

**CHAMPAIGN-URBANA CABLE TELEVISION AND  
TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
QUARTERLY MINUTES**

**DATE:** April 15, 2009  
4:00 PM

**PLACE:** Urbana City Council Chambers  
400 South Vine Street, Urbana, IL

<b>MEMBERS PRESENT:</b>	<b>CHAMPAIGN</b>	<b>URBANA</b>
	Rick Atterberry	Durl Kruse
	Ken Pirok	Peter Resnick
	Giraldo Rosales	David Gehrig
	<b>PARKLAND</b>	<b>UNIVERSITY of ILLINOIS</b>
	Chris Foster	Kate Brickman

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Karen Walker, Barbara Gladney

**STAFF PRESENT:** Jeff Hamilton – City of Champaign  
Kate Gorman – City of Urbana

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Art Svymbersky, Kristin Pollack, Jim Lee – Comcast  
John Quinn – AT&T

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Chair Atterberry asked Kate Gorman to note the attendance.

**3. MODIFICATIONS TO AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The agenda was approved as presented.

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Minutes from the Study Session on January 14, 2009, the Regular Quarterly Meeting of January 21, 2009 and the Special Meeting of March 24, 2009 were approved as presented.

**5. CORRESPONDENCE**

Jeff Hamilton presented various letters from Comcast, including a notice that the price of basic cable went down, as well as Comcast's annual report. There were notices about AT&T's U-verse product, letters of concern about U-Verse, and the resulting petitions

filed with the FCC. Commissioner Resnick's report from the 2008 NATOA Conference and the formal complaints of cable subscribers to the City of Champaign (8) and the City of Urbana (3) were also presented.

Chair Atterberry recognized new Commissioner Kate Brickman, who will represent the University of Illinois, and also recognized Commissioner Pirok's service, acknowledging that he is retiring from the City Council and the Cable Commission.

## **6. OLD BUSINESS**

### **A. Cable Franchise Renewal Update**

Commissioner Gehrig stated that Urbana's negotiations were proceeding. The amount of PEG funding has been discussed by the Council, making sure to keep the levels the same if new franchises are negotiated in the future.

Mr. Hamilton stated that both Champaign and Urbana passed Resolutions extending the current franchises so that negotiations could continue. Champaign's has been extended to June 30, 2009 and Urbana's has been extended through August 31, 2009. Both Cities are now negotiating independently and have each engaged the formal process with Comcast.

### **B. Digital Television Transition Update**

Mr. Hamilton stated that the digital television transition was postponed until June 12, 2009, but WCIA is the only channel in the area still broadcasting an analog signal.

### **C. PEG Marketing**

Chair Atterberry stated the Commission would address the PEG Marketing topic later in the meeting.

### **D. AT&T U-Verse**

Chair Atterberry asked the Commission if they had any questions about the information covered at the Study Session on April 8, 2009. Mr. Hamilton stated that he had received the PEG AT&T application from Mr. Quinn, and has shared it with the PEG Coordinators.

Commissioner Pirok asked if any legal opinions on the state or local level had been formed about Channel 99 in Illinois. Mr. Hamilton stated there had been no legal answers provided yet, but that the Illinois Attorney General's Office is investigating the matter.

Discussion ensued over several issues surrounding Channel 99. Commissioner Brickman felt the service would offer a wider viewership for the PEG channels. Chair Atterberry was concerned about the loss of individual channel identity. Commissioner Kruse felt that the legal concerns raised by the Attorney General had not yet been addressed by AT&T. Commissioner Rosales was concerned about the lack of build out to every community. Commissioner Pirok and Commissioner Gehrig felt that the quality of

broadcast on Channel 99 is still a concern, and felt that local channels would be adversely affected.

Commissioner Resnick asked if it was possible to record PEG stations' programming on a DVR. Mr. Quinn stated that it is possible on a customer's TiVo or a personal DVR, but not on AT&T's DVR. Mr. Quinn stated that eventually Channel 99 would accommodate closed captioning. He stated that the Commission could demo U-Verse at an AT&T Experience store in Indianapolis or Chicago.

Chair Atterberry asked if there were any confirmed dates set for the launch of U-Verse in Champaign-Urbana. Mr. Quinn stated that there were not, but they were hoping to launch in the summer.

## **7. REPORTS**

### **A. Committee Reports**

Commissioner Resnick stated he would give further information about the activities of the Broadband Committee later in the meeting.

### **B. Staff Reports**

Mr. Hamilton stated that Champaign sent invitation letters to the 20 largest cable providers in the country to solicit possible franchises and increase competition in the area. *Champaign Connection* has aired 11 episodes on CGTV and is now using Parkland's studio to produce the show.

Ms. Gorman stated that the annual membership meeting was held on February 26, 2009 and that UPTV's policies were reviewed and members were instructed how to renew their membership online. UPTV has helped with two youth video workshops, one with the Urbana Free Library and another with the Urbana Park District SPLASH program. New governmental programs *Building Urbana* and *Champaign County Government* are now airing on UPTV.

## **8. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Cable Compliance Report**

Mr. Hamilton presented the 2007 compliance report, stating that Comcast and the Cities had agreed to move to a calendar year for the report in the future. The delays in bringing the 2007 report together were attributed to the transition from Insight to Comcast. Mr. Hamilton shared that staff had also begun work on the 2008 compliance report. He stated that for 2008, Comcast was withholding much of the information shared in the past, stating that the new state law allows them to do so.

Commissioner Resnick asked if as-built maps would be available for the public to view. Mr. Hamilton stated that those maps are available to city staff, but that the City had an agreement with Comcast to keep them confidential. Commissioner Resnick asked if the

City of Urbana has participated in compliance reports. Ms. Gorman stated that while Urbana has not participated in the past, now the City is and will review the 2008 report.

### **B. Big Broadband Project**

Commissioner Resnick briefed the Commission on the Urbana-Champaign Big Broadband (UC2B) proposal prepared by Mike Smeltzer. The UC2B would utilize money from the US government stimulus bill to create several fiber rings and fiber to the premises in certain areas of Urbana and Champaign. The Urbana City Council has already voted to get City staff working on the project. Champaign's City Council will be addressing the issue in the next few months. The proposal still needs community input and provisions for community access and education. Commissioner Resnick would like to know what the Commission's role should be in regards to this project. He went on to state that there will be community forums on broadband on April 25<sup>th</sup>, May 9<sup>th</sup> and May 30<sup>th</sup> to explore several of these topics.

Chair Atterberry stated that he felt the UC2B proposal took care of a number of the structural and financial problems posed, and that the Commission could function as a resource in creating community forums and facilitating the educational component.

Discussion ensued over the financial situation presented by the UC2B to both Cities, which would require significant contributions from both Champaign and Urbana. Commissioner Gehrig expressed concern over the financial cost, particularly in these trying financial times. Commissioner Resnick stated he planned to present different possible funding models to each City Council. Commissioner Kruse stated he hoped every avenue would be explored to fund the project. Commissioner Pirok felt that Champaign would be interested, but it would be difficult to get an agreement from the Council for the funding without good revenue streams.

Commissioner Resnick requested \$900 from the Commission to pay for mailing out notifications and possibly refreshments for the two upcoming broadband meetings in May. Mr. Hamilton stated that the Commission has \$2000 left in its budget.

Chair Atterberry stated that Commissioners Walker and Gladney had conducted a meeting of the PEG Committee and determined that a website would be a good way of promote the four PEG channels. In a previous meeting, Commissioner Walker stated that \$1200 was needed to commission a logo and/or website design.

Commissioner Foster moved that the PEG Committee be authorized to spend up to \$1200 on the website/logo, and that the Broadband Access Committee be authorized to spend \$800 to promote their public forums. The motion passed unanimously.

## **7. REPORTS (continued)**

### **C. System Operator Reports**

Kristin Pollack stated that Comcast's Leaders and Achievers program had donated \$155,000 to Illinois high school seniors, with 3 students from Champaign-Urbana

receiving scholarships. \$5,000 had been raised by Comcast employees and donated to Champaign County United Way.

Art Svymbersky stated that Comcast has rolled out 3 new tiers of service, with the Digital Economy package priced at \$39.95.

Jim Lee followed up on technical questions posed at the last Commission meeting. The station ID issues were resolved, with the recent launching of WCFN's HD signal. WEIU is on an SD feed, and WILL is also on an SD feed. WCIA and WILL are the two stations in the area who have not yet transitioned entirely to digital, but that will happen soon.

Discussion ensued concerning the framing of HD programming on standard television sets which are center cut for broadcast, and where individuals could find complete channel listings for each cable package online. Mr. Svymbersky said the channel lineups are available online at [www.comcast.com](http://www.comcast.com) under Programming.

Commissioner Resnick inquired if there is flexibility in the assigned digital channel numbers, requesting that the PEG stations have some number that corresponds to the current channel numbers of the station. Mr. Lee stated that the digital bundling was still occurring and they hoped to have the channels solidified by the summer.

Chair Atterberry asked Mr. Svymbersky to describe the circumstances of WEIU's disappearance from analog on April 14<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Svymbersky stated that WILL is the primary PBS channel in our area, with WEIU being secondary. WEIU made the decision for Comcast to remove its analog signal from the Basic tier, and to carry its multiple digital channels instead. Subscribers who want to watch WEIU but don't have a digital television can request a cable box from Comcast. The box will be provided for free for one year.

## **9. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

There was no participation from the audience.

## **10. COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS**

There were no additional comments from Commissioners.

## **11. SET NEXT MEETING DATE AND ADJOURNMENT**

The next Study Session was set for July 8, 2009 and the Regular Quarterly Meeting was set for July 15, 2009. The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

Submitted by,

Kate Gorman  
Urbana Public Television  
City of Urbana