

MINUTES OF CABLE TELEVISION COMMISSION MEETING

CITY OF LOS ALAMITOS
3191 Katella Avenue
Los Alamitos, California 90720

March 13, 2014

1. CALL TO ORDER

A Regular meeting of the Cable Television Commission was called to order at 4:00 PM on March 13, 2014, in the Council Chambers Conference Room, 3191 Katella Avenue, Los Alamitos, Chair Tom Rothwell presiding.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Hasselbrink, Rothwell, Underwood

Absent: Commissioners Clayton, Jempsa

Present: Staff Bret Plumlee, City Manager
Catherine Howard, Police Department Secretary

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None

4. PRESENTATIONS

None

5. MINUTES

Approval of the minutes for the Cable Television Commission meeting of February 13, 2014.

MOTION: HASSELBRINK/UNDERWOOD

Motion unanimously carried to approve the February 13, 2014 Cable Television Commission meeting minutes.

Ayes: Hasselbrink Rothwell, Underwood

Nays: None

Absent: Clayton, Jempsa

Abstain: None

6. ACTION ITEMS

City Manager Plumlee stated that Mr. Larry Strawther was scheduled to make an oral presentation to the commission concerning van operations, but was delayed. He requested that item 6A: Report on Van Operations is postponed until Mr. Strawther arrives.

He also suggested that due to the absence of Commissioner Jempsa today, that item 6D: Discussion of Using Underwriting as a Means to Fund LATV Programming is postponed to the April meeting, given that this item was her request.

MOTION: UNDERWOOD/HASSELBRINK

Motion made and unanimously carried to postpone item 6D: Discussion of Using Underwriting as a Means to Fund LATV Programming to the April 10, 2014 Cable Television Commission meeting.

B. LATV Studio Program Productions

City Manager Plumlee provided a brief update concerning this report and asked Vice Chair Underwood to continue the discussion. Vice Chair Underwood stated that the items listed were studio related as he had minimal involvement with van operations, therefore this list only includes his productions. The thirteen items are annotated as a "P", "E", or "G" program; "PA" means Public Access programming funded by outside community parties. Some of the thirteen shows are funded by LATV, some by community sponsors, such as Southland Credit Union; some use studio assets and equipment and some don't.

Commissioner Hasselbrink stated that she had requested a complete list of all LATV programming, to include City Council Meetings, LAUSD Board meetings, RCSD meetings, etc.; the list in this report provides minimal information. She clarified her request for a complete list to include ALL of LATV's programming, indicating which City account pays for which program, including programs that are no cost to the City. The goal is to have a comprehensive list of all LATV programming, including any and all costs, if any, to gain a better understanding of programming and related costs, i.e., an Excel spreadsheet identifying the specific fiscal impact of every program.

City Manager Plumlee clarified that a comprehensive report should: 1) Identify and separate funding sources and man-hours; 2) Indicate which studio operations and programs are overseen by Mr. Underwood; and, 3) Identify costs related to Council meetings overseen by Doug Wood. He suggested that the fund balance analysis completed last year might be helpful.

Recommendation: Return to next meeting a comprehensive list of all LATV programs, including City Council, LAUSD, and RCSD board meetings, which include the cost of each program, and which City fund pays for which program. Bring back a list of everything paid for using LATV funds to determine what and

where to cut-back or continue funding. Provide a detailed list of expenditures for the past two years and the Fund Balance Analysis report.

A. Report on Van Operations

City Manager Plumlee provided a brief summary of the request and then introduced Mr. Larry Strawther to discuss van operations.

Mr. Strawther said that it wasn't until 2009 that his company, Community & Schools Media Partnership (CSMP), became involved with the studio and van. This partnership helped to reduce City costs and he tried to keep the association revenue neutral by obtaining booster funds and sponsorships. In 2010, he obtained a \$6,500 annual sustaining sponsorship from Consolidated Disposal. Roughly, the van films four to seven football games, five basketball games, three soccer games, one wrestling match, and one or two softball games per year. Additional programs filmed from the van include coverage of the National Junior Basketball's four games, and several community events, such as the We Care "From the Heart" fundraiser, a Taste of Los Al, the Jewish Family and Children's Services Fundraiser, Friday Night Lights, Los Al Girls' Softball Opening Night, McAuliffe's Fit-a-Thon, the Bronco World Series opening series and four games, and the Los Alamitos City Council Candidates Forum. He also did six episodes of *A Great Place to Live*. Overall, about 25 events per year, necessitating 35 to 40 hours of programming time are filmed using the van.

He cautioned against budgeting for studio time versus van time. More than any PEG programs, the majority of LATVs programming is "local origination" – which is not Public Access. Public Access is programming done by a member of the public and given to the station to air. Local Origination means a show produced by local people connected with the studio.

Mr. Strawther stated that while LATV is a PEG station, the majority of the programming is still Local Organization, which doesn't fall into any PEG category. The ACLU decision and consent decree clearly define this.

City Manager Plumlee stated that while the Public Cable Television Authority can do programming, they do not do Public Access programming.

Chair Rothwell thanked Mr. Strawther for his presentation and said he would like to see the van operations some time. Mr. Strawther replied that he'd be happy to accommodate Chair Rothwell's request, however the van is very old and has not seen many improvements since 1995. The carpet is from 1995; the new equipment purchased last year reduced the weight by 200 pounds; the van has been a very productive asset to the station. One challenge is bringing high definition to LATV programming, which would ultimately expand viewership. Streaming programs would be a huge boost to LATV broadcasting.

City Manager Plumlee stated that as more viewers begin to watch programs online or streamed, that cable company revenues will continue to decline, further eroding the primary LATV funding source.

Mr. Strawther stated that if new technology is incorporated into LATV, young people might become engaged and involved in studio operations. He cited Santa Clarita school system as a model teaching organization; the city and the school district are strongly partnered.

Commissioner Hasselbrink pointed out that while Seal Beach residents have their children in the Los Alamitos Unified School District, they are unable to view LATV programming – even the LAUSD meetings. LATVs broadcast capabilities are unnecessarily limiting.

Mr. Strawther discussed the advantages of simul-casting, being digitized and stored on the Cloud. With a larger broadcast audience, the underwriting capabilities can be limitless. Businesses would be more inclined to participate in LATV with a larger sales footprint.

Commissioner Hasselbrink discussed the advantages of increasing LATVs server capabilities to strengthen the future of the station.

Mr. Strawther estimated the initial equipment cost investment of \$2,000.

Vice Chair Underwood added there would be additional on-going costs. Not all productions can be immediately streamed or simulcast.

Commissioner Hasselbrink requested more specific information be returned for commission consideration, adding that she would love to seek City Council approval. Expanding viewership and the opportunities for sponsorship/underwriting would be an exciting step towards strengthening the future of LATV.

Mr. Strawther shared information on Mi-Fi, which Verizon offers free to City related organizations, sending information via an IP service, directly to a Cloud.

City Manager Plumlee cautioned that the Council would expect a request to be outlined as part of a comprehensive plan for LATV; he suggested the inclusion of an underwriting policy.

Mr. Strawther stated that an underwriting policy was already in place and approved by the Council and City Attorney, therefore an inclusion with any equipment purchase request seemed superfluous.

Commissioner Hasselbrink argued that if the Council required a long-range, fully-comprehensive and detailed strategic plan for LATV, then their hands would be

collectively tied to move forward with any ideas or steps to immediately increase the viability of the station. Having the capacity to dramatically increase viewership within a relatively short time period, with minimal capital outlay, and the near certainty of increasing sponsors and underwriters, would be a win/win for everyone. This appears to be the best, most effective, pro-active way to secure LATV's future.

Vice Chair Underwood said he would support this request as long as it included equipment upgrades for the studio.

Commissioner Hasselbrink responded that she'd prefer to not mix the requests; increase broadcast viewership now, and then equipment upgrades could be accomplished later.

Mr. Strawther said that the three best ways to make the station more sustainable are: 1) Being seen by more people; 2) More programming; and, 3) Make the cost of programming more efficient.

Mr. Strawther stated that the van has been an excellent investment for the City. It has done a lot of work with the advantage of mobility and broadcasting a program immediately.

Recommendation: Request to return to the next meeting a list of technical equipment, itemized to include costs, necessary for LATV to broadcast programming over the internet.

C. Development of a LATV Maintenance and Discrepancy Log

Vice Chair Underwood provided a summary of the report and discussed the advantages of maintaining a Maintenance and Discrepancy Log to document technical discrepancies, regular maintenance, unscheduled repairs, upgrades, downtime, blackouts or program glitches, and include viewer complaints, in an effort to stay informed of the status and operational issues concerning LATV. Mr. Wood has reviewed the Excel spreadsheet sample log and agreed to oversee the data input.

Commissioner Hasselbrink suggested the inclusion in the log explaining how a problem or issue was resolved.

MOTION: HASSELBRINK/ROTHWELL

Motion made and unanimously carried to have Mr. Doug Wood manage the Maintenance and Discrepancy Log for LATV studio operations.

Ayes: Hasselbrink Rothwell, Underwood
Nays: None
Absent: Clayton, Jempsa
Abstain: None

7. COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Vice Chair Underwood met with the State of California Film Commissioner recently. He invited her to tour the station and discussed various options for grant opportunities.

8. ADJOURNMENT

At 5:45 PM, the Cable Television Commission meeting was adjourned.

The next Regular meeting of the Cable Television Commission scheduled for Thursday, April 10, 2014, at 4 PM, in the City Council Chambers Conference Room.

Tom Rothwell

Tom Rothwell, Chairperson

ATTEST:

Bret M. Plumlee

Bret M. Plumlee City Manager