

APPROVED MINUTES OF CABLE TV COMMISSION MEETING

Oct. 23, 2024

CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 350 W. SIXTH ST.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jennifer Tigges (Chair), Georgina Guerrero Galvan, Pauline Maloney, Ron Tigges

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT:

- Randy Gehl, City of Dubuque Public Information Officer
- Felicia Carner, City of Dubuque Multimedia Specialist

JTigges called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m.

Acceptance of the Agenda

- Upon a motion by Maloney, seconded by Guerrero Galvan, the agenda was accepted by a vote of 4 - 0.

Approval of the Minutes of Feb. 28, 2024, Meeting

- Upon a motion by RTigges, seconded by Maloney, minutes of the Feb. 28, 2024, meeting were approved 4 - 0.

Oath of Office for Commissioner Jennifer Tigges

- JTigges recited and signed her oath of office.

Public Input

- Dubuque resident and Mediacom customer Clete Gartner of 410 Maplewood Dr. addressed the commission regarding his concerns with Mediacom customer services and questions of regulatory oversight of Mediacom. Mr. Gartner detailed his experience with cable service issues and disruptions related to Mediacom's decision to require all customers to have a box for video service. He cited issues with finding phone numbers for service and in-person experiences with Mediacom staff, at his residence and at the Mediacom office. Mr. Gartner also described his communications with the Iowa Utility Board (IUB) and their insistence that the IUB does not have regulatory authority over Mediacom despite the fact that the IUB issued the state franchise to Mediacom to operate in Dubuque. Commissioners sympathized with Mr. Gartner's experience, explained their understanding of the state franchise and regulatory authority and their lack and the City's lack of regulatory authority in the matter, and offered suggestions and phone numbers for future issues with Mediacom service.

PEG Equipment Grant Program Update

- Carner and Gehl introduced and explained their recommended changes to improve the processes related to the PEG Equipment Grant Program, including a review of draft documents detailing those changes.
- Highlights of the recommended changes include the creation of two separate processes, one for community members and one for PEG channel operators. Other details included the conversion of the process to an annual grant cycle for community member applications, a maximum number of grants awarded per year and maximum grant amounts, required minimum amounts of programming for grant recipients, and clarification of equipment eligible through the program and ownership of equipment purchased through the program.
- Significant discussion followed with feedback and suggestions from commissioners. Staff agreed to incorporate feedback and provide revised drafts for commissioner review and consideration of approval at a future meeting. Staff will also ask the City Attorney's Office to review the documents.

PEG Channel Guidelines

- Carner explained the goals of the Dubuque Cable Access Policy and Procedures Guidelines document she developed, based on research and review of policies used by other communities. The document outlines policies and procedures for submission of programming for local PEG channels as well as program content and restrictions, as well as enforcement. Commissioners expressed support for the guidelines. Staff will ask the City Attorney's Office to review and submit a final draft to the commission for their consideration at a future meeting.

PEG Programming Report

- Gehl provided an update on new public access programming received from grant recipients since the February 29, 2024, commission meeting.
- The Dubuque County Historical Society submitted 10 new programs with a total runtime of approximately 123 minutes.
- The Glasshouse, LLC received their equipment at the beginning of March 2024. Since then, they submitted one program with an approximate runtime of 8 minutes. They report they intend to submit another program by November 1.
- Art4Us received their equipment at the beginning of March 2024 and committed to submitting programming by July 1, 2024; however, they have not submitted any programming and have stopped responding to City staff communication requesting updates.

- Gehl said the City expects updated programming from the Dubuque Community School District and Loras College is expected when the City requests the 2024 programming report at the end of the year.

Staff Report

- Carner asked the commission for their support in the initiation of discussions with PEG channel operators regarding developing a formal channel operator agreement and on the future of PEG programming and channels in Dubuque as streaming and video services continue to evolve. Commissioners expressed support for these discussions to begin. Staff will initiate and keep the commission updated.

Adjournment

- Upon a motion by Maloney, seconded by Guerrero Galvan, and 4-0 vote, the meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m.