

URBANA PUBLIC TELEVISION COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

June 9, 1999

MEMBERS PRESENT: UPTV Commission Members:
Ms. Barbara Gladney, Ms. Carolyn Kearns, Ms. Dana Mancuso

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dr. John Peterson, Ms. Angie Kingdon, Mr. Jerry Landay

OTHERS PRESENT: Ms. Amy Rose, UPTV Coordinator; Tom O'Rourke, CU Cable and Telecommunications Commission

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Gladney at 8:00 a.m.

Ms. Gladney asked to have channel promotion added to the agenda.

The Commission reviewed the P.E.G. Budget. Ms. Rose explained the City's Vehicle and Equipment Replacement Fund (VERF) is used to save money in order to replace current equipment when needed.

Correspondence and Communciations

Ms. Rose reported she had received a request from the Early American Museum in Mahomet to include information on the UPTV bulletin board. She informed them that the channel was for use by Champaign-Urbana organizations only. The woman from the Museum argued that it is an entity of the Champaign County Forest Preserve and they serve Champaign-Urbana residents.

Ms. Rose stated the Champaign County Board submits their meetings for televising, but they were required to join as UPTV members. She added there is typically no charge if an organization only wants to submit bulletin board announcements and not programming. Does the Commission want to extend that service to groups outside of Champaign-Urbana?

Ms. Mancuso volunteered to speak to the public relations person with the Champaign County Forest Preserve. This would be a way to determine the interest on their behalf and explain the position of UPTV administration.

Ms. Rose stated the policies require residency within the Champaign-Urbana cable system. The Forest Preserve serves all of Champaign County, but is located outside of the Champaign-Urbana cable system. How should this be handled without opening it up to all organizations in the area?

Ms. Kearns stated the Commission needed to consider how many other County organizations would fall into this situation? She also suggested the Commission make an exception for Champaign County governmental entities.

Ms. Rose mentioned policies concerning free use of the bulletin board may also need to be revised. The intention was to allow occasional free announcements promoting special events. Several local organizations are requesting announcements of ongoing general services. Should this use of the bulletin board be allowed without UPTV membership?

Ms. Mancuso suggested limiting the number of free announcements and then requiring membership for additional bulletin board use. The Commission agreed 12 announcements a year would be an acceptable cut off point for the bulletin board. This would allow organizations an average of one announcement a month without being charged.

Survey

Ms. Rose and Ms. Mancuso proposed using the Park District's new Opinion Meter to start gathering public opinion before conducting the survey by mail. This would also allow Ms. Mancuso to test out her new equipment.

The Commission reviewed the survey and cover letter and made suggestions for changes to make the survey more clear to participants.

Mr. O'Rourke suggested before sending the survey out to the public, ask a few people around the office to complete the survey and give feedback on the clarity of questions. He also explained how to effectively select a random sample of participants.

Ms. Rose stated she would mail the surveys in early September with the help of AT&T Cable Services in supplying random addresses. Mr. O'Rourke stated three weeks should be sufficient response time for such a survey.

Ms. Gladney suggested reporting the findings to the News-Gazette and making a report available to the public.

The Commission brainstormed on some ideas to help promote the channel and its programming.

Equipment Policy

Ms. Rose presented the policies proposed to address field equipment use. Ms. Rose reminded the Council of the adjustment of the fees to a lower cost than originally recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee. The original fee was to include all services offered by UPTV. The City Council voted to lower the fees and then add additional charges for new services. Therefore, Ms. Rose asked the Commission for input on charging a new fee for equipment use or would they prefer to include it in the current membership price.

Ms. Rose stated the participation of members may increase if the equipment check-out was part of the current membership price. The Commission agreed to keep membership fees the same and include equipment use.

Ms. Rose asked for advice on the check-out process and the need for a security deposit. She also suggested asking for a credit card number as a deposit, which is done at other PEG centers.

Ms. Rose stated the problem of equipment theft is very minimal in the public access world. The main concern would be covering the expense of damage repair. A deposit may also make users feel more responsible for the care of the equipment.

Ms. Gladney stated the deposit should not be so high as to discourage low-income users.

The Commission suggested starting with a \$25 deposit of cash or check and not using the credit card option for now.

Ms. Gladney asked about the length of equipment check-out time. Would it be possible to extend the time if requested by a member?

Ms. Rose stated that extensions could be made, if the equipment was not reserved by another member.

Ms. Gladney also commented on the need for a cancellation to be made by speaking directly to a staff member. She thought the use of a voice mail message should be acceptable.

Ms. Rose said she was concerned about the reliability of voice mail messages. She felt messages should at least be confirmed by a staff member.

Ms. Gladney said the policy should be changed to some how accept voice mail messages.

The Commission decided to think further on the use of voice mail as a reliable cancellation method. The Commission approved all other sections of the equipment policies.

Miscellaneous

Ms. Rose reported that the AT&T Cable Services production department has been closed down. The production facilities have been consolidated and moved to Decatur. Ms. Rose suggested it may be worthwhile to look into the companies future plans for the studio space.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 a.m.