



Mt. Hood Cable Regulatory Commission

Serving Multnomah County and the Cities of Fairview, Gresham, Portland, Troutdale & Wood Village

MT. HOOD CABLE REGULATORY COMMISSION

Hybrid – Zoom and MetroEast, Gresham, Oregon

March 17, 2025 Meeting Minutes --**APPROVED**

SUMMARY MINUTES

Call to Order 6:30 PM

Roll Call:

Present: Chair DeGraw; Vice Chair Harden; Commissioner Dennerline; Commissioner Goodlow; Commissioner Moyer; Commissioner Wagner

Absent: Commissioner Thomas (excused)

Staff: Seema Kumar, BPS Chief of Community Technology; Andrew Speer, Utility Manager; Rana DeBey, MHCRC Grants Manager; Laura Dyer, MHCRC Compliance Analyst; Douglas Imaralu, MHCRC Financial Analyst; Kevin Block, Policy Coordinator; Kathleen Lefebvre, MHCRC Administrative Specialist

- Agenda Review: Chair DeGraw reviews the agenda.
- Chair DeGraw acknowledges Carol Studenmund's passing and notes her family has scheduled a memorial service for Saturday, March 22 in Portland, Oregon. Chair DeGraw expresses that Carol's impact on our work and the broader community cannot be overstated and she will be deeply missed. Chair DeGraw shares that Carol was appointed to the Commission by Multnomah County in 2010 during a pivotal time of cable franchise renewal. Over the last 14 years Carol was dedicated to MHCRC and its work, evidenced by her 2 terms as Chair and 2 terms as Vice Chair. While Carol often remarked that fully grasping the work of the commission takes years, she quickly became a passionate advocate for local authority in communications technology regulation, the community media centers, and the community grants program. Beyond her leadership roles, Carol made a point of actively engaging the communities we serve. She frequently took time from her busy workday to represent MHCRC at events supporting the TechSmart Initiative and the community media centers and other grantees. A champion for equity and inclusion, she also leveraged her role both in the commission and through her company, LNS Captioning, to advocate for stronger captioning requirements ensuring greater accessibility for all. Carol's impact on our work and the broader community cannot be overstated, and she will be deeply missed. Chair DeGraw personally expresses her gratitude for Carol and that for the short period of time their commission work overlapped Carol was an incredible mentor and inspired Chair DeGraw to take on the chair role.

Chair DeGraw also takes a moment to acknowledge Rebecca Gibbons, Rebecca's last day with MHCRC and city of Portland was in March. For over two decades Rebecca has been committed to advocating for community media, digital equity, and public-interest telecommunications policy. We appreciate Rebecca's contribution to MHCRC over the years and wish her the best on her next chapter. Chair DeGraw noted that she could not have fulfilled her commission roll without the





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incredible support from Rebecca.

- Disclosures: none.
- Public Comment (non-agenda items): none.
- Community Media Center Updates
 - MetroEast – John Lugton shared MetroEast just wrapped a video for Quest Center for Integrative Health for their upcoming gala which showcases the impact of nourishing growth in the community through the integrative nature of its programming and via the voices of Quest clients, providers, and community partners. The video captures a day in the life of a FSR client (Finding and Sustaining Recovery), weaving their personal journey with the broader narrative of the Quest community. John highlights a project that MetroEast just finished with League of Women’s Voters of Portland titled: Immigration Community Education Series. The first of these forums is focused on the local aspect of law enforcement actions in a sanctuary city in a sanctuary state. Regarding Production, John notes that David and his team have been focused on finishing up the municipal build at the city of Gresham, with the city of Wood Village up next. John also notes that MetroEast Community Media Center was recently a proud award recipient for the partnership with David Douglas School at the Alliance for Community Media Northwest chapter in Salem.
 - Open Signal – Courtney Rae shared the following updates: Director of Community Media, Katmeow Garcia, is on leave through May 2025 after welcoming their first child on March 9th. In other staffing news, Woodrow Hunt will be joining the team as Fundraising and Development Assistant next month. Woodrow is a featured artist of COUSIN Collective and was a 2022 Sundance Institute Non-Fiction Intensive Fellow. Courtney notes that Open Signal has begun their FY26 budgeting process, and they are on track to deliver a draft budget to the Commission by April 15. The Board of Directors has just approved a Fiscal Sponsorship policy to allow Open Signal to support mission-aligned groups and individuals by providing the use of Open Signal’s EIN in grant seeking, and under this arrangement will provide administrative and fiscal support to organizations who are sponsored. Open Signal’s policy is to never charge more than a 5% administrative fee, and to never carry sponsor funds amounting to more than 10% of the organization's annual operating expense. **Production Services updates:** Open Signal services provided to Portland City Council and other government offices have increased dramatically, producing an average of 20 more government meetings per month so far this year than in 2024. This is expected to increase even more as the new Council finalizes its in-district meeting schedule. Due to improvements in Open Signal’s production equipment, there is an increased demand from non-government clients for projects such as promotional videos and assets for their organization. Open Signal’s new clients include Minds Matter, Chamber Music NW, Kinship House, and others. New service offerings include conference A/V support including livestream, picture-in-





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picture, synchronized recording, and audio support for up to six rooms with one mobile unit. Additionally, Open Signal worked with the Freedom and Open-Source Software Consortium and for PCEF. **Community Media Updates:** Open Signal's volume of community-produced shows increased by 74% in the second half of 2024, driven by a surge in short-form content. Open Signal's Train the Trainer program has paused and will resume when Katmeow returns from leave. However, Open Signal is currently fulfilling Train the Trainer workshops for Hand2Mouth Theatre, Indigenous Media Guild, and Imagine Black Futures. The Youth Media program officially launched March 3rd. Open Signal's newest team members, Macie Lewis and Britt Pioquinto are running the show, with support from Studio Production Trainer/Technician Vo McBurney. Open Signal has applied for grant support from the National Endowment for the Arts to help local teenagers explore video production as a way of sharing their voices, connecting with their communities, and exploring careers in media. Courtney highlighted that Melissa Salazar, Daniela Serna and herself took part in the Alliance for Community Media NW Regional Board's Best of the Northwest Awards event in Salem at Capital Community Media, including a panel on shared leadership. Courtney notes that the members of the Winter 2024 Production Cohort screened 6 finished works in January and the Spring 2025 Cohort has been selected. Courtney shares specifics of the films to be created as part of this program, which will screen at Open Signal on Saturday, July 25th. And finally, Courtney noted that Open Signal's Partnered Media program was awarded \$5,000 from the Regional Arts & Culture Council and the City of Portland's Office of Arts and Culture to produce the first episode of Beyond Entertainment: This program will feature local BIPOC music artists and industry professionals. This episode will be the first in a five-part live music showcase amplifying some of Portland's most dynamic artists of color.

- Franchisee Activity Report
 - Ziplly – not present
 - Comcast – Tim Goodman is present and shares new partnerships for 2025 have been finalized in the following MHCRC areas in 2025, sharing this is a partial list: The Boys and Girls Club, Free Geek, the Native American Youth and Family Center, which Tim is on the board of directors, PCC Foundation, Greater Portland, Inc, The Hispanic Chamber, the Urban League, Dress for Success, Girls, Inc., Community Service Network, the Latino Network, The Junior Achievement of Oregon and Southwest Washington and SEI. Tim also shared that Comcast is partnering with MHCRC in investing in the area LiftZones, which provides high speed Wi-Fi to non-profits and organizations serving clients who benefit from access to free high-speed Wi-Fi. Tim shared the following organizations are current LiftZones: City of Portland Community Centers, Boys and Girls Club, Free Geek, and YMCA. Comcast is in the process of adding eight LiftZone sites, including MetroEast, NAYA, SEI, Latino Network by the end of 2025.

***CONSENT AGENDA – NO DISCUSSION**





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All items listed below may be enacted by one motion and approved as consent agenda items. Any item may be removed from the consent agenda and considered separately if a member of the Commission so requests.

C1. February 24, 2025 Meeting Minutes

MOTION: Commissioner Harden moved to approve the consent agenda. Chair DeGraw seconded.

VOTE: 6-0 passed

REGULAR AGENDA

R1. Remarks from the Chair on Comcast Franchise Renewal – Information Only

1. Chair DeGraw shares some brief remarks about the Comcast Franchise renewal and a review of the letter she sent via email on March 11th to all Commissioners, all Jurisdictional leadership represented by MHCRC, and all MHCRC Staff. The letter is included in the packet materials. Chair DeGraw highlights the top 3 points of the letter. First, Chair DeGraw noted she strongly would have preferred a unanimous decision and worked hard to get to that, but the passing agreement is the majority decision. Second, she highlighted that regarding Section 5 and the provision that allows Comcast to charge jurisdictions for certain costs, the agreement recommendation by the Commission reflects the settled state of Federal Law under FCC Order 621. Further, Comcast is now, under law that has evolved since our last franchise negotiation, legally permitted to recover these costs from the jurisdictions. The recommended agreement is not broader than federal law requirements. Those requirements also apply whether our agreement expressly addresses them or not. Chair DeGraw noted for clarity that there were several edit requests to Section 5 that were made by the Community Media Centers that were included in negotiations, and we were not able to get all those requests met but it was part of the process. Chair DeGraw's third highlight of the letter is about risk. MHCRC's legal counsel advised that if individual jurisdictions pass a version of the agreement that is different than the one the Commission has negotiated with Comcast, this may give Comcast the right to file a lawsuit against the individual jurisdiction(s) that is likely to at least survive a Motion to Dismiss. Chair DeGraw shares the example *Beaver Creek Co-op. Tel. Co. v. Clackamas Cnty., No. CIVIL 07-645-ST, 2007 WL 4480756 (D. Or. Dec. 17, 2007)*. Chair DeGraw emphasizes that sharing this information is not meant to influence decisions but only to suggest that jurisdictional legal counsel may want to investigate this aspect of law when making decisions.

DISCUSSION: Vice Chair Harden notes that he has met with Wood Village Mayor Rios-Campos and Greg Dirks, City Manager, regarding this issue. Additionally, per a request from Commissioner Thomas, Troutdale Mayor Ripma reached out to Vice Chair Harden to discuss his no vote. For both cities, Vice Chair Harden suggested they both vote yes on the agreement despite his initial misgivings. Vice Chair Harden discussed right-of-way (ROW) protection and the cost of broadcasting meetings as it relates to the ROW fees that are returned to the jurisdictions, and he suggests that it proves beneficial to the cities of Troutdale and Wood Village to pass the agreement. Vice Chair Harden had a robust conversation with Mayor Ripma of Troutdale on the larger aspects of benefits of MetroEast Community Media.





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Commissioner Moyer raises concern that there may not yet be a majority of Multnomah County Board members who are ready to vote yes to adopt the agreement. Commissioner Moyer highlights that there is concern and discussion about the cost to local governments for programming and the ability to put Multnomah County content on the guide. There were no concerns about the 2.5%. Vice Chair Harden highlights that neither Troutdale nor Wood Village had any more pushback in the negotiated 2.5%. Chair DeGraw requests that if there are any concerns that she would like to meet with appropriate staff and elected officials and will reach out to Multnomah County for a meeting on clarifying any questions. Chair DeGraw invites Andrew Speer to speak to Commissioner Moyer's concerns, Speer confirms his contact with Garet Prior, Senior Policy Advisor for Infrastructure with Multnomah County, to review the agreement and that there were no specific questions during that engagement but is available for further discussions if desirable. Speer notes that Tim Goodman is on the call and available to inform or answer any questions. Speer expresses there is opportunity for engagement for anyone interested. Tim Goodman notes that he is meeting with the jurisdictions and confirms that the agreement does not allow Comcast to charge for broadcast of PEG programming or city council meetings or the county commissioner meetings. Tim Goodman put in the chat "There will not be a cost to broadcast Council or Commission meetings or any PEG programming." Tim notes that what Section 5 would allow per the 621 ruling by the FCC is the potential marginal cost of the maintenance of the fiber that runs from Comcast's head end in Troutdale to, for example, MetroEast, Open Signal, PCC or Portland Public Schools. Tim notes that for those four locations it would be a minimal amount. Importantly, Tim noted there is a misconception that he would like to clear up: the FCC does not allow Comcast to charge jurisdictions to air city council meetings. Chair DeGraw seeks clarification from Commissioner Moyer on Multnomah County's concern with the agreement, specifically the comment regarding Comcast charging jurisdictions to put content on the guide, Commissioner Moyer will be following up via email, if deemed necessary.

R2. Updates from Nex Strategies on Strategic Planning Process – Information Only

Chair DeGraw invites Autumn Carter, Managing Partner NEX Strategies, to present. Autumn notes that their work with the Commission over the last year has been focused on looking at the MHCRC's challenges and identifying potential paths forward. Autumn provides an overview of the process thus far and updates on the status, which is now focused on assessing costs, funding needs and scenario implications. NEX Strategies is currently engaged with Tiberius Solutions, a contracted finance firm, to give an independent analysis of financial considerations for each scenario. Autumn reviews the four objectives of the Strategic Plan and then shares three scenarios that are being investigated, including Status Quo, Sunset Current Commission structure, and Independent Organization. NEX Strategies is currently refining recommendations through stakeholder feedback and will present recommendations in the coming months.

DISCUSSION: none.

*R3. 2025 Community Technology Grant

Rana DeBey notes that Staff is recommending that the Commission approve the Community Technology grant agreement with Portland Art Museum in an amount not to exceed \$91,000 to





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support the Desert Island Studio's Post-Production Facility & Expanded Member Equipment Pool project. Portland Art Museum is the fiscal sponsor for Desert Island Studios.

DeBey shares the following background on this year's grant cycle, the Commission selected 15 Pre-Applications to invite to apply for funding. Following the Commission's decision, MHCRC staff began to engage all 15 applicants in a process to complete full grant applications and contracts. In follow-up to specific Commissioner comments at the January meeting, staff has collaborated with applicants to make suggested revisions to the pre-applications including clearly defining measurable outcomes and evaluation measures, expanding on programmatic details surrounding beneficiaries, and the development of a detailed project budget that would more clearly identify the matching resources necessary to successfully implement the project. DeBey noted during the January meeting the Commission directed Staff to work with the Equity Committee if funds became available and subsequently one organization withdrew their application since the January Meeting, Rohingya Youth Association of Portland and one organization Sabin Community Development Center reduced their grant request, therefore Staff engaged the Equity Committee to move forward two additional applicants into the final application process. Those organizations are Peer Tribe Foundation and North Star Civic Foundation. The Commission will see those final applications in the near future during a Commission meeting.

DeBey noted that Desert Island Studios did receive one previous grant from the Commission in 2023 and all grant outcomes were met satisfactorily.

DISCUSSION: None

MOTION: Commissioner Goodlow moved to approve the following Community Technology grant agreement with Portland Art Museum in an amount not to exceed \$91,000 to support the Desert Island Studio's Post-Production Facility & Expanded Member Equipment Pool project. Commissioner Wagner seconded.

VOTE: 6-0 passed

Staff Activity

- **FY25-26 Budget Process and Timeline Update** – Seema Kumar gives an update on the March Finance Committee and suggests the date of May 1, 2025 as the next Finance Committee to review the MHCRC proposed FY 25-26 Budget. Staff will work with Commissioner Thomas on scheduling that date.
- **Legislative Activity Report** – Kevin Block shares the Policy memo sent in the packet materials and highlights that we are in the middle of a long legislative session at the state level, and Block highlights two bills that are being monitored, HB3147 Utilizing Federal Broadband Funds (Oppose) and SB 1062 Study of Locally Regulated Utilities (Monitor). Block reviews Federal





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- Legislation and HR 278 and HR 339, both geared towards Broadband, and will take appropriate advocacy action if necessary. Block is available
- **Consumer Protection Report** – Laura Dyer shares the Cable Complaint Summary that was included in the packet materials and highlights that 311 staff have recently received additional training.
 - **MHCRC FY 25-26 Goals and Objectives** – Chair DeGraw highlights that the draft MHCRC FY 25-26 Goals and Objectives document is in the packet materials. Commissioners are asked to send any updates or revisions to Staff before the May Meeting when they will be adopted on the Consent Agenda. Vice Chair Harden inquires on if they are comprehensive as it relates to Strategic Planning and Chair DeGraw notes that updates to our Goals and Objectives will be made throughout our strategic planning process. Commissioners are in consensus that they will adopt the current version knowing that they are subject to change in the future. DeBey shares a point of clarification that on the MHCRC FY 25-26 Goals and Objectives document the red letters will be added to the document, not removed.
- Committee Reports
 - Finance Committee – Staff will reach out to Commissioner Thomas to schedule a Finance Committee, if agreeable, on May 1st.
 - Equity Committee – Commissioner Goodlow notes there is an Equity Committee scheduled in the coming months, details are being finalized.
 - Policy Committee - Vice Chair Harden notes that there is no meeting currently scheduled.
 - City of Portland Charter Reform Liaison – Chair DeGraw has not recently had a check-in.
 - Open Signal Board Appointee – Chair DeGraw, no updates.
 - MetroEast Board Appointee – Commissioner Dennerline notes he attended an in-person meeting recently and the new Board members are orientating to their roles.

New Business; Commissioner Open Comment - none.

Public Comment (non-agenda items): none.

Next MHCRC Meetings:

- April - Recess
- Regular MHCRC Meeting May 19, 2025 - Open Signal/Hybrid
- Regular MHCRC Meeting June 16, 2025 - MetroEast/Hybrid
- FY 25/26 Jurisdictional Budget Presentations:
 - City of Fairview Council Budget Wednesday, June 4th at 7:00 pm
 - City of Troutdale Council Tuesday, June 10th at 7:00 pm
 - City of Wood Village Council Tuesday, June 10th 6:00 pm
 - Portland TBD
 - Gresham TBD
 - Multnomah County TBD
- Comcast FA Renewal Dates:





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- Gresham City Council scheduled for April 1st
- Troutdale City Council scheduled for April 8th
- Fairview City Council scheduled for April 16th
 - Fairview Work Session April 2nd
- Wood Village City Council scheduled for April 22nd
- Portland TBD
- Multnomah County TBD

Adjourned: 8:02 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Kathleen Lefebvre

