

**City of Bloomington  
Telecommunication Council  
Business Meeting – June 2, 2009**

Common Council Chambers  
City Hall at the Showers Building  
401 N. Morton St.

**I. Members Present:** Carl Zager, Eric Ost, Suzann Owen, Jesse Stryker, Duane Busick,  
**Others in Attendance:** Kevin Bowlen – ITS, Michael White – CATS, Phil Mayer - WTIU

**II. Approval of Minutes:** Motion was made by Suzann Owen to accept the May minutes, Jesse Stryker seconded the motion. No corrections or changes, all moved. Motion was passed.

**III. Public Comment – None**

**IV. Reports**

**1. Telecom Members**

**Suzann-** On the national landscape there is still no chairman of the FCC. The national focus still remains on broadband, instead of broadcast or cable issues, which relate more to us. Today, Michael White from CATS did forward information on a lawsuit filed in the State of California against AT&T for basically the same thing we have been concerned about and that is the carriage of the PEG channels. Their legislation is very similar, so it will be a test case, on whether it is decided in favor of AT&T or the municipality.

**2. CATS – Michael White**

- Monthly programming
- With the Memorandum of Understanding in place, we will be running the “From the Archives” on Saturday evenings on Ch. 3 at 8pm. Repeats will be on Sunday at 2pm.
- Working on a news program that will highlight city and county meetings from the week.
- We are pleased to be housing the Golden Age Radio people in Studio B. They were to have gone to the sportsplex but there was no feed there.

**Suzann –** In Dancing with Celebrities the name Mario needs to be changed to Angelo. Also, as you think back to 2008, was there anything particular that you think were landmarks that should be recorded in the annual report?

**Michael –** I will look into that and send you an email.

**Carl –** Do you have any feelings about what the state budget impact is going to be on our local activities?

**Michael –** No, I don't! County people are going to do there best. We will survive from the separate revenue (franchise fee's) for the PEG channels. San Francisco public accessed just went dark because of ramifications from franchising. Connecticut also has laws underfoot to remove franchise support, and PEG channels. Additionally, there are laws that prevent them from doing any fundraising as well. Hopefully, it won't come to that here.

**3. WTIU – Phil Mayer**

There have been state funding cuts to public broadcasting. The state budget agency has withheld the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter payment of the state appropriations which goes thru the Department of Education to 8 public television stations, and 8 public radio stations. For WTIU, that is about an \$80,000.00 cut. It is money that was already appropriated by the legislature, and the state budget as not yet been approved for the upcoming year. It wasn't well publicized but 2008, the state legislature appropriated capital money to inter-connect all the PBS stations, which would allow us to do gavel to gavel coverage of legislature proceedings, and that was not distributed either. So, those two factors have an impact on WTIU World (Comcast 17). It forces us to look for alternatives. There is a IPBS board meeting tomorrow (6-3-09) where these factors will be discussed, as well as alternative funding models, alternative inter-connect systems, and alternative programs. The way the state budget was left, the house proposed an 8% cut to public broadcasting, the senate had a 20% cut, and the governor's proposed budget was 100%. Somewhere between those figures it will be decided. The question remains whether that money will be distributed. So far it has meant unfilled positions, no money spent on marketing, and cutting expenses for program acquisitions, and capital equipment. While we have lost no positions, the strings are tightening. WTIU World will continue, but the ability to insert local content will be delayed.

**Suzann-** The paper said FIU was 8% of the budget.

**Phil –** It is about 8 to 10%, not critical but still a piece to the puzzle.

Suzann – Will there be cuts from the university budget?

Phil – President McRobbie has already announced a 1 ½% cut to all departments, before the state budget comes down.

Jesse – The 4<sup>th</sup> channel popped up, with Spanish, is there anyway to get it dubbed in English.

Phil – It is a packaged feed. It is an extra expense that producers are not willing to undertake.

4. **ITS Dept. – Rick Dietz** – No Report

5. **Comcast** – No Report

6. **AT & T** - No Report

## V. Old Business

### 1. Reports to City Council

**Carl** – On the first page under video service provider, Comcast, were we ever officially inform of the first clause in the first sentence?

**Duane** – Yes, at the last meeting Wendy attended.

**Suzann** – I took that phrase of general responsibilities of the council from previous reports, but I think this might be an opportunity in which we could somehow identify those things that need to be modified. Such as:

- Reviewing and evaluating the city's franchise agreement. (No longer exist)
- At least once a year the council shall evaluate the quality subscriber services, to make sure companies are operating within the federal and state regulations (need to be modified).
- Explore ways of using cable television to meet those needs (change to video service instead of cable)

**Carl** – I really appreciate you putting that paragraph out there.

**Suzann** – Shared the list of major concerns and activities of the council for 2008.

**Eric** – Can we modify the wording:

- Use “ongoing” in front of the word implementation in the 2<sup>nd</sup> bullet item, because 2008 was not the first year.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> bullet item, AT&T non-compliance with state franchise law.
- Final bullet item, preserving local emergency notification

**Carl** – Since we are expecting additional comment from Michael White, we will have more time to re-look at this July.

**Eric** – I did a quick tally of the total revenue from January thru March is up over \$5,000.

**Suzann** – I was waiting till new business to look at those numbers.

**Duane** – It might be worthwhile to make a personal appearance/contact at the Comcast office to get the total number of subscribers for 2008, and do that with AT&T as well. Also, do a tally on whether the revenue is up from 2007.

**Carl** – I will get with Rick Dietz to make the contact with Comcast and AT&T for the year end numbers.

### 2. Comcast, EAS, Local Emergency Overrides

**Carl** – We do not believe that there are issues with Comcast system relative to national or state EAS announcement. We have no knowledge of AT&T on whether the EAS announcements are being transmitted.

- The issue with Comcast is the practicality of the analog override equipment having a major bug when operated.
- Essentially the legislative session is not over; Representative Pierce local override bill is dead in the water, unless it gets attached to something else in the short session.
- I have asked Matt Pierce for a short report once the session is over.
- We made real progress, and the effort will continue.

**Duane** – With EAS announcements, the digital channels go blank.

**Carl** – It is coming thru on the larger systems.

### 3. PEG Channels

No information or changes

4. Telecommunications Council Charter

**Carl** – The general responsibilities paragraph in the report, gives a firm grasp on what we need to ask the city council to do with our charter.

**Eric** – I would like to see the public become more involved. It would help with the upgrading of the charter. Asked Michael White about putting up signage in the library.

**Michael** – It would have to go before the library administration.

**Suzann** – Is there intent to rename the library channel on the Comcast system?

**Michael** – Smithville has said the numbers will stay the same on their system, but as for others it may change, so don't lose viewers.

**VI. New Business**

**Suzann** – Revenue and Franchise Fee's

<b>2009</b>	Jan – Mar	
	AT&T	\$18,796.54
	Comcast	\$167,445.65
	Total	\$186,242.19

\*considerable growth

**Carl** – I think we can deduct a decrease in Comcast subscribers, due to the decrease in community contact.

**Jesse** – Comcast on Demand interface, I would like to know about the configuration. It seems very difficult to use. I had visitors trying to sell Comcast to me; they did not have me down as subscriber, when I am. There seems to be a lot of cross – signals.

**Carl** – On Demand menu, the purpose is to sell and promote the services they can charge a fee for.

**VII. Adjournment**

**Next Regular Meeting**

Tuesday July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009 at 7:30

Common Council Chambers in City Hall at the Showers Building  
401 N. Morton St.

Submitted By:  
Stephanie Jachim 6-17-09