



GREATER WEST BLOOMFIELD
**CABLE COMMUNICATIONS
COMMISSION**

KEEGO HARBOR • ORCHARD LAKE • SYLVAN LAKE • WEST BLOOMFIELD

MINUTES

September 14, 2023

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by the Chairperson, Jennifer Taylor Boykins, at 7:02PM at West Bloomfield Town Hall.

2. Roll Call

Members Present

Representing Orchard Lake:

Jackie Beach
Anne Dziuba

Representing Sylvan Lake:

Pat Riney
Phil Ross

Representing West Bloomfield:

Jennifer Boykins
Stuart Dorf
Harvey Gersin
Mark Kowalsky
Suzanne Levine
Deborah Macon

Others in Attendance

Dave Scott (General Manager, Civic Center TV/Lakes FM), David Albery (Executive Director, GWBCCC)

3. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Mr. Kowalsky, support from Ms. Levine:

“That the Greater West Bloomfield Cable Communications Commission approve the agenda as provided for the September 14, 2023 meeting.”

Voting YES: Beach, Boykins, Dorf, Dziuba, Gersin, Kowalsky, Levine, Macon, Riney, Ross
Voting NO:

The motion carried.

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4. Public Comment

The Chairperson stated that residents are provided an opportunity to address the Commission regarding cable-related issues at each meeting. Those unable to attend should contact the Commission at gwbcable.org.

No member of the public rose to address the Commission.

5. Approval of Minutes

Mrs. Dziuba provided two corrections to the Minutes of the August 1, 2023 meeting.

- the listing of absent commissioners should be deleted
- page 2, Item 6, New Business, Commission Reflection, second paragraph, second sentence should read “Mrs. Dziuba provided a written report focusing on the history of Civic Center TV and Lakes FM, priorities, and challenges.”

Motion by Mrs. Macon, support from Mr. Gersin:

“That the Minutes of the August 1, 2023 meeting, the September 5, 2023 joint meeting, and the September 11, 2023 joint meeting be approved as corrected.”

Voting YES: Beach, Boykins, Dorf, Dziuba, Gersin, Kowalsky, Levine, Macon, Riney, Ross
Voting NO:

The motion carried.

6. Acceptance of Financial Reports

The report for January through August 2023 and the report of second quarter cable operator payments were summarized by the Executive Director.

Motion by Mr. Ross, support from Mr. Dorf:

“That the Financial Reports be accepted.”

Voting YES: Beach, Boykins, Dorf, Dziuba, Gersin, Kowalsky, Levine, Macon, Riney, Ross
Voting NO:

The motion carried.

7. Committee Reports

The Chairperson stated that this portion of the agenda provides an opportunity for committees to report to the Commission.

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Report of the Finance Committee

Commissioners were provided a written report which was presented by Mr. Ross, the committee vice-chairperson.

Report of the Executive Committee

Commissioners were provided a written report which was presented by Ms. Boykins, the committee chairperson.

Report of the Community Programming Committee

Commissioners were provided a written report which was summarized by Mrs. Dziuba, the committee chairperson.

Report of the Commission Operations and Strategic Planning Committee

Commissioners were provided a written report which was summarized by Mr. Kowalsky, the committee chairperson.

Strategic Plan Implementation 2023

Commissioners were provided a written update regarding implementation of the Commission's strategic plan.

Motion by Mr. Kowalsky, support from Ms. Levine:

“That the Greater West Bloomfield Cable Communications Commission accept the reports of the Finance, Executive, Community Programming, and Commission Operations and Strategic Planning committees, as well as the strategic plan implementation update, and consider committee recommendations under New Business later in this meeting.”

Voting YES: Beach, Boykins, Dorf, Dziuba, Gersin, Kowalsky, Levine, Macon, Riney, Ross
Voting NO:

The motion carried.

8. Executive Director's Report

Civic Center TV/Lakes FM

Commissioners were provided a written report of programming cablecast on Civic Center TV in July, August, and early September.

Cable Operators

Commissioners were provided copies of a communication from Comcast regarding services provided to subscribers.

Report to the Four Communities

Commissioners were provided copies of the report provided to Keego Harbor, Orchard Lake, Sylvan Lake, and West Bloomfield.

Cable Industry News

6.2 percent of cable subscribers dropped their service in 2022, and the projected number for 2023 is 8.1 percent. 2015 was the peak year for pay TV subscribership, which has decreased every year since.

In June, 38 percent of all television viewing was via streaming, with 31 percent cable and 21 percent broadcast.

35 percent of streaming subscribers, three times as many as in 2019, believe they are overspending on services and intend to cut back. The primary reason for dissatisfaction is higher prices, and the industry is responding by offering bundles of multiple services for one price.

The churn rate (percentage of subscribers who cancel service) for streaming services is currently 47 percent, the primary reasons for cancellation being cost and completion of the viewing of a program which was the reason for the subscription.

Anna Gomez has been confirmed as the fifth member of the FCC, bringing the Commission to full strength for the first time in over two years. Observers expect the Democratic majority to initiate action on net neutrality and new regulations for broadcast television and streaming services to level the competitive field.

The Affordable Connectivity Program is now helping over 20 million households across the country by providing subsidies for internet service.

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Communication

Commissioners were provided copies of communications from the Commission's contractors indicating interest in continuing to provide services in 2024.

Commission Assistance to Residents

The Commission notified Comcast of a low-hanging cable on Green Road, and the cable was raised.

A West Bloomfield subscriber had his underground cable cut, and a Commission request for repair resulted in restoration of service.

A subscriber contacted the Commission regarding a billing issue, Comcast was notified, and a resolution was achieved.

Two subscribers were having intermittent service problems, and Comcast resolved both after a request from the Commission.

The Commission contacted AT&T regarding a pole leaning over the safety path on the north wide of Walnut Lake Road near Shenandoah, and the pole was set back to vertical.

Preview

The Executive Director presented his agenda for the time period between this meeting and the next.

Mrs. Macon suggested that the Commission and the Executive Director consider researching the eligibility standards for the Affordable Connectivity Program in order to identify those in the community who meet those standards and to publicize the availability of the program. That research could involve securing National School Lunch Program data from school districts and data regarding senior citizens from WB Parks. Mr. Gersin added that the ACP eligibility standards focus on household income and family size.

Mrs. Dziuba stated that she had a very positive experience with a customer service representative at the Xfinity Store on Telegraph in Bloomfield Township in assisting with a review of her account.

9. Unfinished Business

No items of Unfinished Business were presented.

10. New BusinessRecommendation of the Finance Committee – Adoption of 2024 GWBCCC Budget

The Chairperson presented the recommendation and noted that as a committee recommendation, a motion to approve does not require support.

“That the Greater West Bloomfield Cable Communications Commission adopt its 2024 budget as provided and recommend its approval by the four communities.”

The Executive Director noted the budget presentation document provided to commissioners and stated that it includes two references to the revised allocation of cable revenue that the Commission is recommending to the four communities. He also noted a background information document that will be added to the presentation for submission to the communities for approval.

Mr. Scott addressed the Commission regarding the background information document, focusing on funding, changes over the years in the availability of Civic Center TV programming, on-line audience metrics, and the impact of programming in the community. He added that archived programming over the last decade serves the communities as positive marketing content.

Mr. Kowalsky stated that the budget information provided, both in written and verbal form, is excellent.

At the request of the Executive Director, Mr. Scott spoke regarding anticipated capital expenditures for Civic Center TV and Lakes FM.

Mrs. Dziuba suggested that perhaps the budget presentation could include a video montage of CCT programming. She stated that the budget submission to each community should include the exact amount of the revised allocation, and Mrs. Macon added that the Commission should anticipate the questions and concerns that each governing body will raise regarding the budget, especially the revised allocation. Mr. Gersin stated that the revised allocation amount is included in the Commission’s financial reports.

Mrs. Dziuba asked whether the budget and the revised allocation will be presented as separate recommendations, and the Executive Director stated that the revision is part of the revenue component of the budget.

In response to a question from the Chairperson, Mrs. Macon mentioned the possibility of consulting with West Bloomfield Township Treasurer Teri Weingarden regarding the budget format used by the 48th District Court. She added that Mr. Scott’s presentation is a great comparison of budgeted funds and services provided over past several years.

Motion Mr. Ross:

“That the Greater West Bloomfield Cable Communications Commission adopt its 2024 budget as provided and recommend its approval by the four communities.”

Voting YES: Beach, Boykins, Dorf, Dziuba, Gersin, Kowalsky, Levine, Macon, Riney, Ross
Voting NO:

The motion carried.

11. Commissioner Comments

Mr. Dorf stated that the Finance Committee is working on the creation of a 501(c)(3) non-profit and suggested a joint meeting of the Finance and Community Programming committees to establish a collaboration to create programming which will assist in the fund-raising effort, to provide relevant programming which will attract community interest and support. He suggested research into the age demographics of the four communities, focusing on content which focuses on all facets of the community, including the schools and the business community, education, to encourage financial support of the Commission's efforts. He stated that the goal is programming which is new and innovative and speaks to the community. He stated that the Commission's committees work in silos and that not all commissioners are assigned to the committee that best utilizes their skills and experience. He suggested a re-evaluation of committee responsibilities and collaboration as well as committee assignments.

Mr. Ross stated that the long-term goal is for the Commission to be able to provide programming that supports the ability to raise the revenue it needs to operate. He also reminded commissioners that Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, starts on Friday.

Ms. Levine stated that Civic Center TV needs more stories and narratives about the community. She noted the Chamber of Commerce Leadership Breakfast at Wabeek on September 27, details available at the chamber web site. She also mentioned that Chamber Cup Challenge, a golf event involving the Lakes Area and Greater West Bloomfield chambers, on October 3.

Mrs. Macon thanked Trustee Jonathan Warshay for presenting the Cable Commission update at the September 11 West Bloomfield Township Board meeting and stated that she will present at the October 16 meeting.

She noted a container outside the east entrance of West Bloomfield Town Hall where Narcan is available for the public to take and administer in overdose situations.

She also noted information from FEMA regarding emergencies which had been provided to commissioners and reported that the West Bloomfield Fire Department Open House will take place at Fire Station #1 on Sunday, October 1.

Mrs. Dziuba suggested that those in attendance supporting the presentation of the Commission's 2024 budget to the four communities should include commissioners and Commission partners. The Chairperson stated that each commissioner can be sharing information with elected officials and community partners.

Ms. Boykins stated her support for collaboration among committees as outlined by Mr. Dorf, and Mrs. Macon stated that one way to achieve that collaboration is for the Executive Committee to schedule "committee of the whole" meetings involving all commissioners.

12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by the Chairperson at 8:17PM.

The next meeting of the Greater West Bloomfield Cable Communications Commission is **THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2023, at 7:00PM at WEST BLOOMFIELD TOWN HALL, 4550 Walnut Lake Road, West Bloomfield, Michigan.**