



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

September 16, 2024 Meeting Minutes -- **APPROVED**

SUMMARY MINUTES

Call to Order 6:30 PM

Roll Call:

Present: Chair DeGraw, Vice Chair Harden; Commissioner Dennerline; Commissioner Thomas

Absent: Commissioner Goodlow, (excused), Commissioner Wagner (excused)

Staff: Seema Kumar, BPS Chief of Community Technology; Andrew Speer, Utility Manager; Rebecca Gibbons, MHCRC Operations; 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: none.
- Disclosures: none.
- Chair Committee Assignments and Liaison Duties – Chair DeGraw made Committees & Liaison Board Appointments for FY 24-25. The committee and board assignment roster was included in the meeting packet. Chair DeGraw expressed appreciation to all and especially to Commissioner Goodlow for stepping in to Chair the Equity Committee.
- Public Comment (non-agenda items): none.
- Franchisee Activity Report
 - Zply- not present
 - Comcast – Tim Goodman updates the Commission on community projects, including Comcast is the title sponsor for the Hispanic Heritage Gala at the Metro Hispanic Chamber, and sponsorship of the Latino Networks Gala at the Portland Art Museum, Goodman shares other updates including the upcoming MHCRC/Free Geek/Comcast device give-away event on September 29th at PCC Cascade Campus.

*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. June 17, 2024 Meeting Minutes





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MOTION: Commissioner Thomas moved to approve the June 17, 2024 meeting minutes with a slight change to the text under R3. to correctly reflect "Scott Harden". Vice Chair Harden seconded.

VOTE: 4-0 passed

Vice Chair Harden requests history of the franchise renewal negotiations, including emails and meeting notes from meetings with MHCRC Staff and Comcast thus far to be sent to all Commissioners. He is seeking assurance that the MHCRC agreed upon franchise renewal terms have been presented and negotiated. Commissioner Thomas concurred. Andrew Speer, Cable Utility Franchise Manager, will follow up and distribute to Commissioners all documented exchanges between him and Comcast.

REGULAR AGENDA

*R1. Launch the 2025 Community Technology Grant Cycle

Rana DeBey noted staff is recommending the Commission allocate \$1 million for the Community Technology Grant Cycle for FY 2024-25 and that amount includes the Off-Cycle grants program. Staff is recommending that the Commission establish a pre-application deadline of December 5, 2024 with the application window opening up on October 16, 2024. Staff will hold informational meetings in October and November for interested applicants. Pre-applications are due by December 5th through the portal and with initial Commissioner review happening in December and January. At the January meeting the MHCRC Commissioners will decide which pre-applications move forward in the process. Staff will work with applicants to finalize the contracts and MHCRC will approve the contracts at future MHCRC meetings. The off-cycle grants will be approved following the protocol that was previously approved by the Commission. The current approved budget reflects the \$1 million allocation request.

DISCUSSION: Commissioner Thomas suggests a funding limit of \$250,000 to the Off-Cycle grants. This request is due to Off-Cycle grant awards impacting the Competitive Grant budget accordingly and suggests that the Commission designate \$750,000 to the Competitive Grant applications. There is a concern that if we move forward with this request then applicants who are not ready to apply during the competitive cycle may not have a funding opportunity. Commissioners and Staff review the history of the FY23-24 budget and the FY 24-25 budget of the Community Technology Grants. Gibbons notes the current decline in revenue and highlighted that last year we had a surplus of capital funding available due to being fiscally conservative during Covid years, and therefore able to increase the Community Technology Grant in the FY 23- 24 budget to \$2 million.

MOTION: Vice Chair Harden moves to approve an allocation of \$1 million to the 2025 Community Technology Grant cycle with a limit to the amount of funding for Off-Cycle grant awards to no more than \$250K this fiscal year, and approving the proposed deadlines; Commissioner Dennerline seconded

VOTE: 4-0 passed

*R2. CMC Annual Report to Commission (Information Only)





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Courtney Rae, Open Signal Director of Growth, shares a PowerPoint presentation which starts by highlighting Open Signals' mission to nurture the change-making power of community media in service of a just and equitable world. Courtney discusses the Production Cohort which offers one-on-one support, projects highlighted included a documentary on the Burnside skatepark by Kipp Kruger, a profile on nonprofit organization *Friends of Refugees* by Svetlana Dedova, and an animated short reflecting on belonging as a Black woman navigating educational systems by Beryl McNair. Courtney highlighted one of the most impactful program shifts in the past year has been the introduction of "Open Playground" which is a weekly, staff-facilitated, volunteer-crewed studio production. Alumni of this program gain valuable experience and upon finishing the program can apply for Production Services on-call positions. Courtney notes generating local content for broadcast remains a high priority for Open Signal, while recognizing that the communities served often have competing demands on their time compared to those with greater social privilege. Open Signal's distribution team is currently identifying barriers to content submission and expanding outreach efforts. Open Signal's written report includes the following topics and will be distributed to the Commission: Investing in Capacity; Rebuilding Youth-Focused Activities; Fine-Tuning Core Programs; MHCRC Grantees; Fundraising and Foundation Support; and Supporting Government Transition.

Discussion: Chair DeGraw expresses admiration for the Open Playground program, Courtney further shares the program is new as of last winter and is consistently a weekly offering. Courtney invites the Commission to reach out to her or to anyone on the leadership team with additional questions.

Seth Ring, MetroEast Director of Education & Volunteers, shares a PowerPoint presentation which emphasizes MetroEast's focus on their Strategic Priorities. Seth shares details on each of the four Strategic Priorities, highlighting priority communities as the area municipalities, the local educational institutions, surrounding non-profits, and underserved community groups. Seth shared that with the reduction in cable revenue requires MetroEast to grow and diversify income to stay vibrant. The priority to develop shared leadership meant adopting a new staffing model which included changing Board responsibilities. Seth highlights the Mobile Media Lab, this very decorative and visible van provides educational opportunities in the priority communities, providing media training around East County and beyond. Another successful partnership is with Multnomah County Library, offering YouTube and TikTok camps to youth, these trainings are offered on a regular basis. Other organizations that MetroEast served throughout the summer are: Play East! (East County Recreation), SKIP (Summer Kids in the Park), and Play-Grow-Learn LLC. MetroEast also supports Gresham Barlow Schools and Reynolds School District supporting the teachers with skills training and equipment. Seth notes that MetroEast works closely with The Rosewood Initiative, hosting trainings to build up attendees' technology skills. Seth shares that MetroEast modeled their Media Cohort program in a similar style to Open Signal's program and expressed appreciation to Open Signal. The Media Cohort program focuses on serving the underserved, and MetroEast is currently collaborating with the organizations PHAME and It Takes A Village NW, LLC. John Lugton, Head of Production, shares with Commissioners that MetroEast during FY 23/24 had 1670 new programs and 1466 hours of original programming. MetroEast is currently embarking on a survey of 300 people to create a current Community Needs Assessment, the prior one was done in 2016. MetroEast engages with East County working with Gresham Area Chamber of Commerce and League of Women Voters PDX. John shares exciting updates on building and storage system modernization is underway, along with studio upgrades. John speaks to growing and diversifying income streams working with the following organizations: Oregon Arts Commission, PGE Foundation, City of Gresham, The Collins Foundation, OnPoint Community Credit Union, and Miller Foundation.





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MetroEast has rebuilt its Board to represent the community served and highlights that MetroEast is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. Seth, John and David expressed appreciation for MHCRC and all the support they have received from the Commission over the years.

Discussion: Vice Chair Harden expresses his appreciation for the value MetroEast provides to the East County Communities and highlights the need for continued funding to our Community Media Centers. All Commissioners shared appreciation for MetroEast.

Staff Activity

- Legislative Advocacy Report- Kevin Block gave a report to the Commission, which is included in the Info Only Packet Materials. Block gave the Commission an update that HR3557 American Broadband Deployment Act and noted MHCRC sent a letter to local delegations in opposition to HR3557. Block clarified that the Mixed-Use letter signed by the MHCRC Chair did not take a position, however it was in support of the docket to be re-opened by the FCC, to open an avenue for advocacy. Vice Chair Harden would like to see the City of Portland letter and shares concern that there is not a consideration for MHCRC or the other four MHCRC cities in the advocacy work, hoping in the future that MHCRC can get more involved.
- NATOA Conference – Kevin Block gave a NATOA Conference report to the Committee, also included in the Info Only Packet Materials. MHCRC Staff attended this conference last month and gained valuable insight. Block said the Policy track at the conference was heavily focused on cable franchise and broadband policy issues and was very informative. Block said the conference provides valuable opportunities for staff to engage with leading legal experts from across the country.
- Franchise Compliance Update – Laura Dyer shares the MHCRC Compliance Report which is included in the Info Only Packet Materials. Dyer notes that her request for Commissioner feedback at the June Commission meeting is reflected on this most current Cable Complaints Summary. Dyer worked with 311 at the City of Portland to track services implicated, specifically cable, internet, or a bundle of services. Dyer highlighted that on the Cable Complaints Summary there are no Complaints for Ziplly but this is likely due to low subscribership. There is, however, a pattern of Ziplly Non-Compliance and the Franchise team is watching this issue. Dyer notes that Staff recommends Commissioners approve a notice of Non-Compliance be sent to Ziplly and Commissioners approve this request. Staff notes that Ziplly has not given their formal notice to exit the cable market. Chair DeGraw wants to re-address this at a Policy Committee meeting with an extended invite list to Commissioner Dennerline. Commissioner Thomas highlights that all four East County MHCRC Jurisdictional cities need to be notified of the Ziplly Non-Compliance.
- MHCRC Strategic Planning Update – Rebecca Gibbons updates the Commission that Staff have been working with NEX Strategies presenting MHCRC Educational Sessions at East County City Councils and will very soon will re-engage with Multnomah County. Then, we will have a MHCRC Work Session, with jurisdictional leadership, all Commissioners, NEX Strategies and MHCRC Legal Counsel to provide an opportunity to map out future MHCRC scenarios. Kathleen Lefebvre goes over preliminary dates for the Work Session and the Mini-Retreat.





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- Peer Learning Event – Rana DeBey shares with Commissioners that the 2nd annual Grantee Peer Learning Event will be on Tuesday, October 29th from 8:00 am – 12:00 pm at The Laurelhurst Club and inviting Commissioners can attend this event. The agenda will follow.
- I-NET End Fund Digital Equity Initiative – Rebecca Gibbons shares an event called “Waitlist-Zero” where MHCRC, Free Geek and Comcast will host a Device Give-Away on, Sunday, September 29th at 2:00 pm, at PCC Cascade Campus and requests Commissioners to attend this very exciting event.
- Budget/Accounting/Audit Update – Douglas Imaralu shares fiscal information that will be included in the unaudited report with Commissioners at the October meeting and will be working with OMF and Moss Adams on the MHCRC Financial Reports. Commissioner Thomas requests more MHCRC financial information.
- **New Business; Commissioner Open Comment** – Vice Chair Harden notes that he will be attend the October meeting virtually. Chair DeGraw notes that we are recruiting for two MHCRC Commissioner appointees, one representing Portland and one representing Multnomah County and please reach out if you have any interested parties.

Committee Reports

- Finance Committee – none.
- Equity Committee – none.
- Policy Committee – none.
- City of Portland Charter Reform Liaison – none.
- Open Signal Board Appointee – none.
- MetroEast Board Appointee – none.

Next MHCRC Meetings:

- October 21
- November: Mini Retreat TBD
- December 16
- January 27
- March 17
- May 19
- June 16

Adjourned: 8:32 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Kathleen Lefebvre

