

SUMMARY MINUTES

CITY/COUNTY TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION Wednesday, December 4, 2024

VANCOUVER CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
415 W 6th Street, Vancouver, Washington

APPROVED AGENDA

I. CALL TO ORDER – 3:30 p.m.

A. Roll Call

PRESENT: Dicker, Green, Hale, Hinds, Maas, Nygard

EXCUSED: Rogers

ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Archer, Demmon, Driskell, Peck

B. Approval of Minutes for August 7, 2024

Minutes approved as submitted.

C. Review and Approval of Agenda for December 4, 2024

No changes.

II. CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS

No communications taken.

III. OLD BUSINESS

A. PEG Capital Support Funds for Equipment Repair and Replacement Amendment

Kerry Peck, Administrative Assistant in the City Manager's Office, reminded the Commission that in late 2023 TV ETC made a request to increase the amount set aside in the PEG fund for equipment

repair and replacement since the amount had not been adjusted since 2013 when the Commission made the recommendation to set aside the funds. She stated that since staff was still in franchise renewal negotiations with Comcast it was suggested that the issue be revisited after the franchise was approved.

Peck said that in the new cable franchises the PEG fees are now based on 1% of gross revenue, instead of the \$1 per month per cable subscriber, which will bring more money into the fund. She said staff is proposing that repair expenditures be increased from \$2,500 per piece to \$5,000 per piece and that each PEG recipient cannot exceed \$25,000 in requests in a calendar year without additional approval from the PEG Subcommittee. She said that there is currently no cap set on the amount each provider can receive, just that each request was capped at \$1,000 per request.

Dicker explained that the Commission set aside money from the PEG Grant fund for the access providers to be able to repair or replace broken equipment purchased with the funds prior to Comcast allowing the access providers to purchase warranties for the equipment.

ACTION: THE COMMISSION UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED RESOLUTION 2024-05 REGARDING THE USE OF PEG CAPITAL SUPPORT FUNDS FOR EQUIPMENT REPAIR AND REPLACEMENT (attached).

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. PEG Access

1. Report from the PEG Committee on PEG Capital Support and Funding Recommendations

Peck reported that 15 grant applications were received this grant cycle – three from CVTV and the remaining from TV ETC and their member school districts. She said that the PEG Committee and the technical review members met a couple of times to discuss the grants and follow up with the providers to review their grants. The PEG Committee recommends a total of \$615,694 be awarded.

ACTION: THE COMMISSION UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED RESOLUTION 2024-06 REGARDING RECOMMENDATIONS TO AWARD PEG CAPITAL SUPPORT FUNDS TO DESIGNATED ACCESS PROVIDERS (attached).

2. TV ETC Update

Xander Hayes, TV ETC Coordinator, thanked the Commission for approving the recommendation for the PEG Grant funding. He stated that the equipment that will be purchased will continue to give students access to industry standard equipment to produce high-quality productions.

Hayes stated that so far this school year 45 live sporting events have aired and there are 35 more that will be aired this winter. He said that holiday concerts are starting to air and 12 school board meetings have also aired.

Demmon asked if TV ETC's HD channels have been launched by Comcast.

Hayes responded that the channels have been launched, but it wasn't in time for live football season.

Hayes showed a video highlighting TV ETC programming.

Dicker complimented the work of TV ETC members and asked if any of the members have received any awards for their programming.

Hayes responded that he would ask TV ETC members if they've received any awards in the past year and report back to the Commission.

Dicker stated that when he first started on the Commission most of the video production was done by adults with students watching and now it's primarily students producing content. He wanted to know how many students are now participating in video production programs at the schools.

Hayes responded that he didn't have those numbers and would need to check with the schools to receive that information.

3. Clark/Vancouver Television Update

Demmon thanked the Commission for the recommendation to approve the PEG Grants. He stated that this round of PEG funds will be used to update the CVTV video playback server, replace cameras that are not working in the County Public Service Center

training room and upgrade the CVTV booth in community room at the main library downtown.

Demmon informed the Commission that the recommendation on increasing the amount that can be requested for repair and maintenance on PEG equipment and the recommended grant awards will go before the Vancouver and Clark County Councils early next year for approval.

Demmon stated that to keep branding looking modern and relevant, it's best practice to do a refresh every five years. He said in the spring of this year, CVTV completed a graphic re-design to refresh the CTV logo and on-air graphics. He added that an update of the CVTV website will begin in early 2025 and be completed in late spring and will incorporate the new branding. He showed a video highlighting the new on-air graphics.

Hinds wanted to know what standard or organization determines the best practices for updating branding and websites.

Demmon responded that the City of Vancouver updated their branding the previous year and since CVTV had not had a brand refresh or website update in 12 years staff felt that it was time for that to be done.

B. 2025-2026 Cable TV Office Work Program

Demmon explained that the interlocal agreement between the City and County that establishes the City/County Cable Television Office, states that the Commission will review the Cable Office work plan and budget for the biennium. He said that the plan covers the core services provided by the Cable Office, including City Manager's Office staff, and does not include the work done by CVTV. He stated that those core services include monitoring cable franchise compliance, customer ombudsman role and managing the PEG Grant fund. He provided an overview of the 2025-2026 work program and explained that this is consistent with previous years' programs.

Hinds stated that in looking at the budget there seems to be a significant increase from 2024 to 2025 of about \$30,000. He wanted to know the reason for such a large increase.

Demmon explained that the interfund total – the amount charged by the city for services – increased.

Hinds asked if the increase in the salaries budget was due to hiring additional employees.

Demmon responded that that no additional staff will be added. He said that it's approximately 60 percent of his time and 30 percent of Tracie Ramirez's time. He added that he wasn't sure what methodology the budget office used to calculate the salaries. He explained that the city requested reductions in discretionary spending which is why there is a big reduction in services and supplies.

(Hinds contacted staff after the meeting about concerns he had with the salaries expense on the budget handout in the Commission packets. Staff explained that the increase in the salaries was due to a reclassification of Tracie Ramirez's position. City budget staff met with Hinds on January 16, 2025, to review the Cable Office budget.)

ACTION: THE COMMISSION UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED RESOLUTION 2024-07 REGARDING 2025-2026 CABLE TV OFFICE WORK PROGRAM. (attached).

C. Review and Adopt Tentative Meeting Schedule for 2025

Demmon reminded the Commission that at the August meeting the Commission provided clear feedback on the need to keep this advisory board functional. The Commission feedback was presented to the legislative bodies, and it was recommended to keep the Commission active, but reduce the number of yearly meetings to a minimum of two, unless additional issues arise that need the Commission's attention.

Demmon reported that the City and County codes will need to be amended to reflect a change to the minimum number of meetings required. He said that the City Council approved this change on December 2 and the County Council is considering amending their code.

Demmon reviewed the tentative meeting schedule for 2025. He reminded the Commission that at the last meeting it was decided that the redesignation of PEG providers would be every three years instead of every year, but the providers will still present an annual report to the Commission each year. The first meeting of 2025 will be on May 7 and the providers will present their annual reports and the Commission will elect its officers.

Demmon said that the second meeting of the year is being proposed for November 19 where the Commission will make its recommendations on PEG Grant funding. He said that moving the meeting up a couple of weeks will give staff time to get recommendations to the legislative bodies for their approval before the end of the year.

Demmon concluded that staff feels that this schedule will work and can be adjusted if additional issues arose that would require the Commission's action. He asked for Commissioner feedback and, if they felt the schedule would work, their verbal approval.

There was consensus among the Commission that the proposed meeting schedule was appropriate. Nygard asked what the procedure would be if additional meetings needed to be added.

Demmon responded that staff would reach out to the Commission chair or vice chair to advise them of the need for an additional meeting to get their feedback on the issue. Staff would then reach out to rest of the Commission to advise them of the issue prompting an additional meeting and coordinate a meeting date.

Dicker stated that since this would be the last meeting until May 2025, and this was his last meeting, who would act as chair until officer elections at the May meeting.

Demmon responded that Vice Chair Green would act as chair until elections in May.

The Commission unanimously accepted the proposed 2025 meeting schedule.

D. Resolution and Certificate of Appreciation – Paul Dicker

Green presented Dicker with the resolution of appreciation and certificate for his service on the Commission for the past 13 years.

Dicker thanked the Commission for the acknowledgement of his service, staff he has worked with and the past Commission members he's had the pleasure of working with. He stated that serving on the Commission has been very rewarding and encouraged those watching the meeting to consider applying for the vacant positions.

ACTION: THE COMMISSION UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED RESOLUTION 2024-08 REGARDING APPRECIATION OF SERVICE BY PAUL DICKER (attached).

V. COMMUNICATIONS

A. Comcast

Samantha Ridderbusch, Comcast Direct, Government & Regulatory Affairs, echoed the appreciation of Chair Dicker and his service on the Commission.

Ridderbusch stated that November kicked off Comcast's season of giving that encourages Comcast staff to get involved in their communities through donations to non-profits and volunteering. She said that Comcast is estimating \$25 million in giving across the company to local non-profits.

Ridderbusch announced that Comcast was recognized by Military Times as the best company in their industry and third overall best employer for veterans. She said that in November during Comcast's Operation Appreciation customer's hand wrote 35,000 notes to thank our veterans and military customers for their service. She added that Comcast donated \$20,000 to America's Vet Dogs charity.

Ridderbusch provided an update on the broadband initiative partnership with Clark County. She said that construction has begun on the 31-mile extension of their plant in the area just east of Battle Ground Lake.

Maas mentioned that there have been changes in sports programming because of the college football teams league changes and the Portland Trail Blazers and Seattle Kraken games now being shown on local television in the Pacific Northwest market. He wanted to know if Comcast has been able to make games available to customers in the Vancouver/Clark County area.

Ridderbusch responded that negotiations for sports coverage is outside of her scope, but she was able to confirm that Comcast has been able to negotiate airing the Big Ten college games. She added that she will follow up and provide additional information.

Dicker thanked Comcast for their work in giving back to the communities they serve.

B. Commission

None.

C. Staff

Demmon reported that the City of Vancouver was facing a \$43 million biennial budget deficit and balanced the budget through budget cuts and additional tax revenue. He said one of the added taxes is a six percent utility tax on cable television services. He said that the tax will begin in 2025, and other services provided by Comcast, such as internet, will not be affected by the tax. He added that this affects only subscribers that live within the Vancouver city limits.

Maas mentioned that he participated in a video to promote citizen involvement on County boards and commissions that CVTV produced.

VI. NEXT MEETING DATE: May 14, 2025

VII. ADJOURNMENT – 4:25 p.m.

AN AUDIO RECORDING OF THIS MEETING IS ON FILE IN THE CITY CLERK'S OFFICE; A VIDEO RECORDING OF THIS MEETING IS ON FILE IN THE CITY/COUNTY CABLE TELEVISION OFFICE.

Attachments:

1. Resolution 2024-05 Regarding Use of PEG Capital Support Funds for Equipment Repair and Replacement
2. Resolution 2024-06 Regarding Recommendations to Award PEG Capital Support Funds to Designated Access Providers
3. Resolution 2024-07 Regarding 2025-2026 Cable TV Office Work Plan
4. Resolution 2024-08 Regarding Appreciation for Service by Paul Dicker

Approved May 14, 2025
Date

Doug Green, Vice Chair
City/County Telecommunications Commission