

APPROVED MINUTES OF CABLE TV COMMISSION MEETING

June 16, 2021

VIRTUAL MEETING

MEMBERS PRESENT: Pauline Maloney (Chair), Jennifer Tigges, Ron Tigges, Alan Vincent

MEMBERS ABSENT: Garrett Heidenreich

OTHERS PRESENT: Randy Gehl, City of Dubuque

- Maloney called the meeting to order at 4:29 p.m.

Acceptance of the Agenda

- Upon a motion by JTigges, seconded by RTigges, the agenda was accepted by a vote of 3 - 0.

Approval of the Minutes of May 12, 2021

- Upon a motion by RTigges, seconded by JTigges, minutes of the May 12, 2021, meeting were approved 3 - 0.

Public Input

- There was no public input.

Review of PEG Fund

- Maloney asked Gehl to share information on the commission's previous questions about use of PEG equipment funds. He reported that he consulted with Barry Lindahl, the City's senior counsel and former city attorney, and Craig Nowack, retired cable TV coordinator, to review the commission's questions. Gehl said requests for funding are qualified as long as it gets used to produce programming (or to facilitate the broadcasting of programming) on the PEG channels. Currently, the funding cannot be used for equipment for streaming video, or projecting video, or for distributing video within a facility. The equipment must be used to produce or broadcast content on a PEG channel. Gehl cited section 477A.7 of the 2007 state franchise law, as amended, which states, "All fees collected pursuant to this subsection shall be used only for the support of the public, educational, and governmental access channels." Commission discussion followed regarding the validity and enforcement of the requirement in the context of the Iowa Utility Board's responsibility for the state franchise agreement. Commissioners expressed interest in exploring the possibility of additional flexibility regarding use of PEG funds to support the production of videos that support/enhance the community that would be shared through non-PEG channels like YouTube, for example. Commissioners asked Gehl to research options to redirect PEG funds to benefit more people and report back at a future meeting.

Mediacom Update

- Gehl reported that the City was notified by Mediacom of its intentions move from its Asbury Road location this year and to subsequently cease support of the public access

channel. He noted that Mediacom is not required to support the channel beyond transmitting it. Gehl said Mediacom has asked the City for direction on what to do with the channel as well as related equipment at Mediacom's facility. He noted that very little programming is being provided for this channel and the City's view is that the City does not have the capacity to take over operations of this channel and that it is not utilized enough to warrant it. Two occasional sources of programming for the channel are two local churches, both of which stream the same videos on YouTube channels and Facebook. Commissioners agreed with the assessment and commented that the elimination of this channel is one less option for public access programming, in the context of the previous agenda item. Gehl said he plans to consult with contacts at Loras College and the Dubuque Community School District regarding possible use of the public access equipment as well as their future plans for the two education access channels.

Staff Update

- Gehl provided an update on the search to fill the Multimedia Specialist position and said the goal is to have the position filled within the next few weeks.

Next Meeting

- Commissioners agreed to meet on an as-needed basis. Next meeting tentatively requested in September to continue PEG Fund discussion and meet new Multimedia Specialist.

Adjournment

- Upon a motion by Vincent, seconded by RTigges, and 3-0 vote, the meeting adjourned at 5:08 p.m.