

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

DATE: December 19, 2006
9:00 a.m.

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

MEMBERS PRESENT:	CHAMPAIGN	URBANA
	Rick Atterberry	Barbara Gladney
	Karen Walker	Durl Kruse
	PARKLAND	U of I

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

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

Call to Order

Chairman Atterberry called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

Cable Renewal Consultant Review and Recommendations

Chair Atterberry explained that since a quorum was not present, the Commission could discuss the cable renewal consultants, but couldn't take any formal action or make a recommendation.

Jeff Hamilton explained to the Commission that their input on the cable renewal consultant was important and valuable to the Refranchising Committee. He explained that the Refranchising Committee would meet December 20, 2006, and asked that the Cable Commission provide feedback and suggestions regarding the three finalists for the Committee to consider. Mr. Hamilton also asked the Commission to clarify if any of the three consultants were deemed unacceptable to the Commission.

Commissioner Kruse stated that Moss & Barnett (Brian Grogan) was his last choice, due to the high costs, demeanor of the consultant, and the ongoing problems they are having with the Decatur renewal. Mr. Kruse stated he was afraid this could carry over and set a bad tone for the Champaign-Urbana renewal.

Commissioner Gladney stated that Mr. Grogan seemed “detached” and lacked interest. She stated that he didn’t sell himself like the other firms did, wanted two separate contracts, and didn’t bring his team with him to the interview.

Commissioner Walker stated that she felt Mr. Grogan’s honesty was refreshing. She said that he freely admitted problems with the Decatur renewal but showed he has a handle on Insight’s motivation and knows what needs to be done. She points out he spent time talking about “what he can do for us” and sees him as a real “bulldog”.

Chris Foster agreed with Commissioner Walker and stated that Mr. Grogan offered up lots of valuable information without a lot of prompting. He thought Mr. Grogan made a number of good points that the others had not brought up.

Trisha Crowley agreed with Mr. Foster and stated that Mr. Grogan gave us tons of specifics and wasn’t afraid to tell us the truth.

Chair Atterberry stated that Mr. Grogan was very well prepared and had read our existing franchise agreements before the meeting.

Jeff Hamilton agreed and stated that Moss & Barnett was his top choice of consultants. He stated that Mr. Grogan was very well prepared, had obviously read our documents and was able to recall specific details without the aid of notes. Mr. Hamilton found Mr. Grogan to be very honest and made several money-saving suggestions regarding our RFP requirements. Mr. Hamilton admitted he was unsure if the Decatur situation was a plus or minus for Moss & Barnett.

Mr. Foster agreed, stating that Moss & Barnett was also his top choice, but that the Decatur situation would have an unknown effect on our renewal.

Chair Atterberry asked Mr. Hamilton if any other Cable Commissioners had provided written comments on the consultant interviews. Mr. Hamilton read a brief statement from Commissioner McDonnell in support of Municipal Services Associates (MSA). In his note, Commissioner McDonnell stated that he felt MSA would do the “best job overall in getting us the best possible agreement”. He also stated he was impressed by their “desire to secure all we are seeking in terms of PEG Access channels”.

Commissioner Gladney stated that Mr. Grogan claimed he would do whatever we told him to do. She expressed a desire for the consultant to provide suggestions and ideas to benefit our process.

Commissioner Walker expressed that she understood Mr. Grogan’s statement to mean that he will provide that input and give us our options, and then do whatever we directed him to do. She also stated she was impressed he made significant cost-saving suggestions.

Commissioner Kruse stated that choosing a consultant involved the evaluation of several criteria, including cost, experience, style, accessibility, and staff’s comfort with the consultant. He also expressed a desire for our consultant to want to work well with Insight. Mr. Kruse stated that he

thought CBG Communications (CBG) was “good”, though they didn’t appear to have read through our franchise agreements. He stated that all three consultants have proven experience and he felt comfortable with their knowledge of and ability to monitor the changing legislative environment. He stated that Stu Chapman (MSA) tended to “rattle on” at points. He also stated that CBG brought three people to town, showing their commitment and interest. He summarized his feelings by saying that he felt CBG and MSA were “about even”, and that Moss & Barnett was a “couple of notches lower”.

Chair Atterberry stated he would be comfortable with any of the three firms.

Trisha Crowley expressed concern that MSA was weak on the formal process and we may have to hire another firm if the negotiations go that way. She stated that we should be prepared and ready to enter into the formal process if necessary.

Chair Atterberry stated that the CBG team lacked focus and wasn’t well prepared. He recalled that they had no good answers for the current AT&T Project Lightspeed issue. He stated that MSA is well versed on the AT&T issue because it is assisting communities on the issue in the Chicago area.

Commissioner Gladney stated that she ranked MSA as her top choice, CBG second, and Moss & Barnett third. She felt that MSA was the best choice because they are an Illinois firm, they are very knowledgeable about the political climate in Springfield, would be involved and on-site for the needs assessment and negotiations, and they “really wanted the job”. She offered that she too found all three consultants acceptable.

Commissioner Walker stated that she found CBG very personable, but that Moss & Barnett was “heads and shoulders above them”. She expressed that Mr. Grogan didn’t have a need to bring his whole team into town to impress us and was able to talk specifics about our current franchise. She was unable to attend the MSA interview, but felt that either CBG or Moss & Barnett would do well.

Chair Atterberry reported he had charted the rankings as reported by the Commissioners, but that the only thing it showed was “that no one had ranked MSA last”. He personally ranked the consultants as MSA at the top, Moss & Barnett second, and CBG third.

Trisha Crowley pointed out that if we selected CBG, Tom Robinson (lead consultant) wouldn’t be at the negotiating table. Negotiations would be led by Matt Ames, the legal arm of their team. She also renewed her reservations about MSA’s abilities to lead us through a formal process and stated she would place a follow-up call to MSA to get more information on their abilities in this regard.

Commissioner Kruse expressed that he felt Mr. Grogan’s responses and attitudes reflected on his current situation in Decatur. Commissioner Kruse stated that 99% of renewals are done informally and that we shouldn’t dwell on the formal process.

Commissioner Gladney stated that all three consultants were experienced and will do what we tell them to do.

Commissioner Walker offered that MSA is the least expensive but using them could send a message to Insight that we aren't willing to go into the formal process.

Chair Atterberry summarized that the "sense of the Commission was that MSA was the consensus choice, but that any of the three firms would be acceptable". The four Commissioners present verbally agreed with this statement.

Meeting adjourned at 10:06 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeff Hamilton
City of Champaign