

**CHAMPAIGN-URBANA JOINT CABLE AND
TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION**

MINUTES

DATE: July 25, 2001
Wednesday, 7:00 p.m.

PLACE: Champaign City Building

MEMBERS PRESENT:	<u>CITY OF CHAMPAIGN</u>	<u>CITY OF URBANA</u>
	Richard Atterberry	Danielle Chynoweth
	Tom Bruno	Barbara Gladney
	Thomas O'Rourke	Kevin Maxson
	Brian Silverman	John Peterson
	<u>PARKLAND</u>	<u>UI</u>
	Tom McDonnell	George Badger

MEMBERS ABSCENT:

STAFF PRESENT: Trisha Crowley Chris Foster

OTHERS PRESENT: Charlie Heflin, Lori Carroll, and David Treat (Insight)

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman John Peterson called the regular Champaign-Urbana Joint Cable & Telecommunications Commission Meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Previous meeting minutes were approved, no additions or corrections were made

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Agenda was approved

INTRODUCTION OF NEW COMMISSION MEMBERS

Commissioner Atterberry stated that he has been involved in commercial broadcasting and radio for 30 years, and has spent the last three years heading a web design group at the U of I through the College of Aces.

Commissioner Maxson stated that he was the chief technology officer for NCS Learn in Champaign. He said he had a background in software engineering and English.

Commissioner Chenowith stated that she was recently elected to the City of Urbana's City Council and that she works in graphic design. She said she new a lot more about the internet than television, but she has been working with public access issues for the last 7 or 8 years.

Commissioner Gladney introduced new staff member Chris Foster

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Commissioner Peterson asked about the cable radio situation and Charlie Heflin said that the carriage of the U of I's WBML, WILL, and WFMT out of Chicago, was all in digital format on Insight's digital cable radio product, which was eliminated when Insight launched their new DMX digital radio service. In order to keep those stations on-line Insight would have to pay for a \$75,000 upgrade. Instead of doing that and passing the cost onto it's customers they decided to go with the DMX system. In order to keep the old service available to some customers, they put it into an FM format with an audio stereo receiver.

Commissioner Silverman stated that some customers might need additional equipment for the hook up. Mr. Heflin stated that Insight would provide customers with a free kit that has a switch that allows customers to hook up their off-air antennae, so they can receive both groups of stations by switching back and forth. Commissioner Silverman asked how hard it would be for people to add stations out of Chicago and St. Louis at a later time. Mr. Heflin said that if Insight had the equipment to do it, it could be done, but that he didn't know if there would be enough FM frequency space for it to work. If there were a significant response for the stations from the community, then they would look into the process.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

There was none.

REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES

Chairman Peterson described the standing committee's to the new members, and asked them to look into the committee's and see if they had any interest.

Programming Committee

There was no report

Technical Committee

There was no report

PEG Advisory Committee

Commissioner Gladney stated that in July the commission has its annual report to touch base with the four PEG channels, to find out what each station is doing. She said that the reports were behind schedule because of all the transitions. It was stated that UPTV should bring a report to the next meeting and Commissioner Gladney was going to contact Carl Caldwell and see what was going on at the U of I. Ms. Crowley was asked to put something together for Champaign.

REPORT FROM CITY STAFF

Ms. Crowley stated that the commission requested that cable complaint forms be provided to the PEG channels, since the Champaign and Urbana offices were receiving an influx of calls because of Insight's billing problems and excess phone calls. Commissioner Gladney agreed but said she liked the way that the complaints were being dealt with, and felt that the process that was formalized was working. Commissioner Bruno wondered how far back we went to get complaints, and stated that the sample was only a small number of the total complaints, and in fact an Insight employee even took up residence at the Champaign City building to field calls. He added that he knew someone who had tried to call Insight on several occasions and only got a busy signal. Commissioner Maxson asked if the complaints were passed onto the cable operator and wondered how Insight was going to resolve the issues. The Commission asked if there was a way that they could receive feedback from the complaint reports. Commissioner Silverman felt that it's Insight's responsibility to get responses to complaints. He said that it is not unreasonable for the commission to require feedback on how complaints were handled. He then asked the cable company if they could include that feedback in their quarterly reports to the commission. **Commissioner O'Rourke moved that the cable company provide a response to each customer complaint at the next quarterly meeting. Commissioner Chenowith seconded it.** Mr. Bruno asked whether the commission has authority under its franchise to impose a specific obligation on Insight. Commissioner Silverman thought that the commission did have the authority, but he added that it was better if Mr. O'Rourke's motion was that we ask them to do it voluntarily. He added that a reasonable interpretation of the compliance section of the franchise agreement would be that they tell the commission how they followed up on complaints. Mr. Silverman re-stated that it was better to ask the cable company to provide the information than to force them. **Chairman Peterson asked for a vote and the motion carried unanimously (10-0).** Commissioner O'Rourke asked Ms. Crowley to look into whether the commission did have the authority to make Insight provide the reports, and bring the information to the next quarterly meeting.

REPORT FROM CATV-SYSTEM OPERATOR

Ms. Carroll from Insight stated the problems were getting better and that the majority of the bills that were being sent out were correct. As far as she knew everything was getting back to normal, but calls had picked up because students were coming back. The phone volume was much better than what it was, and Ms. Carroll said she didn't realize that the cities were still receiving calls. She said from April to June, Insight had taken about 5,000 more calls and each call takes about 3 ½ minutes to resolve, but with the new billing system the calls were up to six minutes or more. Ms. Carroll stated it should be okay for Insight to send complaint responses to the commission, but she would have make sure before she promised anything. She added that if the problem stems from a billing error, they need to deal with privacy issues. Commissioner Silverman stated that the information did not need to be that detailed. The commission then suggested that Insight send all busy calls to a pre-recorded message explaining the problem. Ms. Carroll said that was not possible with their phone system. Commissioner Bruno suggested that Insight Communications send out a mailing to all of their customers telling them that there current bill could be incorrect, and that they are working on fixing the problem. Mr. Bruno added that while it would be an expense to Insight it would drop their call volume. Ms. Carroll stated that it was a great idea, but that they had been calling people by phone, and that since the problem was almost resolved it was to late for a mailer. Commissioner Silverman added that he received a call from Insight telling him that many bills had errors and they were in the process of correcting it.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Emergency Alert System - Chairman Peterson asked Charlie Heflin from Insight if the emergency alert system was installed. Mr. Heflin said that it was not installed because of an issue involving WCIA and WICD. It was unknown if both channels were going to participate with the system. He added that the equipment just came in two weeks ago, and since they have been in the middle of updating the digital cable system that Insight is getting ready to launch, it had not been installed, he added that it would be installed by the end of the next quarter. Chairman Peterson asked if WICD was going to participate in the system. Mr. Heflin said that he never did get an official word from WICD.
- B. Local Source - Mr. Heflin announced that Local Source was going to be launched on August 12th. Dave Treat, the technical operations manager with Insight stated that Local Source is an interactive digital service on Insight's DCT boxes in customer's homes. It contains local information such as weather, restaurants, and entertainment. Commissioner Gladney asked how we were supposed to get information to Local Source. Ms. Carroll stated that Source Media was contacting cities with Local Source for information about their schools, churches, businesses, and television stations. The information was to be sent to Source Media through e-mail. Commissioner Badger was concerned about Local Source's similarity to the internet. Mrs. Carroll stated that the service was mainly designed for those without computers or internet service. Commissioner Bruno displayed concern about inaccurate information being placed on the system and hoped that Source Media had a system set-up to prevent that from happening.
- C. D3 Internet Lines - Mr. Treat stated that Insight had hooked up an OC3 Line, which is the equivalent to 3 DS3 lines. He added that the lines were being tested and should be in service in about a week. Chairman Peterson asked if customers would notice and increase in internet speed. Mr. Treat stated that Insight isn't suffering a decrease of speed because of using too much bandwidth. He added that when the students return the OC3 line would help with that increased traffic, but customers will not see an increase in speed.
- D. Local Peering - Mr. Heflin stated that Insight Communications was in the beginning stages of looking into doing local peering with the University of Illinois. That would route internet traffic through a local router so that the line goes straight from the Cumberland data center to the U of I servers, which would speed up latency for those wanting contact off of the U of I server. Commissioner Maxson asked if Insight was willing to explore local peering with local businesses. Mr. Heflin stated that the University already had links built and was doing it to improve staff telecommunications, but if they did for local businesses they would have to build the links. Mr. Heflin said it is something that it could be a possibility in future.
- E. Race Street Antennas - Chairman Peterson implied about the Race Street antennas that were taken down. Mr. Heflin stated that the Race Street antennas were picking up a back-up to WCIA and WICD. Both of those back-ups had been moved to State Street. The main channel on the Race Street antennas was WEIU. That antenna was placed on the WCCU tower on Kilarney Street. Mr. Heflin added that WAND and WEIU are picking up a ghosting effect because their signals bounce off of the Radisson. Therefore, Insight is trying to move their antennae system to the top of the Chancellor, which would eliminate any ghosting problems.
- F. Election of Officers - Commissioner Silverman nominated John Peterson for Chairman and Commissioner Gladney seconded the nomination. The nomination passed unanimously (10-0). Chairman Peterson thanked the commission for its support and declared his intentions to recommend a new person for chairman in 2002. He stated that his recommendation would be for Vice Chair Silverman.
Commissioner Silverman nominated Thomas O'Roarke for Vice-Chairman; Commissioner Bruno seconded it. Commissioner Silverman moved to close the nominations; there were no objections to closing the nominations. The nomination for Commissioner O'Roarke passed unanimously (10-0).

Commissioner Silverman nominated Barbara Gladney for Secretary. Commissioner McDonnell seconded the nomination. Commissioner Silverman moved that the nominations be closed, there were no objections. The nomination for Commissioner Gladney passed unanimously (10-0).

- G. Inserts for the Cable Bills – Commissioner Gladney stated that the franchise has a provision that the cable company mails out something to promote the local PEG channels. She added that Parkland does the photo-ready copy, the commission pays for the printing, and the cable operator pays for the mailing, the cost is about \$600 and the commission makes about 40,000 inserts. Commissioner Bruno added that the franchise also allowed PEG channels a quantity of on-air advertising. Commissioner Gladney said that Parkland was using the airtime and Urbana was going to put something together.
- H. NATOA Conference – Chairman Peterson asked for volunteers to attend the upcoming NATOA Conference. Commissioner Atterberry and Commissioner Chenowith volunteered to attend the conference.
- I. 4th of July Parade – Commissioner Peterson complimented Insight on their coverage of the parade. He said it was nice that Insight reached out to the community.

NEXT MEETING DATE AND ADJOURNMENT

The next regular meeting date will be October 24, 2001 at 7:00 P.M. in Champaign. The study session is on October 11, 2001 at 7:30 A.M. at the Original Pancake House in Champaign.

Meeting adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

Submitted by:

Chris Foster
Urbana Public Television Coordinator