



Cable Commission Minutes

Monday, August 26, 2024 at 6:30 PM

Columbus City Hall – 105 N. Dickason Boulevard

Called to order at 6:30 pm

Members Behl, Famularo, and Pyfferoen were present. Staff member Bennett was present. Roelke arrived at 6:47 pm.

Meeting was properly noticed.

Motion to approve the agenda by Pyfferoen, second by Behl. After unanimous vote, motion carries.

Motion by Behl to approve the July 29, 2024, minutes as presented. Pyfferoen seconds. After unanimous vote, motion carries.

1. Cable Meeting Minutes from July 29, 2024

There was no public in attendance for comment. Famularo brought up that a resident contacted her about cable channel 980 not being available on Charter's apps. Bennett will be addressing this issue during the July 2024 cable industry reports.

Unfinished Business

2. Bennett presented an update to the proposed 2025 cable budget. After working with the City Treasurer, a few changes were made to it. The changes to budgeted revenues included reducing the anticipated franchise fees from \$51,223.00 to \$48,000.00 and State Aid Payment from \$12,806.00 to \$12,000.00. Interest earned was increased from \$2,000.00 to \$3,500.00. The only changes to 2025 budgeted expenditures were decreasing contribution to programs from \$30,964.11 in 2024 to \$10,487.07 and decreasing contribution to meetings from \$7,404.46 in 2024 to \$4,766.85.

The Treasurer suggested not carrying over the proposed \$100,000 for emergency or council chamber equipment upgrades as the upgrades may be included in the 2025 Capital Improvement Projects and if any emergency were to occur, staff may go to either the City Administrator or Council pending amount in request to use fund balance. Famularo asked if any budget surplus goes back to the fund balance if unspent. Bennett confirmed it would go back.

New Business

3. Mayor Hammer had appointed to the Cable Commission Chris Behl with Council approval for a term of 2024 through 2024. The Cable Commission has one vacancy remaining.
4. Bennett informed the Cable Commission that due to the new IT contract with Rhyme, along with cable/media being pegged for the 2025 Capital Infrastructure Projects (CIP), that staff will meet with Rhyme to discuss their capabilities in selecting editing computers.

Department Reports

5. Bennett provided a brief recap of revenues and spending in the month of July. Revenues on the year are \$26,852.46 after the addition of \$12,118.56 for franchise fees and interest earned. No

State Aid Payment has been received yet. There were no new expenditures beyond staff pay in July and total \$23,918.07 on the year.

6. Bennett reported that there were 21 new programs aired in July and included DailyDodge's WBEV radio show episode featuring the Columbus Area Historical Society. There were 24 video-on-demand files that were streamed via Cablecast along with the channel 980 live stream. The files combined for 395 views totaling 92 hours and 42 minutes of watch time. The stream had 167 views for 60 hours and 30 minutes of watch time. Famularo asked if there was permission to use DailyDodge's content. Bennett explained that a partnership was made back in fall of 2021 to use DailyDodge's content if it was Columbus-related and that no ads were removed or editing made.
7. Bennett provided insight into the cable industry highlighting Charter's 2nd quarter earnings report and Nielsen's The Gauge publication. Charter lost an additional 405,000 cable customers in quarter 2 of 2024 and 813,000 this year so far. Charter has seen a year-over-year decline of 1,353,000 cable customers from 2023 through 2024. Nielsen's publication analyzes all the TV watched in the US and shows that in July, cable TV viewing was only 26.7% which included a boost from the Olympics.

Bennett explained that only digital signals that Charter receives are eligible for airing on their app and Xumo box. Charter currently receives analog signal from Columbus and would need to upgrade their receiving to include digital signal. Bennett stated in Marshfield, they used an encoder and decoder. Roelke asked if there were other video service providers (VSPs). Bennett stated there were no additional providers in Columbus. There was a brief discussion about possibly encouraging another VSP to compete in Columbus. The Commission would like to learn more about VSPs in other states and create an awareness campaign. Behl would like interview programs to be made.

Items for future agendas include discussion on a possible interview program, digital awareness campaign, and additional information regarding video service providers in other states.

Motion to adjourn by Roelke. Second by Behl. After unanimous vote, motion carries. The meeting is adjourned at 7:16 pm.

- These minutes have not been formally approved by the Cable Commission at its next meeting and are submitted by David Bennett, Communications & Economic Development Coordinator.