



Mt. Hood Cable Regulatory Commission

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

MT. HOOD CABLE REGULATORY COMMISSION
Hybrid – The Portland Building – Portland, OR
December 17, 2024 Retreat Minutes -- **APPROVED**

SUMMARY MINUTES

Call to Order: 4:30 PM

Commissioners Present: Julia DeGraw, Scott Harden, Leslie Goodlow, Norm Thomas, Cherri Wagner, and Jeff Dennerline

Staff Present: Seema Kumar, Rebecca Gibbons, Andrew Speer, Laura Dyer, Douglas Imaralu, Rana DeBey, Kevin Block, Eric Engstrom, and Kathleen Lefebvre

Facilitator: Reed Wagner

Legal Counsel: Nancy Werner

Members of the Public: Julie Omelchuck, John Lugton, Tim Goodman

Strategic Planning

Reed Wagner led the Commission through a review of the public benefits/public interests of MHCRC, in the hopes to narrow the scenarios and draw themes of the December 3rd Jurisdiction Work Session:

Below are highlights of MHCRC's Public Interest benefits as discussed by Staff and Commissioners:

- Supporting the Technical and Capital Expenses of CMCs
- Supporting the broadcasting of Jurisdictional Council and Committee meetings to the public who are not able to be in-person, on behalf of local governments resulting in an informed public. (e.g. grant funding to the City of Portland for Council chambers)
- Supporting CMCs broadcast to the internet, internet has a wider audience than cable.
- Stand up for customer to help resolve complaints.
- In many ways, MHCRC supports directly and indirectly broadcasting the public's message out to the public.
- Representing the jurisdictions at the federal level through advocacy.
- Protect against societal misinformation.
- Monitor public right of way and open access.
- The critical function of encouraging civic discourse locally.
- Local journalistic voices in an age of large media networks.
- Protection against misinformation.





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- Use of communications technology - which is more than just video consumption - by marginalized communities.

Reed led Staff and Commissioners through a brainstorming session on outcomes if MHCRC dissolves (Scenario #3 in the packet):

- Likely CMCs would provide services on a fee basis, all jurisdictions would need to separately contract with Community Media Centers.
- No replacement for MHCRC. In this scenario, the Commission would no longer exist, and all jurisdictions would negotiate and enforce their own cable franchises.
- Jurisdictional-dependent for support: under a dissolved MHCRC, jurisdictions would need to prioritize the revenue flow/financial resources with competing programming, resulting in various levels of CMC support.
- Community Grant Program was discussed and risk of reduced/non-existent grant funding under Scenario #3.
- Civic Discourse would remain local and no multi-jurisdictional representation at the federal level.
- The Commission discussed if an IGA covers all the public interests (scenario #3 would require an IGA for certain services).

Reed led the group through a discussion of themes that surfaced from the December 3rd Work Session, summarizing that Jurisdictions desire the following going forward:

- Efficiencies: review of MHCRC's workflow for efficiencies
- Review of the number of MHCRC Meeting per year, perhaps reduced from current cadence.
- Clearly communicate the role of the Commission
- Desire to maintain the expertise of MHCRC Staff
- Jurisdictional leadership confirmed an inability to allocate FTE funding for MHCRC Staff to maintain Commission's work and therefore dissolving may not be acceptable.

Nancy Werner led the group through the three offered scenarios and emphasized that these scenarios were created by her without outside influence.

Discussion

There was a suggestion to look at the decision tree base on "what are we solving for?" with an emphasis on future proofing MHCRC's financial structure as cable revenue declines.

Chair DeGraw stated dissolving the Commission will not fully manage the public benefit resources and assets, and Commissioner Dennerline concurs. There was consensus that creating fiscal efficiencies for sustainability will be necessary. Reed polls Commissioners who are in favor of eliminating Option 3 (dissolving the MHCRC) and all Commissioners agree to eliminate that option. Reed requests Commissioners reach out to their respective jurisdictions





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to inform of that decision. Seema, Reed, and Chair DeGraw will coordinate to reach out Multnomah County as we are currently recruiting for MHCRC's Multnomah County representative. Strategic Planning will be on the January 27th MHCRC Agenda.

FY25 Community Technology Grants Process

Rana DeBey leads the Commission through an update on this year's grantmaking process and shares there is a robust applicant pool. DeBey screenshares the criteria sheet in WebGrant and highlights Staff Notes/Staff Comments and other components of the application process.

Discussion

Commissioner Goodlow requests more information on grant criteria and equity indicators and DeBey noted the application scoring will monitor and prioritize the following: racial equity, new applicants, and grass roots organizations. DeBey further ensured by noting that all grant award recipients are required to submit final reports that Staff reconcile those reports to the application goals. Further, the Community Technology Grants program is reviewed by an outside evaluator. Chair DeGraw notes that racial equity is already built into the application criteria.

PEG Fee Allocation Methodologies

Staff led the Commission through PEG fee allocation methodologies as outlined in the packet materials. Douglas Imaralu shares present cable franchise fee projection trend, 5 years prior and 10 years forward highlighting declining funds by 2035 for grants and CMCs. Program staff show unallocated balance of approximately \$6 million at end of FY 24-25 and used this amount in the shared scenarios. Staff have asked financial staff to verify this amount. Commissioners directed program staff to work with the MHCRC Equity Committee to begin to identify possible pathways forward for spending down the remaining fund balance and how to thoughtfully close out the competitive grantmaking program.

Cable Franchise Compliance Program

Andrew Speer and Laura Dyer provided background and program overview and shared regulation priorities with the Commission.

Adjourn to enter into Executive Session: 7:30 pm-8:25 pm

The MHCRC entered into executive session to consult with the Commission's legal counsel regarding the MHCRC's legal rights and duties regarding franchise renewal, as provided under ORS 192.660(2)(f).

Reconvene: 8:26 pm

Adjourn: 8:30 pm





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Respectfully submitted,
Kathleen Lefebvre



MHCRC 1810 SW 5th Ave. Suite 710 Portland, Oregon 97201
503.823.5385 info@mhcrc.org www.mhcrc.org