

Cable Communications Commission Regular Meeting Minutes

Administrative Conference Room
Meridian Municipal Building, Okemos, MI

July 1, 2015

Present: Commissioners: Chair, Walter Benenson; Vice Chair, Patrick Crowley;
Commissioner, Brian Seipel
Staff: Deborah Guthrie, Communications Director and
Andrea Smiley, Administrative Assistant
Township: None
Comcast: John Gardner, Comcast Sr. Manager Government
Affairs
AT&T: None
Haslett Schools: None
Okemos Schools: None

Call Meeting to Order: Chair, Benenson called the meeting to order at **6:05 pm**.

Public Remarks: No Public Present

Approval of Agenda:

Vice Chair, Patrick Crowley moved **TO APPROVE AGENDA AS SUBMITTED**.
Seconded by Commission, Seipel.

Voice vote: Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes:

Commissioner Seipel moved **TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF** June 3, 2015.
Seconded by Chair, Benenson.

Commissioner, Seipel offered as a reminder to add information about the Cable Commissions Roles and Responsibilities as discussed at the May meeting. It was explained that there was further discussion at the June meeting and that the topic would be added to the August meeting Agenda.

Vice Chair, Crowley moved **TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF** June 3, 2015. Seconded by Chair, Benenson.

Voice vote: Motion carried unanimously.

Communications/Announcements:

1. City of Livonia – Survey Results

Guthrie commented that Meridian Township was a test site for the survey and that several other communities participated. The survey results were included in packet to share with the Commission. Question 29 concerned with challenges that will be

faced in the next two years. Question 28 concerned with issues similar to what the Commission has discussed; the budget, lack of HD availability, staffing, etc. The survey shows that other communities are facing similar challenges. Chair, Benenson asked the question of which communities participated in the survey. Guthrie stated that she would have to check with Livonia on the exact names.

Guthrie stated that she also wanted to share the survey with the Commission because a year ago a special committee was created to do own survey and budgeted for a communication needs assessment, the franchise fee audit and a technical audit for franchise renewal purposes. Vice Chair, Crowley, posed the question that now 2 out of the 3 were no longer needed. Guthrie commented that she shared the Livonia survey to show their process and discuss further after discussing the new business.

Old Business:

1. Township Website – RFP

Director Guthrie commented that Meridian Township received 8 Proposals for the new Website Design. Stephen Gebes, IT Director; Brandie Yates, Communications Specialist and Director Guthrie went over all the RFP's that were submitted and narrowed it down to the top 4 prospective bidders, meeting the majority of the criteria. Those 4 companies will be invited to a follow up interview/presentation to be scheduled in July.

Director Guthrie asked the Commission if they remembered discussing Commissioner Tunga as participating on the committee for the new Website. She wanted to ask if he wanted to be a part of the interviews/presentations. The Commission agreed that he did want to participate.

Director Guthrie commented that the Commission could appoint someone to be on the committee. Vice Chair, Crowley moved **TO APPOINT COMMISSIONER KIYAK, IF HE IS INTERESTED**. Seconded by Commissioner, Seipel.

Vice Chair, Crowley asked for the 8 companies that submitted a proposal and the 4 companies selected for follow up interviews to be identified. Administrative Assistant, Smiley provided a spreadsheet of the companies. The Commission reviewed the amount of local companies, as well as larger companies to be able to handle the expectations of the redesign.

2. Comcast Update and Budget Request

Chair, Benenson asked the question if this topic had been covered. Director, Guthrie explained that the Comcast Franchise Agreement is old business, but relates to the budget so it is all included in one memo. The memo shows the Comcast agreement and the additional monies along with staff

recommendation for the additional money. Director, Guthrie explains some of the needed replacements for equipment within the Communications department. She also discussed how some of the production equipment may not be covered by the Township insurance. Commissioner, Seipel offered his expertise to assist with the process.

Chair, Benenson asked if the meeting had moved to new business and Director, Guthrie commented that the Commission needed to look over the budgeted items and reallocation of funding and then make a recommendation to the Township Board. Vice Chair, Crowley asked if the budgeted items were listed in the memo. Director, Guthrie stated that the first motion is directed to the list of items, new and replacements, on the memo. Commissioner, Seipel stated that he felt the motion should be more specific to the items listed, 'on page 37', in the memo. Vice Chair, Crowley agreed. Director Guthrie commented that they could restate the motion to include that verbiage.

Commissioner, Seipel moved **TO APPROVE THE COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT TO PURCHASE EQUIPMENT ITEMS IDENTIFIED ON PAGE 37 OF THE PACKET THAT HAVE BEEN RECOMMENDED BY STAFF, UTILIZING ANTICIPATED, BUT NOT TO EXCEED, PEG FEE REVENUES RECEIVED FROM COMCAST.** Seconded by Vice Chair, Crowley.

Voice vote: Motion carried unanimously.

Director, Guthrie began discussing the second action in the memo and explained that last year the board approved to budget money for a communication needs assessment, a franchise fee audit and a technical audit for franchise renewal purposes. The franchise fee audit is still planned and conversations have taken place with the technical auditor and that is being finalized based upon what Comcast has allowed to be audited and there isn't anything specific about a technical audit in the Uniform Agreement. Comcast Representative, John Gardner, explained that the technical audit was being performed as part of the Franchise Renewal process, which is now complete. Vice Chair, Crowley stated that he thought the technical review was also for other technical entities within Meridian Township, which also has not moved forward. Director, Guthrie stated that she is pursuing other avenues in that regard.

Chair, Benenson asked for clarification on 'reallocating funding', stating that it wouldn't be reallocating all funding, but only some funding. Director, Guthrie explained that the Communications Needs Assessment was budgeted for \$22,000 and Vice Chair, Crowley stated that one still needs to be done. Director, Guthrie proposed that the audit be done in house as previously discussed. Vice Chair, Crowley asked if there was a specific need for reallocating the money, for instance an emergency replacement.

Commissioner, Seipel asked for more detailed information, as provided with the first part of the memo and motion, rather than just reallocating 'as needed'. Chair, Benenson asked the question concerning what would happen if the Commission didn't approve reallocating the money. Director, Guthrie stated that the Commission could ask for more detailed information as to what the money would be reallocated for or that the Communications Needs Assessment is still needed and that the money shouldn't be reallocated at all. Vice Chair, Crowley stated that he wanted to continue with the Communication Needs Assessment.

Director, Guthrie stated that the original purpose of the Communication Needs Assessment was for the Franchise Renewal Process, which is no longer an issue, so to spend that money would be unnecessary. That money could be used elsewhere and be more beneficial. Commissioner, Seipel questioned whether the need to spend the money on equipment would have still existed if the money had already been spent on the Communication Needs Assessment.

Chair, Benenson thought that it would make more sense to say that the money should be kept in the fund balance with the anticipation of budgeting for improvements next year.

Vice Chair, Crowley suggested that Director, Guthrie provide a list of unspent monies, as well as a list of items that the unspent monies should be reallocated to and which items were extremely important, important in the next couple years, etc. at the next ccc meeting. Chair, Benenson commented that the second motion in the memo is tabled and a new motion be presented at the next meeting.

New Business:

1. 2016 Draft Budget Memo

Director, Guthrie stated that the individual department budget is due to the Township by August 1, 2015. Each year the Cable Commission takes a look at the equipment that the Communications Department plans on purchasing and makes a recommendation for the Board to approve those capital purchases. The memo references those future funding needs, especially budgeted items for 2016. Director, Guthrie pointed out that this refers back to the first memo because those unspent monies could be spent on these equipment items. Vice Chair, Crowley commented that this process is the normal course of action of budgeting for items that would be purchased in future years.

Commissioner, Seipel moved **TO MAKE A RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD TO APPROVE THE RECOMMENDED CAPITAL ITEM**

EQUIPMENT PURCHASES FOR THE 2016 CABLE TV FUND. Seconded by Vice Chair, Crowley.

Voice vote: Motion carried unanimously.

Vice Chair, Crowley moved **TO APPROVE DIRECTOR, GUTHRIE TO WORK WITH THE FINANCE DIRECTOR TO BUDGET AN INCREASE IN STAFFING TO AN APPROPRIATE LEVEL TO MEET THE COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENTAL WORKLOAD NEEDS, IF THE BUDGET ALLOWS, AND MAKE A RECOMMENDATION TO THE TOWNSHIP BOARD.** Seconded by Commissioner, Seipel.

Voice vote: Motion carried unanimously.

2. 5 Year Equipment Plan & Long Term Vision

Table the equipment budget; to be provided at the next meeting; only the warranty budget was provided for this meeting. Long term vision – Commission making recommendation to Board about rules and responsibilities coming in August. Chair, Benenson's long term vision is to do away with all the cables.

Reports:

1. Cable Compliments/Complaints:
2. Video Service Provider(s): John Gardner spoke about the channel guide and the shared channel issue.
3. Communications Director's Report: Top goals for the Communications Department before year end – Programming on the Comcast Guide Channel, Branding Employee Handbook, Branding Guidelines, website vendor training, and finalizing software.
4. Chair's Report: Nothing to Report.
5. Township Information: Nothing to Report
6. Programming: No discussion
7. Viewership/Promotions: No discussion
8. Finance: No discussion

Other Business & Announcements:

Public Remarks: No Public Present

Adjournment:

Vice Chair, Crowley moved **TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**. Seconded by Commissioner, Seipel.

Hearing no objections, Chair Benenson **ADJOURNED THE MEETING AT 7.25 pm.**

NEXT MEETING:

The next scheduled meeting is **August 5, 2015 in the Administrative Conference Room.**