

**URBANA PUBLIC TELEVISION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

DATE: September 10, 2010
12:00 p.m.

PLACE: Urbana City Council Chambers
400 S. Vine Street, Urbana, IL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Barbara Gladney Durl Kruse Peter Folk
Carol Inskeep Dana Mancuso Marie Polk

MEMBERS ABSENT: David Gehrig

STAFF PRESENT: Jason Liggett, Jake Schumacher, Bill De Jarnette

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Barbara Gladney called the meeting to order at 12:03 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Commissioner Gladney began by asking Bill De Jarnette to introduce new UPTV Station Manager Jake Schumacher, and all Commissioners present introduced themselves.

Commissioner Gladney mentioned that there were two Commission openings, and Mr. Liggett confirmed that those were for a Cable Commissioner (as Durl Kruse has become the at-large Urbana representative), and for a School District representative (as Mark Schultz is no longer with the District). Mr. Liggett also gave information on how a citizen might apply to become a Commissioner.

III. MODIFICATIONS TO AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Inskeep moved to approve the minutes of the December 11, 2009, March 12, 2010 and June 11, 2010 meetings. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kruse, and carried unanimously.

V. CORRESPONDENCE

There was no new correspondence for the Commission to review.

VI. STAFF REPORT

Mr. Liggett stated that staff has been busy filming and editing a bicycle education video entitled "C-U Sharing the Road." Press coverage of this joint effort between the cities of Urbana and Champaign was received through stories in the News-Gazette and coverage on WICD and

WCIA. The program was to receive its premiere broadcast in October and will be distributed to the other PEG stations in town for their use, and will be on demand on the city website.

Two new local-access programs have premiered since the June meeting, “On Da Move” is a show exploring the local hip-hop scene produced by Johnnie Campbell, and “News View Muskego” is produced by Michael Badger. Also several individual programs, including a new edition of “Sitting Down with Conrad Wetzel” and “Community Action Showcase” which was produced by Barbara Kessel; and the Urbana Park District produced a program called “Living with Wildlife.”

Mr. Schumacher has been familiarizing himself with the schedule, looking for ways to build more consistency in program scheduling across the week, and utilizing Pegmedia.org to source outstanding programs from other community-access stations and independent networks and producers. He is also looking at new outreach and volunteer opportunities to increase local production. He arranged for staff to work a table at the UI Volunteer Fair at the Illini Union on September 8, where contacts with both individual prospects and other community organizations were made.

Staff are working with the Urbana Park District to improve the sound quality of their recorded meetings with equipment purchased by UPD and other equipment provided by UPTV, and working with Commissioner Inskeep on a video education program for youth run by the library. Commissioner Folk asked when the UPD meetings are held, and Mr. Liggett responded that they are held on the second Tuesday of the month at 7pm at the Anita Purvis Center, and aired Wednesday mornings at 9am. Commissioner Mancuso expressed gratitude to Mr. Liggett for his assistance with the sound improvements.

Chair Gladney asked if the Library Board meetings were broadcast live or recorded. Commissioner Inskeep said that the library director was intending to contact Chair Gladney about that subject. Mr. Liggett said she had been in touch with him and that her intention was to bring it to the Library Board as a whole to see if it was something they wanted to do. Mr. Liggett also responded to Chair Gladney's questions concerning the mechanics of possible live broadcasts of UPD and Library meetings. Mr. De Jarnette also explained how the City's installation of fiber-optic in key locations would enable more live broadcasts from a variety of locations. Commissioner Kruse commented that anything that could be done to enhance public access to governmental meetings would be enjoyed by and would benefit the public. Mr. Schumacher commented that staff's work on regularizing the broadcast schedule of meetings would also assist in the public's ability to better utilize those broadcasts.

VII. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

There was no participation from the audience.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to consider.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

- A. **Franchise Renewal Update.** Mr. Schumacher said he had received e-mail from City Attorney Ron O'Neal the previous day that Urbana's franchise negotiations with Comcast had been concluded, and that the final draft should be available the following week. Commissioner Gladney asked what the next steps in the process would be. Mr. De Jarnette said he thought that it would go straight to the Council, although it had not yet been scheduled for a specific meeting, and didn't imagine that it would be significantly different than the one which the Champaign City Council received and rejected.

Commissioner Kruse commented that there was fifth channel in the proposed Champaign agreement, described as a "shared" channel between Champaign and Urbana. Since UPTV is the only public access channel currently available to the citizens, he wondered what the involvement of the UPTV Commission would be in this fifth channel. Since he thought it likely that both cities would conclude negotiations with Comcast before the next UPTV Commission meeting in December, and that the cities would begin joint discussions concerning that fifth channel, he wanted to know what the UPTV Commission's role would be if those discussions occurred outside of the UPTV Commission meeting schedule--discussions of oversight, funding, sharing and the like. Commissioner Kruse was concerned that the public access channel would be orphaned in the digital tier away from the current governmental channels, and wanted to ensure that public access was put on an equal footing with governmental access. Commissioner Kruse wanted to recommend that once both cities had concluded franchise negotiations with Comcast, the Commission request that the City discussions of those items include members of the UPTV Commission and members of the community. Commissioners Mancuso and Folk, with Mr. Liggett's assistance, clarified that a fifth channel in the digital tier would be available in the 'expanded basic' digital package, but not to subscribers who still have only the basic analog package.

According to Commissioner Kruse, once there is a public access channel available to a community, that channel is often supervised independently of government. He asked about the process of discussion that the two cities would engage in with the UPTV Commission, which is the only body currently representing the public in this respect, concerning the role the Commission would have in helping to design, shape, transition a new public access channel in terms of adequate financing, governance, and all the things that would make it a viable access channel.

Commissioner Folk asked the current staff what the plans were concerning who would manage the new channel and how it would be governed. Mr. De Jarnette said that in the initial survey and analysis concerning a new public access channel, it was assumed that in the short term, the start-up phase would fall to Urbana, having the expertise in the outreach to the public, already having shows that could be switched over to a fifth channel, having adequate technology to start the process, etc. In longer terms, he continued, a joint relationship implies joint funding, and there were issues regarding that which would need to be addressed; as it expands, and more players are involved, a deep organizational plan will be necessary--but that is not going to happen until it is a little more real. And with that comes the concept of a facility: where and what could be afforded? The current facility would not be sufficient. Urbana would jump-start the new channel, and the process could unfold from there.

Commissioner Folk speculated that both cities would reach a franchise agreement in the coming quarter and that by December staff would be making the new fifth channel operational, so that by the March meeting, the Commission could be considering the larger questions. Commissioner Kruse indicated his desire that the public be included in any discussions no matter when they happen. Chair Gladney asked about the size of the task in getting another channel operational technically.

X. COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

XI. SET THE NEXT MEETING DATE AND ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting date was set for Friday, December 10th at 12:00 p.m. in the Urbana City Council Chambers. The meeting was adjourned at 12:50 p.m.