



# 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

October 13, 2025 REGULAR Meeting Minutes – **APPROVED**

### SUMMARY MINUTES

#### Call to Order 6:30 PM

#### Roll Call:

*Present:* Chair DeGraw; Vice Chair Harden; Commissioner Butt; Commissioner Dennerline; Commissioner Underdahl; Commissioner Wagner

*Absent (excused):* Commissioner Goodlow, Commissioner Thomas

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

Chair DeGraw welcomes Mark Wolf, MHCRC contracted legal counsel. Mark is with the law firm Local Government Law Group, P.C. and is present and available during this meeting for any questions or concerns around Oregon Public Meeting laws or other aspects of the Commission's legal counsel.

Chair DeGraw welcomes Nancy Werner, MHCRC contracted legal counsel from Bradley Werner, LLC who will be present during "R1. Next Steps for the Commission – Policy Committee Recommendations" to answer any questions that may arise during the Commission discussion.

- Agenda Review: Chair DeGraw reviews the agenda for the evening, no modifications nor additions were requested nor noted.
- Disclosures: No Commissioner disclosures were noted.
- Public Comment (non-agenda items): No public comment on non-agenda items.
- Franchisee Activity Report: No Franchisee representatives were present to give a report.

#### \*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. September 3, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes
- C2. September 3, 2025 Retreat Meeting Minutes





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**MOTION:** Commissioner Underdahl moved to approve the consent agenda. Vice Chair Harden seconded.

**VOTE: 6-0 passed**

## REGULAR AGENDA

### **\*R1. Next Steps for the Commission – Policy Committee Recommendations**

Chair DeGraw gives an overview of the September 29, 2025 MHCRC Policy Committee and the recommendation to approve the Resolution that is before the full Commission tonight. MHCRC Resolution 2025-01 was informed by the discussions at the September 3<sup>rd</sup> Mini-Retreat as well as the discussion during the September 29<sup>th</sup> Policy Committee meeting. Within the Resolution the Commission is asking that jurisdictions to formalize their commitment to dissolve the Commission by the end of June 2026. Chair DeGraw reviews the Resolution.

Chair DeGraw notes that even though it is not noted in the materials, she takes this opportunity to uplift and center that these recommendations aim to value and support our community media centers who provide the following valuable benefits that reach far beyond running city council meetings, including:

- Invaluable professional media skill development
- Experiences that lead youths in diverse community members to careers
- Offer space for documenting neighborhood events, cultural celebration, oral histories and local arts affirm the unique character of the communities they serve.
- Equip residents with professional-grade equipment, studios, and editing facilities alongside hands-on training in video production and storytelling and digital media skills
- Ensures that underrepresented perspectives can reach their neighbors
- Provide gavel-to-gavel for city council and school board meetings, commission meeting and candidate forums to advance and inform the electorate.
- Elevate local journalistic voices in an age of large media networks.

Chair DeGraw invites discussion.

**Discussion:** Commissioner Underdahl notes that during our September 3<sup>rd</sup> Commission meeting we discussed many potential dissolution timelines, and he is seeking additional background on why this June 2026 timeline was recommended by the Policy Committee, particularly from a legal and logistical standpoint. Further clarifying and agreeing with the principles of MHCRC's dissolution goal and this Resolution, Commissioner Underdahl emphasized his previous desire for an 18-month sunset, and concerns of this 9-month runway. He seeks clarification that dissolving collectively and unanimously provides all jurisdictions equivalent access to any remaining resources and equal responsibility to every jurisdiction. Chair DeGraw noted all viable solutions were explored and notes ultimately, considering that Gresham has confirmed their exit from the Commission and Gresham is the second largest jurisdiction it becomes much more challenging for MHCRC to operate. Chair DeGraw notes that through many conversations, and this Resolution, MHCRC has signaled to Gresham leadership that the Commission is willing to expedite the sunset process which in turn has facilitated the start of a collective and organized process. Chair DeGraw validates that this does result in a short period of time to negotiate the next chapter. Commissioner Underdahl inquires if the Commission has the decision-making power to allocate the PEG money that is remaining after dissolution. Chair DeGraw notes that jurisdictions have all the power to decide how to dissolve the commission and what their agreements





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are after dissolution, but she and Vice Chair Harden are strategically organizing the next policy meeting to continue the collective process, highlighting that at the September 29<sup>th</sup> Policy Committee every jurisdiction had a representative present from their leadership team.

Chair DeGraw notes that the current IGA calls out a 3-month grace period after a full and collective dissolution for continued Commission Staff dissolution work.

Vice Chair Harden notes the Policy Committee was unanimous in this recommendation and notes that regardless of the process being 8-month or 18-month the Commission does not have the authority to disburse the remaining PEG balance to the Community Media Centers. The PEG balances after Commission dissolution will be disbursed to the jurisdictions, per the IGA.

Commissioner Underdahl inquires if the Commission can amend this year's budget to allocate PEG funds to the Community Media Centers, and Commissioner Butt noted that the Policy Committee explored that option, but it ultimately would need to go to the jurisdictions for approval.

Vice Chair Harden noted that Nancy Werner confirmed that after dissolution the Commission must meet all legal obligations before distributing funds back to the jurisdiction. Seema Gadh Kumar, City of Portland Chief of Community Technology, noted that in the scenario where MHCRC dissolves at the end of FY 26, there would not be a MHCRC FY27 operating budget, and therefore no approval by and through MHCRC's jurisdictions.

Nancy Werner confirms that if jurisdictions indicate their "withdraw" from the Commission there is an option for them to retract that withdrawal up until the very last day of the fiscal year.

Commissioner Underdahl expresses appreciation to all those on the Policy Committee and those who have worked on Resolution 2025-01 and noted he is supportive of the principles that the Community Media Centers having a large a portion of the PEG funds. He also believes the Resolution 2025-01 is the best possible option as we approach the Commission sunset.

Commissioner Butt commends Chair DeGraw for leading these conversations. Commissioner Wagner notes that the path forward seems well outlined. Chair DeGraw emphasizes that MHCRC wants to support jurisdictions during this process and this resolution creates a transparent environment. It was noted that Commissioners don't have large influence on the next IGA, however, it will be drafted between now and when MHCRC sunsets and therefore the goal is for MHCRC to do its best that the agreements are in working favor of the community media segment. Commissioner Dennerline notes that recommendations are helpful but concrete draft Resolution language will be more actionable, and the Commission discusses a change to the language on 2.1 from "recommend" to "required" on the Resolution 2025-01.

**MOTION:** Vice Chair Harden moved to amend MHCRC Resolution 2025-01 as presented, changing the word from "recommend" to "requests" on section 2.1. Commissioner Underdahl seconded.

**VOTE: 6-0 passed**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Dennerline moved to approve MHCRC Resolution 2025-01 as amended. Commissioner Underdahl seconded.

**VOTE: 6-0 passed**





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## **R2. Community Media Centers - Annual Report**

**Open Signal:** Courtney Rae, Director of Growth, shares Open Signal's annual report on screen and begins by emphasizing that Open Signal remains deeply aligned with the MHCRC's commitment to community media as a public benefit, and community media is not just about access to cameras or airtime, it's about access to belonging, recognition, and influence. Some highlights include: Despite ongoing economic and structural challenges, Open Signal has sustained every core program, deepened partnerships, and continued to adapt; their Community Media Department supported more than two hundred certified producers and nearly two hundred active volunteers; Open Signal staff and instructors delivered over 3,200 hours of individual production support, classes, and workshops; the Open Playground program doubled production levels; co-produced AMPLIFY PDX, a community block party and fundraiser, celebrating unsung community work happening at the grassroots level; added a part-time Communications and Fundraising Assistant; renegotiated city agreements during a period of government transition and launched a comprehensive IT infrastructure overhaul. Courtney shares details of their financial status and notes Open Signal has remained financially stable. And finally, Courtney expresses appreciation for MHCRC, noting the Commission's stewardship has ensured that public resources are invested in the public's voice.

**MetroEast:** Seth Ring, Director of Education and Volunteers, shares a PowerPoint presentation with an impactful first screen displaying the 50 plus organization that MetroEast serves, which included their municipalities, and highlighted that MetroEast is out in the community they serve in many ways. Seth notes for a staff of 10.5 employees the community impact is much greater than the resources assigned. Seth shares that MetroEast is a nonprofit that engages over 1,000 community members in programming, and MetroEast is an award-winning production studio that makes professional videos for nonprofits, schools, and government organization that serves east county residents. Seth notes that MetroEast has three impactful programs: Education, Production and Content Reach. One of MetroEast's pillar services is their mobile media lab, which provides MetroEast services out in the community, an important access point to those who are not able to travel. Seth shares about the document series Food Foray and the recent successful screening. David Elkin-Bram, Director of Information Technology, highlights the work MetroEast is doing with municipalities, and the technology build-outs at those location are working well. David shares positive testimonials from leaders at local government and production services that MetroEast serves. Seth then continues with a breakdown of MetroEast funding, noting that the majority of MetroEast's funding comes from MHCRC. Seth emphasizes that MetroEast is expanding funding sources, and that includes new granting organizations noted on the PowerPoint slide. Seth ends with the Community Needs Assessment information, MetroEast conducted 7 listening sessions and gathered 193 survey respondents. Seth shares a [link to Community Needs Assessment results](#). Seth shares one example of how MetroEast is finding creative ways to extend their capacity through partnerships: a local business, Gresham Sound Lab, rents a portion of MetroEast's building and as an agreement with MetroEast Gresham Sound Lab will provide quarterly music production classes to the community.

**Discussion:** Chair DeGraw expresses appreciation for both presentations. She noted the presentations illuminated that the Community Media Centers are aware of a changing future and adapting to it. Vice Chair Harden inquires on if MetroEast has shared the Community Needs Assessment with jurisdictions, and Seth Ring noted that a full version is forthcoming to jurisdictions as part of their annual presentation.





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### **R3. FY2024-25 MHCRC Year-End Financial Report (unaudited) (information only)**

Douglas Imaralu, MHCRC Finance Manager, presents an overview of MHCRC balances, revenues and expenditures. Imaralu shares that the purpose of this unaudited financial report is to provide the Commission an informal report and status update and highlights that the FY 2024-25 unaudited report is attached in the packet materials. Imaralu emphasizes that the FY 2024-25 audited financial statement is performed by an external auditor and will be provided to the Commission later in the calendar year. There were five components to Imaralu's presentation: Trend Summary, Revenue Sources, Fund Budget Summary, Resources and Disbursements, and FY 24 vs FY 25 Comparison. Imaralu and Rana DeBey, Community Technology Grants Manager, gave historical context on the PEG fee balance relating to I-Net, the Tech Smart Initiative, and Community Technology award funds returned from grantees.

**Discussion:** Vice Chair Harden seeks more information on if the FY2025-26 projected ending balance is inclusive of the PEG, Franchise Fee and Interest funds. Specifically, Vice Chair Harden would like staff to parse out PEG funds vs Franchise Fee funds of that FY2025-26 projected ending balance. Imaralu notes that staff is working on analyzing PEG vs Franchise Fee balances. Commissioner Dennerline asks if the Interest fund is unrestricted. Imaralu notes that staff will get a final answer on Interest fund spending restrictions in the coming weeks and will seek legal counsel to confirm and report those findings out to the Commission.

Vice Chair Harden seeks confirmation that PEG funds have not been spent to supplement MHCRC Operational expenses. Imaralu confirms that the data shows that no PEG funds have been spent on MHCRC Operational expenses.

Chair DeGraw expresses appreciation for Douglas Imaralu's presentation and the level of detail and clarity it provided, emphasizing that the presentation provided a clear sense of where we came from and where we are headed.

Julie Omelchuck, MetroEast Board Chair, notes a correction on the presentation, for FY 2024-25, MetroEast is collecting the West Multnomah County Franchise fees, prior to FY2024-25 those funds went to Open Signal.

### **R4. Peer Learning Event – (information only)**

Rana DeBey, Community Technology Grants Manager, shares that planning is underway for the MHCRC Grantee Peer Learning Event, which will be held on October 30th, 2025. The event will be facilitated by Paula Manley with support by DeBey. Commissioners Julia DeGraw and Jeff Dennerline will be in attendance along with staff representatives from the community media centers. The event is for all current grantees as well as recent grantees to come together to celebrate impact, build networks and strengthen community. It will be held on Thursday, October 30th, for a half-day starting in the morning at The Laurelhurst Club, 3721 SE Ankeny St, Portland, OR 97214. Chair DeGraw expresses appreciation to DeBey for coordinating this event and extends an open invite to all Commissioners to attend this event.

### **Staff Activity**

- Legislative Activity Report – Kevin Block gives an updated legislative activity report; details are included in the packet materials. Kevin noted at FCC's September 30, 2025 open meeting the FCC voted to open a Notice of Inquiry (NOI) seeking comments on barriers to wireline broadband deployment. MHCRC staff believe the intent of this NOI is to start creating a record





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that will enable the FCC to implement cost-based franchise fees and shot clocks for wireline broadband deployment. Currently, franchises governing cable are explicitly excluded from the NOI; however, the outcome of this docket could have implications for future actions that may impact cable.

- Consumer Protection Report - Laura Dyer gives an updated consumer protection report, included in the packet materials. Laura notes that the report has some corrections that she will work with 311 staff to refine the report and share information at the next Regular meeting.

## **Committee Reports**

- Finance Committee – none.
- Equity Committee – none.
- Policy Committee – Vice Chair Harden gives a Policy Committee report, confirming the Policy Committee supports the grant cycle to launch at \$1 million for the FY 26, which reflects what was budgeted and approved.
- Open Signal Board Appointee – Commissioner Butt reported there was a recent Board meeting and invited Courtney Rae to update. Courtney noted Open Signal is currently recruiting for two open positions. Their open recruitment for an IT Manager position will wrap this week.
- MetroEast Board Appointee – Commissioner Dennerline noted there are some member changes on the Board and they recently had an in-person meeting and discussed financial stability.

**New Business/Open Comment** – No new business/open comment was made.

**Public Comment** – No public comment on agenda items.

**\*Denotes a voting item**

**Adjourned: 8:42 pm**

Respectfully submitted,  
Kathleen Lefebvre

