



Mt. Hood Cable Regulatory Commission

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

MT. HOOD CABLE REGULATORY COMMISSION

Hybrid – virtual or Open Signal: Portland, OR

May 22, 2023 Meeting Minutes – [APPROVED](#)

SUMMARY MINUTES

Call to Order 6:30 PM

Roll Call

Present: Chair Studenmund; Vice Chair Dennerline; Commissioner Wagner; Commissioner Harden; Commissioner DeGraw (joined 6:36pm); Commissioner Thomas, Commissioner Roche

Absent: Commissioner Goodlow

Staff: Eric Engstrom, Deputy Director; Michael Wong, Finance Manager; Rebecca Gibbons, Operations Manager; Rana DeBey, Grants Manager; Julie Ocken, Coordinator

- Agenda Review: none.
- Disclosures: none.
- Public Comment (non-agenda items): none.
- Community Media Center Updates
 - MetroEast: Digital inclusion work continues in partnership with the Rosewood Initiative. Both cohorts have gone exceptionally well. Just hired a digital media education position.
 - Open Signal: Redesign of the Open Signal lobby based on community input – looking to be done in the next month. Full capacity on production services now. Working on studio upgrades funded by a community grant to make them more user-friendly for users of all skill levels. Continuing in-person events in the space – trainings and skill shares. New program, Open Playground, Fridays to work on a studio production crew to air on cable channels. New hire is Courtney Rae, Director of Growth, taking on some of Rebecca's job duties as she transitions away. Website redevelopment project... opensignalpdx.org
- Franchisee Activity Reports
 - Comcast: Tim Goodman, Comcast. Comcast Rise program to help businesses and communities thrive. Giving out 100 grants to small businesses in the MHCRC area – business consult, monetary, creative production, etc. See comcastrise.com.





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***CONSENT AGENDA – NO DISCUSSION**

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. March 20, 2023 Meeting Minutes
- C2. FY2023-24 MHCRC Goals & Objectives

MOTION: Commissioner Dennerline moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Thomas seconded.

VOTE: 7-0 passed

REGULAR AGENDA

- R1. FY 2023-24 MHCRC Fund Budget Proposal
 - Finance Committee report & recommendation
 - Open Signal budget presentation
 - MetroEast Community Media budget presentation
 - Commission discussion and action

Michael Wong said the Finance Committee met on May 1. Wong noted year-over-year changes. Notable is the TechSmart Initiative Grant (page 21) link to final impact report.

Wong referred to Page 22 fund budget table. Project franchise fees for this year look like they are increasing over last year but that is because we overly underestimated last year. Franchise fees continue a steady decline overall. Interest earned is faring better from previous years. The slight increase in the operating budget is due primarily to an increase in staff from 4FTE to 4.9FTE. Wong said the increase is offset by carrying forward cost-savings from vacant positions from this year.

Wong referred to Page 24: revenues and disbursements. Projected is similar holistically to previous years (gradual decline).

Wong referred to Page 25: operating budget. Internal services has increased due to increased costs for facilities, technology, and overhead.

In response to a question from Commissioner Harden related to the internal services increases, Eric Engstrom said the increase is due to the fact that the City of Portland is updating its overall cost methodology for preventative maintenance, so it's not just about increased security.

John Lugton, MetroEast (pages 29-35) presented. Lugton said MetroEast has a new Board and moved to a Leadership team structure last year. Lugton said the Leadership Team and Board





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are engaged in strategic planning and reviewed the vision, mission and values when developing this next year's budget. Lugton said the budget is infused with MetroEast's equity statement and service goals. Lugton gave an operations income overview. Lugton said the proposed budget is responding to decreased franchise fee revenue and trying to keep in mind staff capacity while thinking about what other grant, production, and education income they can bring in. Lugton said the proposed budget does include a COLA to help retain staff (5%+ to staff salaries).

In response to a question from Commissioner Thomas regarding capitalized wages and overhead, Danny Fish, MetroEast Finance Manager, said a percentage of staff time related to capital equipment projects are capitalizable as allowable under the franchise and GAAP.

Rebecca Burrell, Open Signal (pages 36-42) presented. Burrell said Open Signal engaged in an equitable wage assessment. Open Signal's Board passed a Deficit Policy with a cap and also requires a 3-year budget to show if there is a deficit how we can make it up. Burrell said she resigned her position, partly due to budget constraints, and will be leaving at the end of July. The Director of Community Partnerships position was vacated in April and will not be replaced. Open Signal Labs program has been looking to become its own organization, and they will become independent by the end of the calendar year, so we're just budgeting for ½ of the FY. By not replacing some positions we are asking some staff to take on more work, which we know is a risk. Looking at budgeting for some contracted services to accommodate some growth without committing Open Signal staff. Deficit has been approved by the board. No unusual expenses this year aside from investing in production fleet vehicles.

In response to a question from Commissioner Thomas regarding the deficit, Burrell said Open Signal is currently cash positive and the depreciation expense line item is essentially funds that are available, not representative of money we plan to spend.

MOTION: Commissioner Dennerline moved to approve the FY 2023-24 MHCRC Fund Budget Proposal and recommend the budget to the jurisdictions. Commissioner Thomas seconded.

VOTE: 7-0 passed

R2. MHCRC Recommendation: Portland/Open Signal Operations Funding Grant Agreement

Rana DeBey said the renewal of Open Signal's grant agreement is taking the form of two separate, but related, agreements: One with the City of Portland for operations funding and one with the MHCRC for capital funding.

MHCRC and Open Signal staff have reached agreement on Exhibit A: Scope of Work; and Exhibit B: Grant Status Reports. The terms of the attached draft grant agreement are mostly agreed to but, as the grant agreement is with the City of Portland, the terms are subject to further review and negotiations between City staff and Open Signal.





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DeBey said the MHCRC Equity Committee reviewed the draft contract at their meeting on May 11th.

MOTION: Commissioner Dennerline moved to approve the Portland/Open Signal Operations Funding Grant Agreement scope of work and will forward the recommendation to Portland City Council to approve. Commissioner Roche seconded.

VOTE: 7-0 passed

R3. MHCRC/Open Signal Capital Funding Grant Agreement

Rana DeBey said Open Signal's grant agreement for capital funding expires on June 30, 2023.

For the past year or more, staff engaged in renewal discussions with Open Signal. Renewal discussions focused primarily on the terms of the multi-year contract, the scope of work (Exhibit A), and Grant Status Report requirements (Exhibit B). Staff and Open Signal reached agreement on the terms and conditions of the 5-year grant agreement in April.

On May 11, 2023, the Equity Committee reviewed the draft agreement and is recommending the Commission approve the grant agreement as presented in the meeting packet.

MOTION: Commissioner Dennerline moved to approve the MHCRC/Open Signal Capital Funding Grant Agreement. Commissioner Wagner seconded.

VOTE: 7-0 passed

R4 (page 92-118). MHCRC/MetroEast Community Media Grant Agreement

Rana DeBey said MetroEast Community Media's grant agreement for operational and capital funding expires on June 30, 2023. MetroEast receives operations funding as a percentage of the franchise fees collected from the East County jurisdictions and capital funding from the MHCRC. Both funding sources are covered in the grant agreement.

For the past year or more, staff engaged in renewal discussions with MetroEast Community Media. Renewal discussions focused primarily on the terms of the multi-year contract, the scope of work (Exhibit A), and Grant Status Report requirements (Exhibit B). Staff and MetroEast Community Media reached agreement on the terms and conditions of the 3-year grant agreement in April.

On May 11, 2023, the Equity Committee reviewed the draft agreement and is recommending the Commission approve the grant agreement as attached.

MOTION: Commissioner Wagner moved to approve the MHCRC/MetroEast Community Media Grant Agreement. Commissioner Roche seconded.

VOTE: 7-0 passed





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R5. Community Technology Grant Agreements (page 119-123)

- Accent Network (\$38,000)
- CETI (\$74,000)
- Municipal Eco-Resiliency Project (Roots & Beats Project) (\$44,344)
- Trash for Peace (\$28,047)

Rana DeBey said staff reached agreement with four applicants on final grant agreements recommended for approval for a total amount of \$184,391 in grant funds.

DeBey provided overviews of each of the 4 grantees.

MOTION: Commissioner Thomas moved to approve the Accent Network Grant Agreement. Commissioner Harden seconded.

VOTE: 7-0 passed

MOTION: Commissioner DeGraw moved to approve the CETI Grant Agreement. Commissioner Harden seconded.

VOTE: 7-0 passed

MOTION: Commissioner Harden moved to approve the Municipal Eco-Resiliency Project (Roots & Beats Project) Grant Agreement. Commissioner DeGraw seconded.

VOTE: 7-0 passed

MOTION: Commissioner Thomas moved to approve the Trash for Peace Grant Agreement. Commissioner Harden seconded.

VOTE: 7-0 passed

R6. Off-Cycle Grant Request: Desert Island Studios (pages 124-126)

Rana DeBey said Desert Island Studios submitted a Letter of Interest (LOI) to MHCRC staff in early April. Staff deemed that the proposed request met the Off-Cycle grant eligibility criteria and was time-sensitive in nature. The LOI was sent to the MHCRC Equity Committee for consideration. Committee members agreed that staff should move forward with presenting the application to the full MHCRC for funding.

MOTION: Commissioner Roche moved to approve the Off-Cycle Grant Request: Desert Island Studios. Commissioner Dennerline seconded.

VOTE: 7-0 passed





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- Staff Activity Reports & Updates
 - 2022 MHCRC Annual Report (pages 128-143): Eric Engstrom: Overview of Commission's work and upcoming Strategic Plan activity in the next year. We share this with the jurisdictions as part of the budget process.
 - Election of MHCRC Chair and Vice-Chair – June meeting: Rebecca Gibbons: Reminder to make nominations for Chair and Vice Chair, which we'll vote on in June. You can either nominate yourself or someone else by emailing Rebecca by Friday, June 16, which will be circulated before the June meeting. Note that Commissioner Studenmund has termed out as a Chair or Vice Chair.
 - Commissioner Re-Appointments: Rebecca Gibbons: Commissioner Thomas, Dennerline, and DeGraw appointments expire on June 30. In discussions with each jurisdictions about the reappointment process, which we'll provide an update about in June.
 - Jurisdiction Budget presentation schedule: Rebecca Gibbons: The schedule was included in the meeting packet. We have since made a slight adjustment with Multnomah County, which has moved up a week. We will share a packet with the budget, attachments, etc prior to each meeting with talking points and run-of-show for the presentations. Commissioners will present and then Open Signal and/or MetroEast will present.
 - Comcast/Ziplay Cable Franchise Renewal Negotiations (Ziplay page 144): Rebecca Gibbons: No new updates at this time; existing terms will remain in effect until we are formally notified of Ziplay's leaving the market.
 - MHCRC Strategic Planning: Eric Engstrom: We are procuring a consultant to assist with this work.
 - Staffing – MHCRC Admin Specialist Job Announcement closes May 22: Rebecca Gibbons: We are hiring this position, which posted a few weeks ago, and it just closed tonight. About 55 applications submitted, with 35 being eligible. We hope to have a new staff member in the coming weeks.
- Committee Reports
 - Equity Committee: Commissioner Roche: Rana brought a new initiative as a workforce development program launching in 2024 to build skills in tech advancements (AV and communications) and what jobs are available. This is response to the community engagement work we did earlier this year. Since we can't do operations funding, CET was raised for us to consider. Rana will share this short report with the Commission via





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email.

- MetroEast: Commissioner Dennerline: Finalized agreement. Looking for more board members.
- New Business; Commissioner Open Comment: none.

Next meeting is Monday, June 26.

Adjourned: 8:31 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Julie Ocken

