



MT. HOOD CABLE REGULATORY COMMISSION  
McMenamins Kennedy School, Portland OR  
February 22, 2020, Planning Retreat Minutes -- Approved

## **SUMMARY MINUTES**

Call to Order: 9:00 AM

### Roll Call

Commissioners Present: Leif Hansen (Chair), Carol Studenmund, Jeff Dennerline, Norm Thomas, Jacquenette McIntire, Scott Harden, Kory Murphy, Richard Roche

Staff Present: Elisabeth Perez, Julie Omelchuck, Rebecca Gibbons, Bea Coulter, Rana DeBey

Other: Paula Manley, Facilitator

### **Retreat Goals**

- 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.

### **Year in Review: Accomplishments and Challenges**

Commissioners identified and discussed accomplishments and challenges over the past year, which included, among others, the FCC In-Kind Order, Community Technology Needs Ascertainment launch, staff capacity and new employees, move out of the Revenue Division, community technology and TechSmart grants, Frontier franchise extension and ownership transfer, and clean FY18-19 MHCRC Fund Audit.

### **Project and Program Overviews**

Perez highlighted the MHCRC project roadmap, contained in the retreat packet, of MHCRC projects through FY21-22, which was developed by Commissioners and staff in 2018 to map out primary projects through the end of the current Comcast franchise term.

Omelchuck reviewed the Community Technology Needs Ascertainment study overview (Your Voice, Our Communications Technology 2020) contained in the retreat packet and described the work that's been accomplished to date. The study will deepen our understanding of barriers in

media and digital technology access and adoption, especially for people of color, people with disabilities, and seniors. Study results will inform cable services franchise renewal negotiations, as well as the next stage of the Portland, Multnomah County and Multnomah County Library Digital Equity Action Plan, and Portland's Broadband Strategic Plan. The final report will be available in June 2020.

Perez reviewed the draft Comcast Franchise Renewal timeline contained in the retreat packet. Commissioners and staff discussed ways to gain knowledge about franchise renewal negotiations and possible Commissioner roles in the process.

### **Revenue Forecast**

Hansen reviewed the cable franchise fee and PEG/I-Net fee financial projection charts included in the retreat packet, which project a continuing downward trend through 2023 due to cable companies' cable TV revenues declining. Omelchuck handed out and reviewed charts containing high level budget projections and analysis through FY23-24 for the MHCRC administrative and capital fund compliance budgets.

Commissioners discussed potential budget scenarios that use the MHCRC Fund interest and compliance program carryover to sustain adequate staffing and oversight of programs. The MHCRC Finance Committee will consider these further as it develops the FY20-21 budget.

### **Future Planning**

Commissioners and staff discussed key developments in the communications technology and policy landscape, and how the Commission provides value, both currently and historically, to the MHCRC jurisdictions and communities.

Commissioners and staff worked in teams and as a group to explore a variety of possible future scenarios for the Commission, considering franchise renewals, public benefits and community impact, public policy, and federal regulations.

### **Priorities for FY20-21**

Commissioners identified key priorities for the next fiscal year, including:

- Fulfilling IGA commitments, including consumer protection and cable company compliance;
- Complete the Community Technology Needs Ascertainment and move forward with Comcast franchise renewal;
- Communicate with the Jurisdictions to ensure alignment and shared expectations;
- Support and assist MHCRC stakeholders to prepare for future changes in cable franchises;
- Wrap up the TechSmart grant initiative, including evaluation and disseminating learnings; and

- Create a message framework so that Commissioners feel informed to discuss issues and opportunities with their jurisdictions.

Adjourn: 5:00pm

Respectfully submitted by:  
Cinthia Diaz Calvo, Administrative Specialist  
Julie S. Omelchuck, Program Manager