

**CHAMPAIGN-URBANA CABLE TELEVISION AND  
TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
SPECIAL MEETING  
MINUTES**

**DATE:** December 18, 2006  
1:00 p.m.

**PLACE:** Champaign Council Chambers  
102 N. Neil St., Champaign, IL

<b>MEMBERS PRESENT:</b>	<b>CHAMPAIGN</b>	<b>URBANA</b>
	Rick Atterberry Karen Walker	Barbara Gladney Durl Kruse
	<b>PARKLAND</b>	<b>U of I</b>
	Tom McDonnell	

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Danielle Chynoweth, Giraldo Rosales, Stan Yagi  
Peter Resnick

**STAFF PRESENT:** Jeff Hamilton, Trisha Crowley – City of Champaign  
Chris Foster, Jim Gitz - City of Urbana

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Tom Robinson, Matt Ames, Garth Ashpaugh - CBG  
Communications

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 PM.

**Cable Renewal Consultant Interview – CBG Communications**

Mr. Robinson introduced his team and explained what each member would be responsible for handling during our renewal:

Tom Robinson – project manager, needs assessment, PEG and technical audits

Matt Ames – legal representation

Garth Ashpaugh – franchise fee audit

Mr. Robinson said that the biggest part of the project was the needs assessment, which would address PEG, I-Net, and our residential community.

Mr. Ashpaugh said that he is responsible for the franchise fee and financial reviews. He stated it usually includes a 5-year review of the franchise fee payments to make sure the

Cities got what we were entitled to. He feels that the financial review is most important because it tells you if Insight can afford what we want in our next franchise.

Mr. Ames said that the beginning role from the legal side is minor. He stated that we first should get the needs assessment done, and then negotiate. He said that “facts equal power” and that the assessment guides the negotiation strategy. He added that the FCC and possible federal legislation will stir things up, but that he is in touch with what is happening in Washington, D.C. He said that cable operators always say “no” but can be convinced with political will, community needs, and past performance records.

Mr. Robinson stated that his team has knowledgeable legal representation and comprehensive financial experience. The team will conduct forums, surveys, interviews, a technical audit, research trends, evaluate the community impact, compliance tracking, provide legal opinions, and negotiate the new franchise.

He stated that they will work hard to understand the impact the franchise needs to have on the communities. He stated that he feels he has the right team and approach as proven by past success.

Chair Atterberry asked why cable safety codes are so important.

Mr. Robinson said that as cable plants get older and buildings get crowded, we need to make sure that everything is grounded and there aren't a lot of outage problems. They look at the state of the existing system, age and technological advancement, and make sure things are done correctly.

Commissioner Walker asked what the Cities can and can't negotiate for.

Mr. Robinson stated that federal law allows the Cities to negotiate for PEG access capacity/facilities/equipment, I-Nets, franchise fees, and customer service requirements. He stated that we can't negotiate the channel lineup, cable rates on upper tiers, or anything involving broadband internet services.

Chair Atterberry asked about the need to define bandwidth for PEG channels.

Mr. Robinson stated that he feels channels can migrate to digital and provide more services with a smaller amount of bandwidth. If you need a separate channel you may add it as a digital service, providing more channels but using less bandwidth. He volunteered this could lead to on-demand PEG access.

Commissioner Kruse stated that PEG is supposed to actually benefit the cable operator, and asked how this can be used to our advantage during negotiations.

Mr. Robinson said that as long the programming satisfies viewers it is beneficial to the cable operator. He offered that if the needs assessment shows low awareness, the Commission will need to figure out why and look into ways to create awareness (via the

web, city governments, and commercials). He added that PEG is a service that satellite can't provide.

Chairman Atterberry asked about the working relationship between government and public access.

Mr. Robinson responded that you need to have a strong performance contract that spells out everything specifically and addresses a ton of issues. Mr. Ames stated that the needs assessment needs to show how the PEG channel serves the community, which will help convince our local elected officials of PEG's importance.

Commissioner Gladney asked how many communities have viable Public Access.

Mr. Robinson stated that there were several thousand.

Commissioner McDonnell asked the group to talk about their experience with Insight.

Mr. Robinson responded that he worked with them in Indiana in 2002. Dealt with issues related to system upgrades, needs assessments, and negotiated for PEG support and an upgraded I-net. He successfully negotiated an upgrade of the cable system, network, and upgrades for PEG. Mr. Ashpaugh stated that he worked with Insight last week in Jefferson County, Kentucky. He helped with a system transfer which Insight was involved in. He stated that he is familiar with their system and regulatory issues.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:08 PM.