

Rochester Government Channel Minutes
November 20, 2017 Meeting
City Council Chambers, 5:30PM

Members Present:

City Councilor Tom Willis, Chair
James Graham, Resident
Celeste Plaia, Government Channel Coordinator
Others Present:
City Attorney Terence O'Rourke

DRAFT MINUTES

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at **5:35 PM**. All members were present.

II. Approval of minutes July 10, 2017 meeting

A **MOTION** was made by James Graham to **accept** the minutes of the July 10, 2017 meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilor Willis. The **MOTION CARRIED** by a unanimous voice vote.

III. Public Input

There was no one present for public input.

IV. Discussion - Comcast

Councilor Willis stated that he called for a Government Channel meeting before the Public Hearing was scheduled to gain understanding and ask questions regarding the proposal of a Comcast cable franchise agreement as it relates to the Government Channel.

Terence O'Rourke gave an overview of Article 7 of the proposed agreement, which pertains to PEG access programming. Attorney O'Rourke highlighted some of the provisions including the 3 PEG channels, origination points, and PEG funding.

Jim Graham asked for clarification on how a Comcast franchise would work with the existing Metrocast system; are we looking to replace Metrocast or introduce competition? Attorney O'Rourke explained the nature of the Comcast "overbuild" as a separate system from the Metrocast system, including the fact that each cable system would be carrying the same content of the 3 PEG channels. There was also a brief discussion on unknowns as to how exactly the PEG channels get out to Comcast and how the 3rd channel in the Metrocast system, being a "local origination" channel with local regional content, would be handled.

The committee asked where things stood with Metrocast negotiations. Attorney O'Rourke stated negotiations were on hold due to the pending sale of Metrocast. The committee noted that it would be good for the residents to have a choice, but also discussed concerns regarding what would happen if Metrocast does not renew its contract with the city after December 2018. The committee was in agreement that there is an advantage to having a customer service center in Rochester, and that overall Metrocast has very good customer service. Councilor Willis stated he will bring concern regarding the customer service center location to the Public Hearing scheduled on 11/21.

Councilor Willis asked if this contract will be seeking approval from City Council soon. Attorney O'Rourke stated it was possible it could go before council within the next month. The Government Channel Coordinator stated that there were some concerns with the current proposal which still needed to be addressed; including local origination access points and system design, provisions for technologies available to commercial stations such as video on demand, itemized program guide, Government channels in the High Definition tier, and PEG grant money being passed to the cable subscriber. Councilor Willis stated he will bring the committees concerns to the public hearing on 11/21.

V. Other

Councilor Willis gave a brief update on the progress of the technology center and an approximate time line of construction. He stated that things are moving along quickly. The Government Channel Coordinator stated that she had been in touch with the school coordinator and they have been discussing possible scenarios of a shared space, and what shared equipment might meet both party's needs. The committee also discussed if PEG grant money could be used for any possible Public Access Studio. The Coordinator stated it could contribute, but would not cover the entire cost.

VI. Adjournment

Jim Graham **MOVED** to **ADJOURN** the meeting at 6:45 P.M. Tom Willis seconded the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED** by unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,
Celeste Plaia
Government Channel Coordinator