



MT. HOOD CABLE REGULATORY COMMISSION
MetroEast Community Media, 829 NE 8th St Gresham, OR 97030
January 27, 2020 Meeting Minutes -- Approved

SUMMARY MINUTES

Call to Order: 6:30 pm

- Roll Call

Commissioners present: Leif Hansen, Carol Studenmund, Jeff Dennerline, Norm Thomas, Jacquenette McIntire, Scott Harden.

Commissioners absent: None.

Staff: Julie Omelchuck, Program Manager; Rebecca Gibbons, Program Coordinator, Cinthia Diaz Calvo, Admin Specialist, Elisabeth Perez, Interim Director.

- Agenda Review: No changes.
- Disclosures: Studenmund said she will abstain from any discussion or action on the Portland Public Schools grant preapplication due to a potential conflict of interest. LNS Captioning, a company owned by Studenmund, has a contract with Portland Public Schools for captioning meetings and this function is implicated in the preapplication. Therefore, the grant project as proposed could potentially result in a benefit to her company.

Dennerline had a meeting with MetroEast Community Media concerning its design of mobile education vehicles.

- Public Comment: None.
- CONSENT AGENDA

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MOTION: Harden moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Thomas seconded.

VOTE: 6-0

REGULAR AGENDA

R1. Community Technology Grant Cycle - Preliminary Funding Decision

Gibbons provided an overview of the Commission's process. Based on staff's preliminary review for baseline eligibility criteria, 14 of 16 preapplications moved forward for Commission consideration. Gibbons handed out a compiled list of Commissioners' reviews. She said Commission action today will decide which preapplications move forward and does not

guarantee funding for the applicants. Staff will note Commissioners' issues and areas for clarifications for each preapplication and those will be addressed in the final grant application and contract, which will then be considered by the Commission at a later meeting.

Hansen said the Commission allocated \$800,000 in the budget. He noted that the handout indicated seven preapplications had a Commissioner consensus to move forward.

Commissioners agreed that many of the preapplications lacked detailed, objective evaluation plans and directed staff to work with applicants invited to complete a final application to clearly identify project outcomes and develop evaluation plans that assess progress towards achieving those outcomes for the project's beneficiaries.

Commissioners commented that it was easier to evaluate a project's need and potential benefit when the applicant explained use of Open Signal/MetroEast resources and why the applicant organization was ready to pursue owning its own equipment. Thomas said that the community media centers are there to help build skill and expertise within the nonprofit community to go out on their own. Thomas said that after a point, it makes sense for nonprofits who have been trained to want to have direct access to their own equipment.

In response to a question from Studenmund about the MetroEast Mobile Education Vehicle preapplication budget, Gibbons confirmed that the contractual expense line item for "interns and contractors" was not grant fundable as a capital expense. Gibbons said, if selected to move forward, staff would work with the applicant to include these expenses in the project budget match commitment.

MOTION: Thomas moved to approve the following preapplications for development of final applications and contracts: MetroEast Community Media - Mobile Education Vehicle; MetroEast - Reynolds High School; NW Documentary; Outside the Frame; Portland Community College; Resolutions Northwest; and Roots and Beats Project. Studenmund seconded.

VOTE: 6-0

Referring to the handout, Hansen opened discussion on the next grouping of preapplications that received support from five Commissioners. Studenmund said the preapplication from Portland Public Schools TVS did not have six Commissioner votes because she declined to review and weigh in on the application due to the potential conflict of interest mentioned under Disclosures.

Hansen said considering Studenmund's abstention, the preapplication had unanimous support from the remaining Commissioners.

MOTION: Dennerline moved to approve the Portland Public Schools TVS preapplication. Harden seconded.

VOTE: 5-0 (Studenmund abstained)

Hansen opened discussion on the ChickTech preapplication.

Dennerline said that in his review of the preapplication he questioned whether the applicant would have the capacity and expertise to fully prepare the target beneficiaries for careers in video production given the small amount of grant equipment requested (\$18,985). Hansen said he supported the preapplication in part because the grant ask was so small. Hansen the project could have great impact, despite the small ask, on getting the target population engaged in tech careers. Several Commissioners suggested that the applicant look into developing opportunities for the project participants to engage with a wider distribution network to ensure the participants gain experience in real-world video project environments, such as live broadcasting.

MOTION: Thomas moved to approve the ChickTech preapplication. Studenmund seconded.
VOTE: 6-0

Hansen opened discussion on the Open Signal preapplication.

Harden said he supported this preapplication moving on in the grant process. He said he liked that the project proposes working with incarcerated youth, that the project is partnering with other MHCRC grantees, such as Outside the Frame, and the preapplication included a strong evaluation plan.

Commissioners engaged in a brief discussion of the proposed uses of extended reality (XR) technology that this preapplication proposes. Dennerline and Hansen weighed in that this type of technology is appropriate and expressed the importance of providing training opportunities on innovative technology for underserved populations.

MOTION: Studenmund moved to approve the Open Signal preapplication. Dennerline seconded.
VOTE: 6-0

Hansen opened discussion on the North Northeast Business Association preapplication.

McIntire said she supported this preapplication moving on in the granting process because she believes the applicant clearly described the link between the beneficiaries of the project and the public benefit area selected (improving community involvement). She said the applicant presented strong partner collaborations as well.

MOTION: McIntire moved to approve the North Northeast Business Association preapplication. Harden seconded.
VOTE: 6-0

Hansen opened discussion on the Slavic Community Center preapplication.

McIntire, Studenmund, and Hansen all supported the preapplication moving forward in the granting process. Studenmund said the preapplication budget did not include funds for video subtitle and language translation and said the evaluation plan was weak.

In response to comments from Harden and Dennerline, Gibbons confirmed that the Slavic Community Center is a past MHCRC grantee that successfully completed its previous grant project. Gibbons said the prior grant helped establish a studio at the center and programming was produced for the community media channels. Gibbons said because this is a returning grantee, the applicant perhaps was relying too heavily on Commissioner's remembering the past grant, therefore left out some important details.

MOTION: Dennerline moved to approve the Slavic Community Center preapplication. Harden seconded.

VOTE: 6-0

Hansen opened discussion on the CETI preapplication.

Commissioners agreed that the preapplication was vague and presented lofty goals that were hard to follow and lacked specifics (i.e. clearly defining and quantifying the project beneficiaries, detailing quantifiable evaluation metrics).

Harden pointed out that a focus of the preapplication is 2020 Census engagement, but by the time the grant was awarded, if it moved forward, the Census would be nearly over.

Commissioners agreed that this applicant might benefit from utilizing Open Signal/MetroEast equipment in the short term.

MOTION: Studenmund moved to approve the CETI preapplication. Thomas seconded.

In response to a question from McIntire, Hansen said the established guidelines for the grant program do not allow the Commission to partially fund a project.

VOTE: Yes: McIntire, Harden, Studenmund; No: Thomas, Dennerline, Hansen. 3-3 Motion failed.

Hansen opened discussion on the Luke-Dorf, Inc. preapplication.

Harden said he liked that that project proposes partnering with the Keys, Beats and Bars program, another of the MHCRC's grantees.

Hansen said the preapplication lacked clear project outcomes and evaluation plan and has a limited number of proposed beneficiaries (80 young adults over 2 years).

McIntire said she supports the preapplication moving forward and said the applicant seems to have designed a project that will reach young adults who have endured a lot in their young lives. While the project is fairly simple and limited, she said this could be the engagement the youth need to move on into adulthood.

Hansen said that if the preapplication moves forward that staff should work with the applicant to more clearly define the project outcomes, the content that will be produced and aired via Open Signal/MetroEast, and to develop a more robust evaluation plan.

MOTION: Thomas moved to approve the Luke-Dorf, Inc. preapplication. Harden seconded.

VOTE: 6-0

R2. MHCRC Planning Retreat Goals

Hansen noted the proposed planning retreat goals contained in the meeting packet and said they were ambitious but a good starting place for the retreat discussion.

MOTION: Studenmund moved to adopt the following goals for the upcoming MHCRC planning retreat:

- Refresh on the Commission's current and upcoming projects, including a primer on cable franchise renewal.
- Review cable franchise fee and PEG/I-Net fee revenue trends.
- Explore possible futures for the Commission and identify proactive steps.
- Provide an opportunity for Commissioners and staff to get to know each other and strengthen working relationships.
- Revisit the Commission's operating agreements and meeting protocols.

Dennerline seconded.

VOTE: 6-0

R3. Media Centers Annual Activity Reports

Tomi Douglas, CEO of MetroEast Community Media, noted the CEO leadership transition over the summer and thanked John Lugton for serving as interim CEO. MetroEast highlights for 2019 included: Hiring a Digital Equity and Inclusion manager; Welcome to Computers and Rockwood DIY programs' success; internship program growth and increase partnership with Mount Hood Community College due to closure of its broadcasting program; creation of Producer's CornerSwiithboard project with Open Signal; audio booth and podcast classes moved to MetroEast; Studio A remodel; receipt of three Emmy nominations and one student Emmy nomination; several regional and national Alliance Hometown awards.

In response to a question from Thomas, Douglas said MetroEast's partnerships have been shared with the Jurisdictions, but MetroEast will consider sharing awards and other accomplishments going forward.

Hansen suggested that Commissioners could assist in transmitting that information as well.

In response to a question from Dennerline about MetroEast facility capacity for increase number of productions, Douglas said there's capacity and MetroEast's current strategic planning process will drive its staffing and facility's plan over the next couple years.

Omelchuck confirmed that Open Signal was not able to attend and will present its Annual Activity Report during the next meeting.

Staff Activity Reports and Updates

- Public Policy/Legislative/FCC: Perez mentioned that Chair Hansen submitted letters on behalf of the MHCRC encouraging them to support the Protecting Community Television Act. Oregon Senators Merkley and Wyden, and Representative Blumenauer have co-signed the bills. Regarding the FCC Cable Order, following the outcome of the petition to stay with the FCC, our legal coalition submitted a motion to stay the order during litigation to the 9th Circuit court. We are awaiting a ruling from the Court. Oral argument in the Appeal of the FCC Order is scheduled for February 10. The case is estimated to reach a final decision in late 2020/early 2021. Regarding the Cable Service Change Notification, there is a national coalition that may provide a statement and we are yet to decide whether OCT will join the coalition or provide a statement of their own. About the True Fees Act of 2019, the Act requires cable television providers to include the total costs of service in their advertised price and provides additional customer protections including a 24-hour window following notice of a rate increase for customers to cancel their service contract without a penalty.

Studenmund asked if this act will become law, to which Perez responded that it was her understanding that it will become law.

- FY20-21 Budget Process: Perez reported that the MHCRC received its special appropriation amount for FY20-21 from the City of Portland: \$333,365, which is about \$8,500 more than the current year, based on general inflationary factor of approximately 2.8%.
- Community Needs Ascertainment: Omelchuck handed out a post card for outreach for participation in the qualitative survey. She said Commissioners will receive an email with information to support the outreach and requested Commissioners' assistance in engaging their elected officials. Sector and stakeholder focus groups took place Jan. 21-23 with CBG, including all jurisdictions' staff, except Portland. The next group of sector and stakeholder focus groups will take place in February
- Annual Complaint Report: Omelchuck referred to the complaint report contained in the meeting packet, noting that the number of complaints recorded by staff was lower than the previous year due to staff transitions. She explained that the office was not as rigorous as it has been in the past in ensuring complaints were addressed and recorded. One OCT key performance measure will include the tracking of the time it takes to resolve a complaint both internal and the resolution by the cable company. OCT will also improve the complaint intake form and process.
- Other: OCT office is moving on February 21 so staff will have limited availability that day. The new Grant Compliance Analyst Rana DeBey is starting February 13 and she

will attend the MHCRC retreat. The Portland City Council is scheduled to appoint two new MHCRC members on February 6.

Committee Reports

- Finance Committee: None.
- TechSmart Grant Committee: None.
- PCM Board Appointee: None.
- MetroEast Board Appointee: None.

New Business; Commissioner Open Comment: None.
Hansen noted the MHCRC planning retreat on February 22.

Franchisee Activity Report

- Comcast: Tim Goodman, Senior Director of Governmental Regulatory Affairs at Comcast, noted the following community investments by Comcast: Distributing toiletry kits with the City/County joint office on homelessness; partnership with OMSI on Internet Essentials program for low-income people; Leadership award scholarships for high school seniors come out in March; Comcast Cares week is in April.
- Frontier: None.
- Century Link: None.

PEG Provider Activity Report

- Open Signal: None.
- MetroEast Community Media: Tomi Douglas, CEO of MetroEast, noted the current work on strategic planning with a target date for a final plan to share in April.
- Public Comment: None.
- Adjourn: 8:27 pm

Respectfully submitted by:
Cinthia Diaz Calvo, Administrative Specialist