Increase encouragement of public engagement and participation through multimedia and other ways to connect
- f. Create a monthly Township Manager blog and increase its outreach
- g. Conduct a communications needs assessment
- h. Investigate costs of new Township website
- i. Audit social media outlets and develop a social media strategy campaign
- j. Upload packet information on the Township website that is in a searchable format for ease of use by the public
- k. Publish the Meridian Monitor twice-yearly to all residents

m. Increase staff engagement and participation with neighborhood groups using social media, fire safety programs, HOM-TV interviews, and Beyond the Badge

p. Print and distribute one issue of the Meridian Township Parks and Recreation Family Fun Guide (distribution in January)

q. Increase communication with constituents through email and multi-media sources

t. Begin the process of overhauling the Township website and branding up to an amount of \$30,000

Goal #9 Meridian Township shall sustain and enhance neighborhoods and eliminate blight

a. Create DAS (Distributed Antenna System) ordinance with the Public Works & Engineering and Planning Departments

b. Promote Neighborhood Watch

c. Develop a method to increase compliance of communications companies using the rights of way in the Township

e. Promote and encourage the preservation of older neighborhoods

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
CABLE COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

**VIDEO
SERVICE
PROVIDER(S)**

Andrea Smiley

Subject: FW: cable and schools

From: Gardner, John [mailto:John_Gardner@cable.comcast.com]
Sent: Friday, September 11, 2015 10:27 AM
To: Deborah Guthrie <Guthrie@meridian.mi.us>
Subject: RE: cable and schools

Deborah,

Comcast continues to voluntarily offer video and Internet services to state-accredited K-12 schools in the Comcast service area. Please have the principal or authorized representative of schools contact me for information, installation or changes to their courtesy services.

The courtesy services provided by Comcast are part of our educational and community investment initiatives. There are no franchise-related requirements to continue providing these services.

Thank you,

*John Gardner
Director, External Affairs
Comcast - Heartland Region*

*1401 E. Miller Road
Lansing, MI 48911
(517) 334-5686 phone
(517) 334-1880 fax*

INTERNET ESSENTIALS from Comcast

A program designed to expand broadband adoption among low-income American households with at least one child eligible to receive free or reduced price school lunches. Once in the program, participants receive fast, affordable Internet service for \$9.95/mo + tax, the option to purchase a computer for just \$150 and access to free digital literacy training. To learn more or to apply, please call 1-855-8-INTERNET (1-855-846-8376) or visit InternetEssentials.com. To become a partner, please visit InternetEssentials.com/partner.

Confidentiality Notice

This message and any attachments to it contain information exclusively for intended recipients. If you are not an intended recipient, please contact the sender to report the error and then delete all copies of this message from your system.

From: Deborah Guthrie [mailto:Guthrie@meridian.mi.us]
Sent: Friday, September 11, 2015 8:31 AM
To: Gardner, John
Subject: FW: cable and schools

Trustee Styka has a questions about St. Martha School receiving a courtesy account. I do not recall seeing that school on a courtesy account list. This is the list I have on file. Can you verify my list and answer Ron's question about St. Martha? Should I be including St. Martha on this list I have as well? Call me if you need to. Thanks, Deborah

Schools

Bennett Elementary	2650 Bennett Rd
Montessori at Central	4406 Okemos Rd
Chippewa 7-8 School	4000 Okemos Rd
Cornell Elementary	4317 Cornell Rd
Donley Elementary School	2961 E Lake Lansing
Edgewood Elem School	1826 Osage Dr
Haslett High School	5450 Marsh Rd
Haslett Middle School	1535 Franklin St
Hiawatha Elementary	1900 Jolly Rd
Kinawa 5-6 School	1900 Kinawa Dr
Montessori Radmoor	2745 Mount Hope Rd
Murphy Elementary	1875 Lake Lansing Rd
Okemos High School	2800 Jolly Rd
Ralya Elementary	5645 School St
Wilkshire Early Childhood Cntr	5750 Academic Way

From: Ron Styka [<mailto:ronstyka@gmail.com>]
Sent: Thursday, September 10, 2015 11:52 PM
To: Deborah Guthrie <Guthrie@meridian.mi.us>
Subject: cable and schools

Do the schools get free cable service from Comcast?

Was that part of our new agreement?

St. Martha School used to get free cable, but dropped the service due to being charged. Does it qualify for free cable?

Thanks.

Ron

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN

**CABLE COMMUNICATIONS
COMMISSION**

**COMMUNICATIONS
DIRECTOR
REPORT**

Andrea Smiley

Subject: FW: Audio system in Town Hall
Attachments: mic use diagram.pdf

From: Darkus Beasley
Sent: Monday, September 28, 2015 7:49 PM
To: Frank Walsh <walsh@meridian.mi.us>
Cc: Deborah Guthrie <Guthrie@meridian.mi.us>; Brandie Yates <yates@meridian.mi.us>
Subject: Audio system in Town Hall

Hi Frank,

Tonight we are starting to use the new microphones and audio system. We are still waiting on some AV equipment to finalize the installation, but the new system is usable. The laptop and document camera (that show presentations and pictures or documents) will be installed in the next coming weeks – so we’re still using our older devices for those purposes. The Planning Commission meeting is currently underway and we’re testing the new audio system as I type this. Brian Kusch, one of the broadcast engineers that wired and installed the new system is here helping us sort out any hiccups that may arise tonight; he has told me to coach any Commissioners or members of the Township Board about proper microphone use. I have spoken to the Planning Commissioners about proper use, and will do the same before any upcoming meetings. Proper use is as follows:

Sit at a normal distance from the microphone – please do not lean backwards or grab the microphone and bring it closer to speak – the new microphones are more sensitive and will pick up audio from longer distances.
Placing your hands on the microphone may cause scratching noises or unnecessary audio to be picked up – please do not hold the microphone while you speak.
The push button on the microphones will temporarily mute the microphone – use this to make personal comments if you do not want what you say to be televised.

I’ve attached a pdf that explains microphone use. I think it may be useful for some.

If anyone has questions, I’m happy to answer them. When the installation is finalized, I’ll relay that information to Deborah so that everyone is in the know.

Thank you,



Darkus Beasley
Senior TV Production Manager, HOMTV
517.853.4376 | beasley@meridian.mi.us | www.homtv.net |
5151 Marsh Rd. Okemos, MI. 48864



 [Subscribe for free: HOMTV Weekly Top Stories](#)

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN

**CABLE COMMUNICATIONS
COMMISSION**

**TOWNSHIP
REPORT**

September 18, 2015

NOTES

TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETING ~ SEPTEMBER 15, 2015

Supervisor LeGoff was absent from the meeting.

1. PRESENTATIONS

- A. Introduction of Police Officer Doug Strouse
- B. Resolution of Recognition – Haslett Beautification Association
- C. Welcoming Michigan Resolution – **Approved (6-0).**

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA – **Approved (5-1).**

3. CONSENT AGENDA – **The following items were approved as amended (6-0):**

- A. Communications – **Moved to Action Item 4.D**
- B. Minutes – September 1, 2015 Regular Meeting – **Moved to Action Item 4.E**
- C. Bills – **Moved to Action Item 4.F**
- D. Department of Natural Resources Declaration and Notice – Wonch Park Pathway Project
- E. Ratification of Police Officer Appointment
- F. Authorization to Sell 4675 Okemos Road and 2150 Clinton Street (MARC/Fire Station)

4. ACTION ITEMS

- A. 2016 Recommended Budget – **Approved (5-1). During discussion, two additional motions were made and then withdrawn (a motion to change part-time Communications Department staff to full-time; a motion to increase the rental registration fee). Also, an additional motion to delete \$400 allocated to the Chamber of Commerce failed (2-4).**
- B. Budget Amendments – **Approved (6-0).**
- C. 2015 Township Citizen Survey – **Approved (6-0).**
- D. Communications – **Approved (6-0).**
- E. Minutes – September 1, 2015 Regular Meeting – **Approved (6-0).**
- F. Bills – **Approved (6-0).**

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- A. Redi-Ride – Capital Area Transportation Authority – **Board consensus to create a work group (to include Redi-Ride users, Township Board members, Township staff members, and representatives from Okemos School District), to discuss the topic. In addition, Township counsel will be requested to review the information.**
- B. Mobile Food Units – **Board consensus to draft new non-zoning regulations in Chapter 38 of the Code of Ordinances (Option 4 of the options staff presented to the Board). Item will be brought back for Discussion at the October 20 Board meeting.**
- C. Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA) – **Item will return for Action at the October 6 Board meeting.**
- D. Personnel Policy Manual (Draft) – **Board consensus to have the item return for Discussion at the October 6 Board meeting.**
- E. Township Branding and Website Project – **Item was removed from the agenda.**
- F. Smith Drain Study Results – **Board received a presentation on the study results and requested that the item return for Discussion in October. The Board also requested that the Ingham County Drain Commissioner's Office prepare options and costs for the project to be reviewed by the Board.**
- G. Daniels Drain Neighborhood Meeting – **The Board set a special meeting for September 29, 2015, at 6:00 p.m. in the Town Hall room to receive comments from the community in regards to the potential Daniels Drain improvement project.**

6. TOWNSHIP MANAGER REPORT – Township Manager Walsh updated the Board on projects and matters involving the Township.

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN

**CABLE COMMUNICATIONS
COMMISSION**

PROGRAMMING

HOMTV and CAMTV PRODUCTION TOTALS - 2015

Updated 9/29/15 Brandon

NUMBER OF NEW HOMTV PROGRAMS AIRED DURING THE MONTH

<i>Show</i>	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>April</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>June</i>	<i>July</i>	<i>Aug</i>	<i>Sept</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>	<i>Show Totals</i>	<i>Show Hours</i>
All Access	1	4	3	5	3	6	1	1	3				27	11:25:26
Beyond the Badge	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0				6	2:27:12
Coffee Break	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1			2	0:50:10
Community Connection	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0				1	0:25:53
InnerView	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				0	0:00:00
Meridian News Now	2	4	5	4	2	5	3	2	3				30	12:33:39
Meridian News Now (Thursday)	0	3	3	4	1	4	4	1	1	1			22	6:51:00
Open Line	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				0	0:00:00
HOMTV Promos/PSA	0	6	9	9	2	6	24	7	2				65	0:33:30
Downloaded Promo/PSA	16			0	0	1	0	0	1				18	0:10:00
Topical Promos	3	12	11	7	4	6	2	3	3				51	0:12:45
Senior Living	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0				2	0:50:30
Elections	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				0	0:00:00
Special Features	1	0	1	0	2	2	2	1	1				10	6:39:27
Monthly Program Totals	23	30	33	30	15	31	38	17	15	2	0	0		
Quarter 1 Totals	86													
Quarter 2 Totals	76													
Quarter 3 Totals	70													
Quarter 4 Totals														
Yearly Total	234	42:59:32												

NUMBER OF NEW HOMTV MEETINGS AIRED DURING THE MONTH

<i>Meridian Live</i>	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>April</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>June</i>	<i>July</i>	<i>Aug</i>	<i>Sept</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>	<i>Meeting Total</i>	<i>Meeting Hours</i>
Township Board	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2				18	80:19:18
Planning Commission	2	1	2	2	3	2	2	2	2				18	38:37:09
Environmental Commission	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1				6	8:17:25
Zoning Board of Appeals	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	2				15	15:55:24
Park Commission	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1				9	11:47:29
Monthly Totals	7	7	7	8	9	7	6	7	8	0	0	0		
Quarter 1	21													
Quarter 2	24													
Quarter 3														
Quarter 4														
Yearly Total	66	154:56:45												

HOMTV Total	300	197:56:17
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NUMBER OF NEW CAMTV PROGRAMS AIRED DURING THE MONTH

<i>Show</i>	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>April</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>June</i>	<i>July</i>	<i>Aug</i>	<i>Sept</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Show Hours</i>
Battle of Ideas	4	2	4	4	3	3	3	4	2				29	28:46:49
City Pulse Newsmakers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				0	0:00:00
Democracy Now	4	4	5	4	4	5	4	4	4				38	37:24:50
Event Coverage	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0				1	0:30:00
Inspirational Corner	3	3	5	3	2	4	1	4	5				30	13:49:33
Novella	1	4	4	4	3	5	4	5	1				31	30:28:39
Poetree-n-Motion	4	2	5	2	0	5	3	4	2				27	12:52:54
MHD	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0				1	0:07:03
Cut Ins	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0				2	0:06:49
Promos/PSA's	-	-	-	-	-	3	0	0	0				3	0:01:30
In the Fight	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1				7	3:17:00
UM Wolverine Caucus	0	1	0	0	2	0	1	0	0				4	3:51:30
Teen LOL TV	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				0	0:00:00
Syndicated Special Features	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	1			6	4:35:20
Monthly Totals	17	16	25	18	18	28	17	23	16	1	0	0		
Quarter 1	58													
Quarter 2	64													
Quarter 3														
Quarter 4														
Yearly Total	179	135:51:57												

CAMTV Total	179
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Grand Total	479
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CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN
CABLE COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

**VIEWERSHIP/
PROMOTIONS**

Andrea Smiley

From: Frank Walsh
Sent: Wednesday, September 09, 2015 1:23 PM
To: Deborah Guthrie
Cc: Andrea Smiley; Andrew Lathrop; Brian Seipel; Patrick Crowley; Ron Styka; Tunga Kiyak; Walter Benenson
Subject: RE: CTAs Certified Tourism Ambassadors

Congratulations on your accomplishment. We are better thanks to your efforts.

Frank

Frank L. Walsh
Township Manager
Charter Township of Meridian
P: (517) 853-4254
F: (517) 853-4251

www.meridian.mi.us
www.facebook.com/MeridianTownship
www.twitter.com/Meridiantwp
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/frankwalsh3>
<https://managersperspective.wordpress.com/>

From: Deborah Guthrie
Sent: Wednesday, September 09, 2015 12:23 PM
To: Frank Walsh
Cc: Andrea Smiley; Andrew Lathrop; Brian Seipel; Deborah Guthrie; Patrick Crowley; Ron Styka; Tunga Kiyak; Walter Benenson
Subject: CTAs Certified Tourism Ambassadors

Communications Specialist and Intern Coordinator Brandie Yates and myself have become Certified Tourism Ambassadors (CTA's) through the Greater Lansing Convention & Visitor Bureau's (GLCVB) Greater Lansing Tourism Ambassadors Program. As CTA's, we will be able to have greater knowledge to showcase Meridian Township and have greater access to share more information about what to do in the township, encourage visitors to stay at our hotels, experience our parks and trails, and attend our township wide events with the Greater Lansing region.

We also feel it is important that as ambassadors, we are able to ensure that the brand image is being accurately displayed across the region and to the hospitality industry. We will be able to represent and monitor our brand image through the GLCVB website, at GLCVB networking events where the hospitality industry representatives will be in attendance, and through further educational opportunities. All of these efforts will help put our Meridian brand on the map.

We appreciate your support behind our certification. Deborah



Deborah Guthrie
Communications Director/PIO, Meridian Township
517.853.4380 | guthrie@meridian.mi.us | www.meridian.mi.us |
5151 Marsh Rd. Okemos, MI. 48864



August 2015

Dear Greater Lansing Ambassador,

Congratulations – you are a Certified Tourism Ambassador!

It is my pleasure to congratulate you on earning your CTA designation! You are among the very first in Greater Lansing's tourism industry to receive this designation through the Greater Lansing Convention & Visitor Bureau's Greater Lansing Tourism Ambassadors Program.

I want to thank you for the time and energy you put into studying the pre-class document, completing the exercises and participating in the half-day class. Your efforts represent a commitment to your career and to Greater Lansing's hospitality community.

As a CTA, your knowledge and enthusiasm for showcasing Greater Lansing are keys to creating exceptional experiences for our visitors. Each satisfied visitor will share their experience with others, ensuring that Greater Lansing remains in the forefront of destinations worldwide. And that translates into more business for everyone in the tourism industry! All of Greater Lansing benefits from increased tourism – and it all starts with a dedicated community of CTAs, like you!

During the coming year you will have unique opportunities to further your education of Greater Lansing's visitor amenities. By attending events, networking venues and educational sessions, you will have the opportunity to renew your CTA designation each year. We will contact you in the next couple of months with the details.

Again, congratulations and wear your CTA pin with pride!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jack Schripsema". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jack Schripsema, CTA
President

In Memoriam

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Chief Executive Officer

Deborah M. Orloff,
RN, BSN, MPH



September 1, 2015

Deborah Guthrie
HOM TV AND CAM TV
5151 Marsh
Okemos, MI 48864

Dear Deborah,

ON BEHALF OF THE MICHIGAN Parkinson Foundation (MPF), we thank you for supporting the 6th Annual "I Gave My Sole for Parkinson's" Walkathon & 5K Run as a Media Sponsor. We are so grateful for your support. This event, held on August 8, 2015 at Okemos High School, attracted more than 300 participants, raising over \$41,000 and donations are still coming in! Our Walk-a-thons and 5K Runs continue to grow and generate a powerful sense of camaraderie for participants. We had a beautiful day and the clouds kept everyone protected from the hot sun!

The funds raised will help to insure MPF's ability to conduct programs developed to address the critical needs of people who have Parkinson's, their families and health professionals who treat them, within the State of Michigan. There are now 60 affiliated support groups in Michigan. We conduct educational programs, provide information and referral to neurologists and local resources, and have medication and day care financial assistance programs. We serve as a place to go for those needing help with Parkinson's. Our motto is: EVERY PERSON WITH PD WILL HAVE COMPASSIONATE, COMPETENT CARE AND SUPPORT.

As you know, Parkinson's disease is a chronic, degenerative neurological movement disorder which gradually robs people of their independence. Treatment is complicated, requiring a delicate balancing of medication and other therapies. Progression of the disease is slow and takes its toll on the person with PD and the entire family. Although there is no cure, help and support is available through the programs provided by Michigan Parkinson Foundation.

It is through your support of the "I Gave My Sole for Parkinson's Walk-a-Thon and 5K Run" as well as individual fundraising efforts that MPF can continue to provide these valuable programs and services. These times are particularly challenging and individual and company support, such as what you have offered, is invaluable.

Please visit our website at www.parkinsonsmi.org to view photos and more information about this event, as well as other information concerning Parkinson's disease.

Again, thank you for your continued support and we look forward to seeing you in 2016, if not before!

Most sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Edwin B. George (dtk)".

Edwin B. George, MD, PhD
Chairman, Board of Directors

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Deborah M. Orloff".

Deborah M. Orloff
Chief Executive Officer

CC: Brandie Yates
Coty Kenneth

A handwritten note in blue ink that says "Thank you so much for your support again this year." with a flourish at the end.

Founded 1983

Dedicated to People Living with Parkinson's

30400 Telegraph Road • Suite 150 • Bingham Farms, MI 48025
www.parkinsonsmi.org • 248-433-1011 • Fax: 248-433-1150 • 800-852-9781



This certificate is presented to . . .

HOM / CAM TV Media Sponsor

*in appreciation of your
Outstanding Support and Sponsorship of the
2015 Lansing "I Gave My Sole For Parkinson's"
Walk-a-thon & 5K Run.*

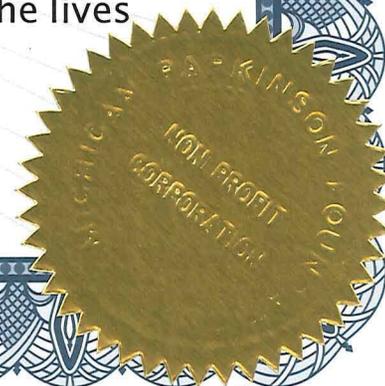
*"Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm."
- Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Your thoughtfulness and generous sponsorship have made a difference in the lives of over 30,000 people in Michigan living with Parkinson's.

We are truly grateful for your support!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Deborah M. Orloff".

Deborah M. Orloff, Chief Executive Officer



CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN

**CABLE COMMUNICATIONS
COMMISSION**

FYI

Andrea Smiley

From: Deborah Guthrie
Sent: Tuesday, September 22, 2015 1:35 PM
To: Andrea Smiley; Brandie Yates; Brandon Wirth; Coty Kenneth; Darkus Beasley; Lynn Meikle
Subject: FW: Drones for PEG Access, Customer Success with Worldwide Viewership, a K-12 Solution, & More!

Drones article. Cool.

From: Sherri Powers [mailto:spowers@leightronix.com]
Sent: Tuesday, September 22, 2015 1:07 PM
To: Deborah Guthrie <Guthrie@meridian.mi.us>
Subject: Drones for PEG Access, Customer Success with Worldwide Viewership, a K-12 Solution, & More!

September Newsletter



To talk to a solution specialist, call
(800) 243-5589

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Wadsworth Community Television keeps public access accessible with LEIGHTRONIX

Using a whole slew of LEIGHTRONIX equipment, Wadsworth Community Television gives community members ample room to broadcast across multiple channels, even providing a full studio and training. WCTV's popularity has grown immensely, receiving international viewership.

[Read the Full Story >>](#)

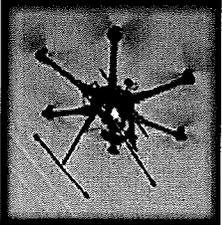
LEIGHTRONIX Tip

K12 Educators: Give special events a bigger impact with the IncodeX One™ Point-to-Point broadcasting solution.

Drones are here, but are PEG broadcasters ready for them?

Organizations all across the country are getting permission to use drones commercially. Find out how drones can help your PEG station's content in the latest post on the LEIGHTRONIX blog.

[Read Full Post >>](#)



New Orleans, LA — Come see us at the SCTE Cable-Tec Expo

IPTV at

Broadcast live events across your campus or district with ease using the IncodeX One.

Special guests no longer need to be limited to one campus; a superintendent's speech can be given to the whole district; every age group can enjoy the high school's play; share school spirit with every student, broadcasting pep rallies to one or more endpoints.

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 Is your software/firmware up-to-date? Find out.

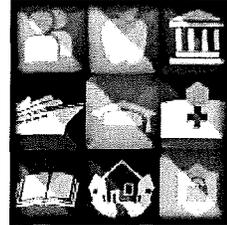
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Between Oct. 16th and 18th, head to booth #1812 for a demonstration of LEIGHTRONIX products. Both the LuxeVision ipMerge™ IPTV system and IncodeX Vier™ 1x4 encoder will be featured.
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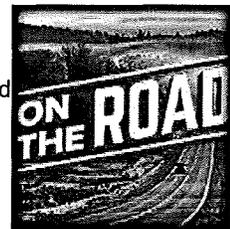
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The fall tradeshow season is here! See us in a city near you.

Find LEIGHTRONIX in Spokane, WA on Sept. 22nd for the VMI Technology Showcase, and in Columbus, OH for iVideo Technologies on the same day. Stay tuned for future event updates.
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Deborah Guthrie

From: MSU Newsroom <newsroom@CABS.MSU.EDU>
Sent: Wednesday, June 10, 2015 9:09 AM
To: CABSMEDIA@LIST.MSU.EDU
Subject: Social media should play greater role in disaster communication

MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS * Communications and Brand Strategy * Michigan State University * 408 W. Circle Drive, Room 403 * East Lansing, MI * 48824

Contact: Bruno Takahashi, Journalism: (517) 432-2454, btakahas@msu.edu; Tom Oswald, Media Communications: (517) 432-0920, cell (517) 281-7129, tom.oswald@cabs.msu.edu

June 10, 2015

Social media should play greater role in disaster communication

EAST LANSING, Mich. – When Typhoon Haiyan slammed into the Philippines in 2013, thousands of people were killed, in part because they didn't know it was coming or didn't know how to protect themselves.

Could an increased use of social media, particularly on the part of the nation's government, have made a difference?

While that question remains open, it is clear that social media should play a larger role in emergency preparedness, says Bruno Takahashi, a Michigan State University assistant professor of journalism who studies the issue.

Using the Philippines' typhoon as a case study, Takahashi and his fellow researchers looked into the matter and determined that more tweets and Facebook messaging might have made a difference.

"We need to think of social media not as an afterthought," he said. "It needs to be integrated into emergency-preparedness plans."

He said as the typhoon, one of the strongest storms ever recorded on Earth, made landfall, many individuals and some journalists were using Twitter to spread information. However, the government was not.

"All of the coordination of relief and what to do to seek shelter came after the storm hit," Takahashi said. "Maybe that is something governments should do ahead of time – be more proactive."

For this study, which was published in the journal *Computers in Human Behavior*, Takahashi and his team analyzed more than 1,000 tweets that were sent around the time of the typhoon.

"We have to think about social media not just as this place online where people go to have fun or share mindless thoughts," he said. "It's apparent that social media can be a really powerful tool, not only for preparedness, but also as a coping mechanism."

Just as radio was years ago, social media helps people connect with others, lets them know there are others out there sharing the same problems.

"It lets people know they are somehow connected to others," he said. "People use social media to share their feelings, as well as help them try to make sense of the tragedy."

One way in which Tacloban City, which took the brunt of the storm, used social media afterwards is officials set up a center where people could log onto Facebook. They were given three minutes to send a message, letting friends and loved ones know they were all right

How effective can social media, particularly Twitter, be at spreading news? Takahashi said that social media messages can spread faster than natural disasters, including earthquakes like the one in Nepal last month.

"There was an instance in which people who had not felt an earthquake got a tweet about it, then felt it seconds later," he said.

Other members of Takahashi's research were Edson Tandoc, assistant professor at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, and Christine Carmichael, a doctoral candidate in the MSU College of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

To view the published paper, visit
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0747563215003076>.

###

Michigan State University has been working to advance the common good in uncommon ways for more than 150 years. One of the top research universities in the world, MSU focuses its vast resources on creating solutions to some of the world's most pressing challenges, while providing life-changing opportunities to a diverse and inclusive academic community through more than 200 programs of study in 17 degree-granting colleges.

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THE INTERNET AND MUNICIPAL BROADBAND NETWORK SYSTEMS

By Michael J. Watza

“The Internet changes everything.”¹

There is a near-endless list of current topics in telecommunications today, but none as central to all of us—municipalities in particular—as the combination of recent changes in Internet regulation and the overwhelming approval of municipal broadband systems providing citizens with true high-speed/low-cost access to that same Internet. Roughly 1,000 pages of new Federal Communications Commission orders and rulings on these two subjects, together with recent changes to Michigan law, make refining the subject for purposes of this article a daunting task. If this primer proves valuable, other important telecommunications issues may be addressed in future articles.²

The URLs to the FCC Open Internet Order (also known as the Net Neutrality Order) and to FCC Chairman Wheeler’s comments (along with his simple summary of the March 12, 2015, FCC order) may be found in the endnotes to this article.³ A URL reference to the companion FCC Municipal Broadband Order is also provided.⁴

The Open Internet Order (net neutrality): Five simple rules

The FCC’s long-awaited, 400-page Open Internet submission—including its order of 282 pages and 1,777 footnotes as well as certain appendices and supportive and dissenting comments—can be boiled down to a few points. All five of these primary rules emanate from the FCC invocation of Title II of the Federal Communications Act, which is how our landline-based phone companies are still largely governed.⁵

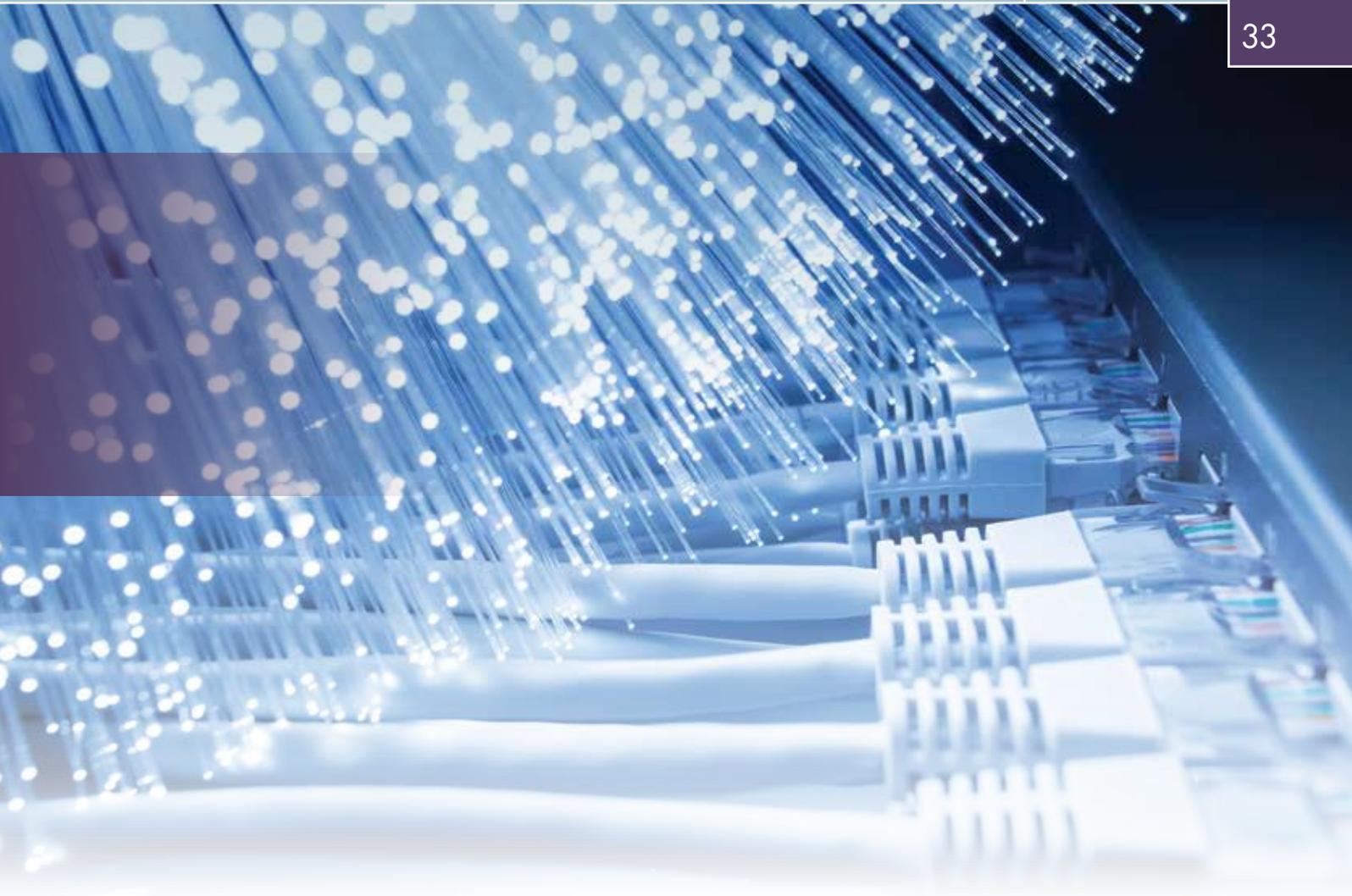
These rules are designed to apply to the largest of the monopolies that own the wires, often referred to as “the

pipes,” through which all Internet access occurs. These are very generally referred to as broadband providers or, in some cases, Internet service providers or ISPs. They include traditional phone providers such as AT&T and Verizon and cable providers such as Comcast, Charter, and Time Warner.

The order refers to the first three rules as “bright line rules,” the fourth as a “general conduct rule,” and the fifth as a reiteration of an earlier “transparency rule” that was upheld in a recent federal appeals court ruling.⁶

The five Open Internet rules are:

- (1) No blocking of lawful content.
- (2) No throttling or “impairing or degrading lawful Internet traffic on the basis of content, application[s], service or use...”
- (3) No paid prioritization except for those instances subject to a “narrow waiver” (no “fast or slow lanes”).
- (4) No unreasonable interference/disadvantage standard designed primarily to protect the innocent consumer and “edge providers” (e.g., those larger entities that populate the Internet with many of the products and applications we wish to use, such as Google and Netflix) from potentially harmful Internet service provider conduct. Alleged violations are to be decided on a case-by-case basis.
- (5) Transparency requirements imposed on Internet service providers to disclose accurate information regarding network practices to consumers and edge providers so they, in turn, can make informed choices regarding use of such services.⁷



Note there is no rate regulation imposed or suggested. These rules are deemed to apply generally to mobile network providers such as Sprint as well as landline or fixed systems.⁸

The Open Internet Order became effective June 12, 2015.

A number of parties have challenged the order with appeals consolidated in the United States D.C. Circuit Court. On June 11, 2015, the D.C. Circuit Court rejected U.S. Telecom's request for a stay of enforcement of the rules until the court issued a substantive decision on the merits. The court did agree to expedite the appeal, however, and is expected to issue a final decision in the case (No. 15-1063) by early next year.

By now invoking the FCC's historic telecommunications regulatory jurisdiction, it imposes these broad but firm rules on the provider monopolies regarding a variety of actual and potential abuses of Internet end users like you and me as well as the interests of edge providers. There have been a number of public fights between these two groups over additional fees or premiums the pipe owners wanted to charge these large bandwidth users for premium access to the Internet. The resulting differential is sometimes referred to as the creation of fast and slow lanes. Consumers and edge providers argued

FAST FACTS

Municipal broadband systems, as recently expressly authorized by the Federal Communications Commission, serve at least two functions to the benefit of all U.S. citizens: to provide much needed high-speed/low-cost Internet access and to spur traditional broadband providers to do so also.

this was a “double dip” by the monopolist providers holding all the connective wires between all Internet users; end users already pay access fees, and to charge content providers another fee would unfairly increase overall charges, not to mention monopoly profits.

The FCC now appears to have barred this parceling out of the Internet and what would likely have resulted in Internet-based haves and have-nots, where the haves would (and in some cases already did) pay for greater speed and access of their products while newer or smaller entrepreneurs who could not afford these faster lanes would be shut out of the Internet-based marketplace. This issue of fast and slow lanes should largely be resolved now, benefitting users and consumers.

Municipal broadband order

Meanwhile—and particularly appropriate to the extent this article is designed to address telecommunications issues unique to municipalities—the FCC also struck down state laws in North Carolina and Tennessee, which purported to limit the ability of municipalities to build and provide broadband fiber networks for the benefit of their own and neighboring residents.⁹ Such laws have been erected in dozens of states at the behest of provider monopolists to reduce competition in the Internet access business.

Although Michigan's laws,¹⁰ which technically allow such systems, impose certain hurdles to municipal broadband networks and were not specifically addressed in the FCC order, the statement of preemption applicable to North Carolina and Tennessee law is equally applicable here and in other states, at least in principle. Whether Michigan communities will have to specifically seek the shelter of a similar FCC order is yet to be determined and, hopefully, unnecessary.

The combined effect of the two orders

By releasing two Internet-related orders on March 12, 2015, the FCC has agreed to regulate the Internet under Title II of the Federal Communications Act and start the process of allowing some serious competition in the Internet marketplace.

In the Open Internet Order, the FCC addressed an urgent subject in this country concerning the state of Internet access both in terms of speed and cost for small businesses and residents. Up to this point, the Internet has been “regulated” almost exclusively by the monopolies that own the wires connecting all of us to the Internet—for the most part, in their own respective territories. Without competition, there has been little incentive for these monopolies to upgrade their networks or keep

Michigan already has its first gigabit community network in Sebewaing.

prices fair and reasonable. As a result, the U.S. has fallen from first in broadband speed to 35th globally.¹¹

This fall from dominance in a broadband world is perhaps best exemplified by South Korean school children, who this year are scheduled to fully abandon their textbooks for entirely electronic notebooks or similar network-dependent devices, given that every home in South Korea is connected with high-speed, low-cost fiber networks.¹²

While the FCC backed away from directly imposing Internet rate regulation for the benefit of consumers in its Open Internet Order, what it left on the cutting-room floor in that Title II-driven order it provided more quietly in the companion proceeding concerning the encouragement and unshackling of municipal broadband networks from restrictive state laws. Across the country, more than 100 communities have built their own Internet access systems or partnered with private entities to achieve the same goal in the face of overpriced and slow bandwidth access offered by monopoly providers.¹³

This is a comparable model followed by communities 100 years ago in the face of similar problems with the electric industry's slow provision of that essential service at a reasonable pace and price.

However, many communities interested in building their own broadband systems have been stymied by state laws written by and for the influential provider industry that either barred such systems or imposed onerous conditions on them. Michigan is one of a couple dozen states with these laws. By striking down such laws, the FCC has authorized and encouraged a significant economic tool for these communities. And perhaps most importantly, by freeing these communities to build on their own or partner with high-speed, low-cost, Internet-friendly private partners like Google (which has been actively pursuing such systems when incumbent monopoly providers have not), it is clear that the FCC is aggressively supporting rate control by the best alternative option in a free market: competition!

Michigan already has its first gigabit community network in Sebewaing. Another system is also evolving with the Midwest Energy Cooperative near Adrian, and other municipalities across the state are actively following their lead. There is also a new private network in downtown Detroit in the form of Dan Gilbert's Rocket Fiber, which is not wildly different from Google's Fiber project being rolled out in several cities in other states.

In Michigan and a number of other states where an organization of universities known as GIG-U exists, local communities have another advantage in the form of a state university Internet backbone (think large, fiber-based networks available to communities at or near cost). MERIT is the Michigan component of GIG-U and available to assist with Internet access in almost any Michigan community seeking a wholly owned broadband system or a public-private partnership.

A note on municipal Wi-Fi

Municipal Wi-Fi can be a good beginning to a community Internet access network. Though not capable of the high speeds provided by fiber networks, a number of municipal-sponsored and operated Wi-Fi systems are popping up around Michigan. Traverse City, for example, has such a system at or near operational status. The rules applicable to installing wireless networks are not necessarily the same as landline broadband networks; nonetheless, care should be taken in establishing these hybrid systems.

Conclusion

The combination of closer regulation of the current dominant monopolists in the Internet business and the development of these municipal systems and even new private-sector systems such as Rocket Fiber or Google's Fiber Program should serve to spur the historic telecommunications monopoly providers, like the electric monopolists a century ago, to build the high-speed/low-cost broadband systems all of us need. That is a good thing as we all find ourselves competing and playing increasingly on the information super highway. ■



Michael J. Watza provides litigated, legislative, and regulatory solutions for municipal clients concerning telecommunications, energy, and insurance in his role as a principal at the Kitch Law firm. He is general counsel to PROTEC, special counsel to the MMRMA, and adjunct faculty at Michigan State University College of Law, teaching Communication Law & Policy. He provided the legal support for the development of Michigan's first gigabit community fiber network.

He provided the legal support for the development of Michigan's first gigabit community fiber network.

Thank you to PROTEC, whose member financial support allows me to address these issues on behalf of Michigan communities and residents. Visit <http://www.protec-mi.org> for more information.

ENDNOTES

1. Cortese, *The Software Revolution—Part 1*, Business Week (December 4, 1995), quoting J. Neil Weintraut, managing director for technology research at Hambrecht & Quist Inc.
2. One of those issues is cell towers, including the FCC's treatment of Distributed Antenna Systems, the problems caused as they pop up in municipal rights of way, and the interplay between the federal pronouncements and recently enacted Michigan law changes. See, e.g., *In the Matter of Acceleration of Broadband Deployment*, Report and Order of the FCC, released October 21, 2014 (WT Docket Nos. 13-238 and 13-32; WC Docket No. 11-59) <http://transition.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/2014/db1021/FCC-14-153A1.pdf>; MCL 28.283 *et seq.*, as amended by 2014 PA 564; MCL 125.3205(a), as added by 2014 PA 556; MCL 125.3514, as added by 2012 PA 143; 2014 PA 86/88. All websites cited in this article were accessed August 24, 2015.
Another subject is cable law, including a discussion of the \$26.7 million settlement of a U.S. District Court case, and the Michigan attorney general's position there, regarding the ability of local communities to reject the Michigan Uniform Video Services Act Uniform Franchise Agreement, a review of the Comcast/Time Warner and AT&T Direct TV proposed mergers, a review of the AT&T audit recently conducted by a dozen Michigan communities, and finally, a look at pending decisions that could redefine the definition of cable and over-the-top (IP-based) video.
3. *In the Matter of Protecting and Promoting the Open Internet*, Report and Order on Remand, Declaratory Ruling, and Order of the FCC, released March 12, 2015 (GN Docket No. 14-28) <http://transition.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/2015/db0312/FCC-15-24A1.pdf>; FCC, *Statement of Chairman Wheeler* <<http://www.fcc.gov/article/doc-327104a2>>.
4. *In the Matter of City of Wilson and The Electric Power Board of Chattanooga*, Memorandum Opinion and Order of the FCC, released March 12, 2015 (WC Docket Nos. 14-115 and 14-116) <https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-15-25A1.pdf>.
5. 47 USC 201 *et seq.*; see also 47 USC 154. Interesting, too, will be the impact of the FCC Internet regulation under Title II on Michigan's 2014 effort to deregulate local phone service requirements, scheduled to occur January 1, 2017. MCL 484.2313 *et seq.*, as amended by 2014 PA 52.
6. *In the Matter of Preserving the Open Internet*, 25 FCCR 17905, 17911 (2010) *aff'd in part*, vacated in part by *Verizon v FCC*, 408 US App DC 92; 740 F3d 623 (2014).
7. *In the Matter of Preserving the Open Internet*, Report and Order of the FCC, released December 23, 2010 (GN Docket No. 09-191, WC Docket No. 07-52), pp 45-47 and 82, ¶¶ 104-109 and 185.
8. *Id.* at p 35, ¶ 88.
9. *The Electric Power Board of Chattanooga* (WC Docket No. 14-116).
10. See MCL 484.3114 and MCL 484.2252.
11. World Economic Forum, *The Global Competitiveness Report 2013-2014* <http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GlobalCompetitivenessReport_2013-14.pdf>.
12. Broadband Commission Working Group on Education, *Technology, Broadband and Education: Advancing the Education for All Agenda* (January 2013), p 26.
13. See Institute for Local Self-Reliance, *Broadband: Building Publicly Accountable Broadband Networks* <<http://ilsr.org/overview-broadband/>>.