Cable TV Operating Costs & Issues

Costs

One-Time

- Hardware purchase of the Cablecast system. Our current system reaches end of life in 2029 and would be replaced by new units in 2028. In 2019, the purchase of the current broadcast system was around $35,000.
- Hardware to send broadcast content to Spectrum varies in replacement costs, but would have to utilize obsolete equipment to continue broadcasting on cable TV.

Recurring

- Annual subscription to Cablecast's Reflect service, which is a video distribution system that allows for us to live stream and provide video on demand to the internet and Roku app.
- Captioning service from Cablecast is renewed as needed and is purchased in blocks of 500 hours for $2,770. We've only had to purchase this twice but would continue to do so more frequently as the FCC has mandated all videos (including church services, sports, and other 3rd party submitted video content) would need to be captioned beginning April 2026. We've only been captioning City meetings and no other programming.
- Budgeting for replacement of aging equipment.

Issues

Cybersecurity

- The Cablecast video distribution system utilizes Amazon Web Services to host its actual controller. This means that for updating the system, scheduling, recording, and streaming programs, or providing video on demand, it needs to be connected online creating a 24/7 hole in our firewall. This hole could be exploited by a bad actor to enter our City network.
- The City has reached its limit on the availability of ports for its network. As the Cablecast system is effectively using the same ports as the Recreation Department's credit card system. This causes CPI compliance checks to fail for Recreation.
- A secondary network would not be feasible due to several factors such as potential new City Hall, additional security needed, and multiple pieces of presentation equipment needing to communicate but be on separate networks. The system would still be reliant on multiple 3rd party remote hosting services.
- CivicPlus is not too keen on having videos directly linked from Cablecast's Reflect video on demand service as the video hosting site provided by Cablecast is not a "secure" site. CivicPlus prefers we use YouTube instead.

Programming

- Due to being more efficient and most likely to improve community engagement, the operation relies on local video producers for content. This includes the school district,

churches, organizations, individuals, and nearby media outlets. However, it is difficult to get consistent and high-quality video content this way. The City does not have enough staff to consistently produce high-quality video content to populate the channel.