



# Mt. Hood Cable Regulatory Commission

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

MT. HOOD CABLE REGULATORY COMMISSION

Hybrid – Wood Village City Hall Council Chambers – Wood Village, OR

September 3, 2025 Retreat Minutes -- **APPROVED**

## SUMMARY MINUTES

Call to Order: 4:30 PM

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

Staff Present: Seema Gadh Kumar, Andrew Speer, Laura Dyer, Douglas Imaralu, Rana DeBey, Kevin Block, and Kathleen Lefebvre

Additional MHCRC consultants present: Nancy Werner, Bradley Werner LLC, MHCRC Legal Counsel; Mark Wolf, LGLG, PC, MHCRC Legal Counsel; Autumn Carter and Reed Wagner, NEX Strategies

Jurisdictional Leadership present: Chris Fick, City of Gresham; Eric Engstrom, City of Portland

CMCs present: John Lugton, MetroEast; Seth Ring, MetroEast; Courtney Rae, Open Signal

### Retreat Goals

The objective is for commissioners to prepare themselves, staff, and consultants to successfully navigate the future of the Commission. Upon completion of this meeting, participants should walk away with the following:

Consensus whether to sunset and when; Start to parse out specifics on how it looks, including timeline, and next steps for that process, clarity on how to approach the grant work moving forward with input from interested parties.

**Welcome all** – Vice Chair Harden shares the history of our meeting location, Wood Village City Hall Council Chambers, and welcomes all.

**Welcome Commissioners Butt and Underdahl** – Chair DeGraw welcomes Commissioners Butt and Underdahl to their first official MHCRC meeting, it is a crucial time to welcome both as we embark on this important chapter.

**Introductions and Agenda Review** – During the Agenda Review Vice Chair Harden shares a handout, included as an attachment to these Minutes, that outlines his recommendation plan which is not included in the NEX Strategies presentation of scenarios this evening.

**NEX Strategies Summarize Final Report and Q & A** – Chair DeGraw introduces this agenda item and emphasizes that the aim is to be working towards a common goal and appreciates everyone as we dive





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into these conversations. The goal this evening is to land on a generalized agreement for a timeline to sunset the Commission and in doing so to openly share information, ask questions of each other and Autumn and Reed from NEX Strategies. Chair DeGraw highlights the Public Comment received by MetroEast earlier today - included as an attachment to these minutes – and reminds all of the Memo from Donnie Oliveira, Deputy City Administrator, City of Portland, sent via email, requesting Commissioners delay the launch of the grant cycle considering the priority to support the Community Media Centers. Chair DeGraw notes this is a recommendation, but we need to consider it.

Chair DeGraw also shares with the group that City of Gresham announced their intent to leave the Commission and will be formalizing that notice before November 1<sup>st</sup>.

Chair DeGraw invites Autumn Carter from NEX Strategies to present. Autumn presents a summary of their final report, highlighting that revenues are declining, and community needs have evolved beyond cable. Autumn presents on the consequences model for decision-making, showing the Commissioners that acting now increases their impact. Autumn also highlights that the presentation is a summary of NEX Strategies' final report recommendations and it is meant to inform the Commission's decisions, not replace Commissioner judgement.

Autumn reviews the three scenario options in their presentation: Adjusted Status Quo; Sunset Commission; Independent Organization.

Nancy Werner, from Bradley Werner, LLC, confirms that according to the IGA when Gresham withdraws from the Commission they still have access to the funds through the end of the fiscal year, but they will no longer have the ability to make budget decisions after they give official notice to withdraw from the Commission.

**Range of Services** – Commissioners Identify and discuss MHCRC's current range of services and how to navigate a sunset in a constrictive environment while engaging in a discussion on CMC Budgets, the Community Tech Grant Program, timeline of sunset as it relates to CMCs and the Community Tech Grant Program, PEG funding and Franchise Fee funding and balances in each.

**Public Perspectives** Chair DeGraw invites CMCs and Jurisdictions to engage in the conversation. Seth Ring from MetroEast would like clarity from Gresham on their intent to fund MetroEast in the future and Chris Fick from City of Gresham notes that no decisions have been made.

**Commission discussion and decision points** - It was noted that creating a structure where CMCs are whole and viable is the priority and the grant program is discretionary. The City of Portland recommendation is made with that framework in mind. Rana DeBey, MHCRC Grants Manager, notes we have not given grantees notice and the current grantee contracts go through 2028.

Chair DeGraw encourages Commissioners and jurisdictional leadership to engage in the MHCRC Policy Committee as we move forward with these discussion.





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**MHCRC Equity Committee** -Chair of the Equity Committee, Commissioner Leslie Goodlow, gives an update on the August 19<sup>th</sup> Equity Committee. Noting the Committee discussed federal funding as it relates to eligibility requirements around DEI. Also discussed the current grant cycle and the annual peer learning event.

**MHCRC Finance Committee** – Chair of the Finance Committee, Commissioner Norm Thomas, gives an update on the August 28<sup>th</sup> Finance Committee. Noting the Committee and Staff are beginning the audit process and if there are questions, please reach out to Commissioner Thomas.

**Adjourn to enter into Regular Session: 8:10 pm**

Reconvene: 9:05 pm

Adjourn: 9:05 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Lefebvre

Attachments:

Vice Chair Harden Handout “Variation on NEX Option 2”

City of Portland memo to Portland MHCRC Commissioners



## Motions/Actions for MHCRC Recommendation/Plan to the Jurisdictions to Dissolve the MHCRC IGA

### **VARIATION ON NEX OPTION 2 (Recommendations and Final Report)**

#### **East County Cities and Multnomah County - New IGA Portland to retain all franchise related functions for its area**

**Motion/Action:** Direct the MHCRC gov't lawyer (LGLG-Mark Wolfe) to draft an IGA in consultation with East County MHCRC representatives no later than September 30; MHCRC recommended draft would be forwarded to the four East County cities and the County, along with the recommended Resolution for dissolution of the current IGA. IGA to include:

Purpose: Coordinate and undertake franchise admin and revenue (FF and PEG Fee) collection and disbursement on behalf of Gresham, Troutdale, Fairview, Wood Village and Multnomah County;

Primary Principles:

- One jurisdiction serves as the administrator of the IGA duties and manages an agreement with MetroEast for community media services.
- Franchise admin funded by an agreed upon amount of the franchise fees and a portion of the carryover/remaining balance amount in the MHCRC Fund attributable to interest earned on the Fund overtime.
- MetroEast continues to receive 60% of franchise fees and 100% of PEG Fee.
- MetroEast designation as the provider of community media services, implemented through a services agreement between MetroEast and the administering jurisdiction.
- Effective upon dissolution of current MHCRC IGA.

#### **Resolution for Jurisdictions to Dissolve current MHCRC IGA no later than end of current fiscal year (FY25-26)**

**Motion/Action:**

- 1) Direct the MHCRC gov't lawyer (LGLG-Mark Wolfe) to draft a Resolution no later than September 30 for dissolution of the MHCRC IGA, in collaboration with an MHCRC work group; MHCRC recommended draft would be forwarded to the six jurisdictions.
- 2) Conduct a MHCRC Fund review and reconciliation to be supported by an auditor hired by the MHCRC and in collaboration with the CoP staff.

Resolution Purpose: To provide the Jurisdictions a template and road map for agreement on how and when the MHCRC and its duties and funds will be dissolved and disseminated.

Primary Principles for Jurisdiction Resolution:

- Timing of IGA dissolution to coincide with the new East County cities/Multnomah County IGA.

- Plan to close out MHCRC Fund, including reconciliation and transfer of funds to jurisdiction administering the new East County IGA, retainment of funds by Portland for grant contract compliance and close out requirements, and payment of funds to Open Signal and MetroEast.
- Through the end of Community Technology grant contracts, grant compliance remains with Portland as does the money to fund it.
- Any unobligated PEG Capital Funds remaining balance at end of FY25-26 transfers 60% to Open Signal and 40% to MetroEast to help supplement the declining amount of annual PEG Fee.

### **Final Community Technology Grant Round FY25-26 - Two-Year Contracts**

**Motion/Action:** Update FY25-26 grant guidelines to allow grant projects up to two-years (not the current three) so that all grant contracts would expire by FY27-28.

FY25-26: Communications and outreach to signal the end of the Community Technology Grant program; highlight media centers as a continuing resource for access to technology and training.



# Community & Economic Development Donnie Oliveira, Deputy City Administrator

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## City of Portland

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September 2, 2025

### MEMORANDUM

**To:** City of Portland Representatives to MHCRC – Chair Julia DeGraw, Leslie Goodlow, Asad Butt

**From:** Donnie Oliveira, Deputy City Administrator, Community and Economic Development Service Area; Eric Engstrom, Director, Bureau of Planning and Sustainability

**CC:** Seema Gadh Kumar, Chief of Community Technology Division, Bureau of Planning and Sustainability

**Re:** City of Portland Position on Mt. Hood Cable Regulatory Commission Community Technology Grants and Sunset/Transition Plan

This memorandum outlines the City of Portland's position on the Community Technology Grant program with consideration to the MHCRC sunset/transition plan.

### Delay of FY 2025-26 Community Technology Grant Cycle

The City of Portland strongly posits that it is essential to delay the launch of the FY 2025-26 Community Technology Grant Cycle until the MHCRC has finalized a formal sunset/transition strategy. The MHCRC is currently in the process of deliberating a phased wind-down of its administration. Launching a new community technology grant cycle while the MHCRC is actively planning its own dissolution is strategically inconsistent with its current course of action. Delaying this year's grant cycle will allow the commission to establish a clear path forward and make a decision that is fair and transparent to all stakeholders.

### Cessation of the Community Technology Grant Program

Furthermore, in alignment with the recent recommendations from the NEX Strategies' July 2025 Final Report, the City of Portland supports the cessation of the Community Technology Grant program. Preserving direct funding for community media and other partners is a compelling use of shrinking cable revenues that unequivocally asserts the City's commitment to community. The City of Portland is committed to honoring existing grants, even if the MHCRC dissolves before they're finished.

The City of Portland is prepared to work with the MHCRC and its jurisdictions to develop a clear, responsible, and phased strategy for wrapping up the commission's work while continuing to support community priorities.

The City of Portland is committed to providing meaningful access.

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