

Columbus Cable Commission

City of Columbus, WI

Minutes from June 24, 2024

Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 6:34 pm

Roll Call

Famularo, Pyfferoen, and Roelke were present. Staff member Bennett was present

Notice of Open Meeting

Meeting was properly noticed

Approve Agenda

Motion to approve the Agenda for June 24, 2024, by Roelke. Second by Famularo. Motion was passed by a 3-0 vote.

Elect Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary

Motion to nominate Famularo for Chair by Roelke. Second by Pyfferoen. No other nominations were made. Motion approves by a 3-0 vote.

Motion to nominate Pyfferoen for Vice-Chair by Roelke. Second by Pyfferoen. No other nominations were made. Motion approves by a 3-0 vote.

Motion to nominate Roelke for Secretary by Roelke. Second by Pyfferoen. No other nominations were made. Motion approves by a 3-0 vote.

Approve Minutes

Motion to approve the Minutes from April 28, 2024, by Famularo. Second by Pyfferoen. Motion was passed by a 3-0 vote.

Citizen Comments and Correspondence

There were no comments or correspondence.

Financial Update

Staff presented the May 2024 Cable Budget Summary to the Cable Commission. Staff highlighted the 1st quarter Franchise Fee payment received that totaled \$11,809.18 and

interest income of \$2,788.86 in year-to-date revenues. Staff provided a short list of expenditures that featured \$3,153.41 for the purchase of a 500-hour block for the Cablecast Captioning service and \$123.22 to Ontech for reconnecting the Cablecast unit to the City's network. Staff announced that there was \$43,109.50 remaining in the 2024 Cable Budget.

Programming Update

Staff presented a list of 35 new programs that aired in April. Staff included some analytics from Cablecast for video-on-demand (VOD) files and live streaming. 41 VOD files were viewed 946 times for 218 hours and 12 minutes. The live stream was viewed 389 times for 115 hours and 36 minutes. Council / Committee of the Whole meetings had 287 views for 97 hours and 30 minutes.

Staff also presented a list of 37 new programs that aired in May. Staff included some analytics from Cablecast for video-on-demand (VOD) files and live streaming. 81 VOD files were viewed 1,071 times for 291 hours and 11 minutes. The live stream was viewed 484 times for 178 hours and 46 minutes. Council / Committee of the Whole meetings had 281 views for 94 hours and 11 minutes.

Equipment Update

Staff updated the Cable Commission regarding the status of issues with PTZ camera #2 glitching. Staff has replaced the CAT cable that runs from the HDMI over CAT transmitter and receiver with a shorter cable. This seems to have resolved the issue. Staff will observe the camera for any more issues and give an update the Cable Commission at the next meeting.

Staff purchased and installed a new projector in the Council Chamber. A new TV was also purchased but had to be returned as it malfunctioned, and a replacement was purchased instead. The new TV works but does not come with a VGA connection as advertised. Staff informed the Cable Commission that the VGA infrastructure should be replaced anyway. Staff will install the new TV once a replacement of the Kramer VGA switcher in the A/V Room is found, and new CAT cable is installed. Staff plans to repurpose the old TV in the Council Chamber for either monitoring cable broadcasts or as an information display board.

Discussion and Possible Recommendation to Council to Approve Updated Cable Ordinance

Staff would like the Cable Commission to recommend for Council approval an updated Cable Ordinance. The changes include:

- Updated language to better clarify the advisory nature of the Cable Commission with minor wording tweaks
- Aligned the Technical Standards section to include applicable State Statutes to fill any holes that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) may have and vice-versa

- Updated who Charter will need to go through in order excavate City streets, alleys, and public areas to the Utilities Director
- Removed the defunct Lead Cable Coordinator position

Motion to recommend to Council to approve the updates to the Cable Ordinance by Pyfferoen. Second by Roelke. Motion passes with a 3-0 vote.

Update Regarding Part-Time Production Specialist Position

Staff informed the Cable Commission of the termination of the current Production Specialist. However, the position is planned to be filled utilizing the Columbus School District's new Youth Apprenticeship Program and was vetted by the City's HR Administrator. The program consists of 450 work hours annually for the student and the City will interview, provide on-the-job training, pay the student, and provide regular progress reviews. The School District will recruit students from relevant classes, coordinate enrollment, integrate the worksite training with in-class instruction, and provide 180 hours of related technical instruction each year. Students will receive credit, pay, and training for participating in the program.

Famularo asked what jobs will be performed for the 450 work hours. Staff would have the position start with learning broadcast and field equipment, followed by filming meetings and then filming local events. Staff plans to have the apprentice help the Library and other City departments with videos prior to working on other projects. The program could create a pipeline of student employment for continuation of the position.

Update and Possible Discussion About Cable Television Status Featuring Charter's Quarterly Earnings Results and Nielsen's The Gauge Platform Analytics

Staff will begin to incorporate a regular update of the cable industry. Using Charter's quarterly earnings report, Staff informed the Cable Commission that Charter has lost 8% of its cable subscribers since March 2023. They had lost 1.16 million cable customers from 2023 - 2024 year-over-year. Charter plans to cut back on costs while increasing prices of its cable services. Charter is pivoting to streaming as it now offers its own direct-to-consumer streaming application along with its Xumo Box joint venture. Staff has found that analog stations are not shown on Charter's streaming services. In order for Columbus to be seen, Charter would need to update equipment on its end, so the City can match the transmission signal. Using Nielsen's, *The Gauge* which measures television consumption between broadcast, cable, and streaming, Staff has noted that cable television has decreased from 34.5% in August 2022 to 28.2% in May 2024. Broadcast nudged up from 22.1% to 22.3% and Streaming increased from 31.3% to 38.8%.

Future Agenda Items

No new items were added

Select Future Meeting Date/Time

The Cable Commission decided to keep the meetings on the fourth Monday at 6:30 pm. Roelke and Famularo may have a conflict on July 22 for the next meeting, but will notify Staff if they cannot attend.

Adjourn

The Cable Commission adjourned at 7:01 pm