

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

DATE: October 20, 2010
4:00 PM

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: **CHAMPAIGN** **URBANA**
Rick Atterberry Barbara Gladney
Karen Walker Peter Folk

UNIVERSITY of ILLINOIS
Kate Brickman

PARKLAND COLLEGE
Chris Foster

MEMBERS ABSENT: Kyle Harrison, Giraldo Rosales, David Gehrig

STAFF PRESENT: Jeff Hamilton – City of Champaign
Jake Schumacher, Jason Liggett – City of Urbana

OTHERS PRESENT: Greg Gomolka – Comcast
John Quinn – AT&T

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:03 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Chair Atterberry asked Mr. Schumacher to note the attendance.

3. MODIFICATIONS TO AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from the July 14, July 21 and August 18, 2010, meetings were approved as presented.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

Jeff Hamilton noted the inclusion in the packet of correspondence from AT&T concerning various programming changes on U-Verse, from Comcast noting a change in the date they apply for rate changes, some Comcast channel lineup changes, the Commission's annual report, and a

letter from Chair Atterberry to the Urbana City Council regarding the proposed Urbana franchise agreement. Commissioner Walker asked how often Comcast could legally change the rate application date and Chair Atterberry and Mr. Hamilton clarified that the change in date had been a postponement and not an advance. Mr. Hamilton then noted the inclusion of cable complaints in the packet as well, 8 in Urbana and 12 in Champaign. Commissioner Gladney reported a letter to her from a subscriber requesting that the Sunlight Broadcasting Network be included in the C-U cable lineup, and that Comcast reported they were reviewing that.

6. OLD BUSINESS

A. Cable Franchise Renewal Update

Chair Atterberry reported that the Champaign City Council at their meeting of 8/24/10, declined to accept the proposed agreement and returned it to staff to pursue further commitments from Comcast to maintain a local office for the length of the agreement. Mr. Hamilton reported that informal negotiations were continuing. Chair Atterberry then noted that the Urbana City Council had deferred a decision on their proposed agreement until their next meeting (11/1/10) to allow the Council to weigh in on the terms.

7. REPORTS

A. Committee Reports

None.

B. Staff Reports

Urbana

Mr. Schumacher reported progress in acquiring additional programming from Pegmedia for UPTV, productions from other public-access stations around the country and from Internet producers such as Link TV. He described new initiatives in the marketing and promotion of UPTV on the city website and other local media outlets, and attention being given to the “watchability” of UPTV to provide the best possible viewing experience for citizens. Mr. Liggett has finished the production of an extensive and very successful collaboration between the cities, “C-U Sharing the Road,” on bicyclist/motorist rights and responsibilities. UPTV staff met with Kevin Reynen of the Open Media Project, who will be assisting in the resurrection of the station's Drupal website which will allow greater access to the station. Outreach efforts at the UI Volunteer Fair, the eBlack Symposium, the IMC and other potential partners were outlined, and various new local productions were noted. Mr. Liggett's efforts on behalf of UPTV and the City of Urbana were recognized by the City selecting him as Employee of the Year in the Finance Department, and Mr. Schumacher commended his efforts in maintaining UPTV by himself over the past year. Mr. Liggett then reported on his attendance at the Alliance for Community Media Regional Conference in Michigan in September.

Champaign

Mr. Hamilton reported on various productions, including a summer street festival in Champaign, and production for the City's 150 anniversary celebration. CGTV is airing a series on the history of Champaign being produced by WILL television, live and on the website as well.

C. System Operator Reports

AT&T

John Quinn described his company's continuing expansion of U-Verse into new areas in Champaign County and throughout Illinois, and some of the new viewing technology being developed.

Commissioner Brickman asked if Tivo was compatible with U-Verse. It is not.

Commissioner Folk asked what the net effect of proposed channel changes would be. Mr. Quinn noted some channels would be dropped if negotiations could not be successfully concluded.

Chair Atterberry asked about the impact of winter on the roll-out of new areas. Mr. Quinn reported that while construction is slowed, engineering aspects continue.

Commissioner Folk asked about the figure of 700 million dollars of investment by ATT in wireless development. Mr. Quinn clarified that figure was for the entire state of Illinois.

Comcast

Greg Gomolka related news about a number of community grants and charitable giving by Comcast in the C-U area. He described the notification and switchover processes and schedule for upcoming digital conversion. He said Comcast is at about 91% of digital penetration in the local area, well ahead of any other region. Comcast has been working with staff on municipal accounts for the conversion as well.

Commissioner Foster asked whether Parkland would have to purchase the digital boxes. Mr. Gomolka said he would have to check.

Commissioner Walker asked about Comcast's policy of not extending an offered and accepted promotional rate when customers failed to return a signed contract. Mr. Gomolka said that policy is under review by the company.

Commissioner Gladney asked about the cost to the customer for the digital converters. Mr. Gomolka said there was no charge for up to three DTAs.

Commissioner Foster asked about the availability of the local HD channels after the conversion, and noted that the mechanics of acquiring those should be explained to customers, to avoid violating the spirit of the must-carry rule.

Chair Atterberry asked for a clarification of what "basic service" exactly means following the conversion.

Chair Atterberry asked if the DTAs would be available for pick-up at the local office. Mr. Gomolka said they would be.

Chair Atterberry noted that customer service reps just do not listen to what customers are trying to tell them. Mr. Gomolka agreed that call center personnel occasionally need to be better informed.

Commissioner Folk noted the new Comcast “customer guarantee” was a step in the right direction, but that the move away from local operators worked against customer service, and that there were a number of complaints that resulted from the remoteness of Comcast phone service. He said local customers deserved better local support.

8. NEW BUSINESS

NATOA Conference Report

Commissioner Folk reported on his attendance of the NATOA Conference. He described some of the emerging Internet technologies that are going to have an impact on cable regulation and funding. Universal service fund reform and the potential classification of digital services as telecommunications vs. information service were highlighted as two of the most important areas currently evolving.

9. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

None.

10. COMMISSIONER’S COMMENTS

Commissioner Walker noted longtime Commissioner Brian Silverman was in the midst of a long hospitalization and he and his family could use good thoughts.

11. SET NEXT MEETING DATE AND ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Hamilton reported that the next study session meeting is scheduled for January 12, 2011, and the next regular meeting for January 19, 2011.

Chair Atterberry adjourned the meeting at 5:05pm.

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