

**MUNICIPAL CABLE TV CONTRACT RENEWAL  
PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES  
January 10, 2008  
@ City Council chambers  
(2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 344 Broadway, Long Branch)**

The public hearing was called to order at 7PM.

1. Don Swanson introduced the members of the panel:

Don Swanson, co-chair  
Kevin Cieri, co-chair  
Robin Kampf, secretary  
Howie Marlin, vice-chair  
Robert Clifton, customer accounts manager, COMCAST

2. Co-Chairman Kevin Cieri read an opening statement for the audience, followed by an opening statement by Mr. Clifton from COMCAST, explaining the reason for COMCAST to renegotiate the existing contract with the city. Mr. Clifton explained to the attendees that the renewal is non-exclusionary, meaning that COMCAST would not have exclusive rights to provide cable service for the city.

3. Co-Chairman Cieri gave a briefing to the audience on the administration of the cable commission, channel 20 programming and community bulletin board system.

1. 4 hours a day of local programming
  - a. 3 hours of local concerts
  - b. 1 hour of Community Connections
2. 4-5 hours/day of taped programming
  - a. uploaded from the Princeton Server Group. PSG is accessible by the commission by virtue of its membership in the Jersey Access Group, a consortium of cable commissions throughout the state.
3. Community Bulletin Boards:
  - a. The bulletin board slides play throughout the day and promote city events as well as other community service events geared toward the common good of the viewing public.
    1. Monmouth Medical Center
    2. Shore Institute for the Contemporary Arts (SICA)

3. Long Branch Public School District
4. Church Groups
5. Non-profit and/or charitable organizations (i.e., IAMA, BPO Elks, etc.).

b. The community bulletin board system is also accessible to the city's Office of Emergency Management for immediate slide broadcasts to the residents of Long Branch in the event of a local emergency.

#### 4. Public Comment:

1. George Catrambone (assistant superintendent of schools) - presented the case for the public school district to have its own PEG (education) channel to originate in the High School. His sentiments were echoed by Long Branch school employees Norman Lundquist, Michael Salvatore, and Anne Degnan.
2. Harold Bobrow - spoke with regards to broadcasting city council meetings live over channel 20 and over the Internet. Also requested that COMCAST not be awarded a long-term contract, but a contract along the lines of 3-5 years.
3. Council member Brian Unger read a prepared statement stressing the need for government to remain open and transparent, and for the city to re-think its position on broadcasting city council meetings as well as other official city meetings. Mr. Unger also suggested that the city hire an attorney who specializes in communications law counsel for the city's negotiations with COMCAST. Mr. Unger also suggested that the cable commission have a website made available to the public, as well as a central e-mail address for residents to make comments regarding the operation of the channel 20. Finally, Mr. Unger proposed adding an additional \$15,000 from the city budget to support taping official meetings.
4. Kevin Brown reiterated the need for the city to tape official city meetings and suggested that he could provide the tapes that he takes at each council meeting and provide them to the cable commission for broadcast.
5. Leslie Hunt recommended that the city contract out to supply for the equipping of council chambers for the purpose of taping council

meetings.

6. Harold Cooper echoed the school district's feelings for the city to negotiate for an education channel in the high school. He also recommended that council meetings be taped. Finally, he posed a question to COMCAST with regards to interruptions that he personally experienced with his cable TV service.
  7. William Nordahl made reference to "Community Connections" and recommended that other Government officials have the ability to tape shows besides the mayor, and he also recommended that the city televise its council meetings.
  8. Michelle Bobrow also recommended that council meetings be taped, not only for openness and transparency, but in case there are residents who are unable to attend council meetings due to illness or prior commitments. Mrs. Bobrow also suggested continued coverage of local campaign and school board campaign debates, as well as videotaping events presented by the public library, the local arts groups, health programs from local hospitals, and education programs put on by the school district.
5. Public hearing was adjourned at 9:05pm.