



GREATER WEST BLOOMFIELD CABLE COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

KEEGO HARBOR • ORCHARD LAKE • SYLVAN LAKE • WEST BLOOMFIELD

MINUTES

September 12, 2024

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by the Chairperson, Jennifer Taylor Boykins, at 7:00PM at West Bloomfield Town Hall.

2. Roll Call

Members Present

Representing Keego Harbor

Ronnie Dahl

Joel Ross

Representing Orchard Lake:

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

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

3. Approval of Agenda

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

“That the Greater West Bloomfield Cable Communications Commission approve the agenda as provided for the September 12, 2024 meeting.”

Voting YES: Boykins, Dahl, Dorf, Dziuba, Gersin, Kowalsky, Levine, Macon, Riney, Joel Ross,
Phil Ross

Voting NO:

The motion was approved.

4. Public Comment

Earnestina Moore introduced herself and stated that she is a candidate for the West Bloomfield School District Board of Education on the November 5 ballot.

The Chairperson thanked Ms. Moore for her comments and stated that those who could not attend can communicate with the Commission through the Comments tab at GWBCABLE.ORG.

5. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Mr. Gersin, support from Mr. Kowalsky:

“That the Minutes of the August 8, 2024 meeting, the September 3, 2024 joint meeting, and the September 9, 2024 joint meeting be approved as presented.”

Voting YES: Boykins, Dahl, Dorf, Dziuba, Gersin, Kowalsky, Levine, Macon, Riney, Joel Ross,
Phil Ross

Voting NO:

The motion was approved.

6. Acceptance of Financial Reports

The reports of expenditures through August 31 and revenue for the second quarter of 2024 were summarized by the Executive Director.

In response to questions from Ms. Dahl, the Executive Director stated that the line item “Services and Supplies” includes security, custodial, and pest control. He added that “Capital Equipment” and “Replacement Equipment” are line items suggested by the West Bloomfield Township Finance Department and that equipment purchases are budgeted and approved by him as Executive Director.

Motion by Phil Ross, support from Mr. Dorf:

“That the Financial Reports be accepted.”

Voting YES: Boykins, Dahl, Dorf, Dziuba, Gersin, Kowalsky, Levine, Macon, Riney, Joel Ross,
Phil Ross

Voting NO:

The motion was approved.

7. Committee Reports

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

Report of the Finance Committee

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

In response to a question from Mrs. Macon regarding the committee's budget deliberations, Phil Ross stated that the committee is recommending the same additional funding from the communities as last year (.5% of gross revenue). Mrs. Macon suggested that discussions should take place with the communities to explain the budget in advance of their consideration of its approval, and Mr. Ross agreed that such discussion should take place.

Ms. Dahl stated that the Finance Committee should meet more frequently to work on revenue generation by the tax-exempt non-profit organization. Mr. Ross stated that the committee has always scheduled its meetings quarterly, meeting more often as necessary, and added that the establishment of the tax-exempt non-profit is progressing through the work of counsel from Secrest Wardle. Ms. Dahl suggested that the committee meet more often and stated that the Commission is asking the communities for additional funding without doing the work necessary to support that request.

In response to a question from the Chairperson, the Executive Director stated that the budget will first be presented to the West Bloomfield Township Board for consideration on October 7.

In response to a question from Mr. Kowalsky, the Executive Director stated that the budget document provided to commissioners for consideration, if adopted, will be the presentation provided to the four communities. The Chairperson stated that perhaps the presentation to the communities should include more than the document provided to the Commission.

Joel Ross stated that it will be difficult to achieve approval of the budget by the four communities if some line items show an increase year-to-year. Phil Ross stated that cost increases are based on cost-of-living for the programming contractor's employees. Mr. Kowalsky noted that the total budget is 2.26 percent lower than 2024, and the communities are being asked for less support than last year.

Report of the Community Programming Committee

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

Mrs. Macon stated that the Request for Proposals for Programming Services does not include the programming contractor's contribution to community events like Michigan Week, and Mrs. Dziuba stated that the committee will consider adding those contributions to the RFP. Mrs. Dziuba added that she and the Executive Director are continuing to revise the RFP document, incorporating substantial language from the West Bloomfield Township template.

Ms. Dahl noted the value of local community and the value of good television and stated that

there is nothing compelling or good about an event where attendees are sitting and eating. She added that the Commission should revisit how the Michigan Week Awards are covered. She stated that she gets nothing out of seeing volunteers be recognized for their efforts and that effort should be made to highlight the volunteers and their stories in another way.

Joel Ross stated that the Commission's programming services provider is a for-profit company and that the allocation of resources to cover an event like Michigan Week means that fewer resources are being allocated elsewhere. He added that the provider's contributions to the event are not due to good will but to business interests.

The Chairperson thanked Mrs. Dziuba and the Executive Director for their work on the RFP.

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 2024

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

Motion by Mr. Dorf, support from Joel Ross:

“That the Greater West Bloomfield Cable Communications Commission accept the reports of the Finance, 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: Boykins, Dahl, Dorf, Dziuba, Gersin, Kowalsky, Levine, Macon, Riney, Joel Ross,
Phil Ross

Voting NO:

The motion was approved.

8. Executive Director's Report

Civic Center TV/Lakes FM

Commissioners were provided a written report of programming cablecast on Civic Center TV in August.

Mr. Scott addressed the Commission regarding the operation of CCT and Lakes FM, focusing on social media boosting and metrics, as well as health problems being experienced by CCT Associate General Manager Tyler Kieft. He noted that in a communication to the Commission in June, he offered to renegotiate the Commission's agreement with his company, Michigan

Digital, reducing the annual compensation for 2025 by fifteen percent.

Cable Operators

No communication was received from Comcast or AT&T.

Report to the Four Communities

Members were provided copies of the report for January through June 2024 submitted to Keego Harbor, Orchard Lake, Sylvan Lake, and West Bloomfield.

Cable Industry News

The number of pay TV subscribers in the US is still decreasing significantly, although at a slower rate. The first quarter of 2024 was the worst quarter ever for the industry, and the second quarter was not quite as bad. An industry analyst stated that there is no limit to how far those losses can go.

Streaming services provided more news and sports than ever in the second quarter, an area in which broadcast and cable TV have traditionally had a big advantage.

Communication

No communication was received.

Commission Assistance to Residents

At the request of the Commission, Comcast sent a technician to troubleshoot the loss of internet service by a Sylvan Lake resident following the late August storm. Service was restored by replacing the subscriber's modem and router with Comcast equipment.

Comcast removed a residential drop at a residence in Sylvan Lake after a Commission request on behalf of the homeowner.

The Commission was involved in the repair of damage to a West Bloomfield home caused by a Comcast subcontractor.

Preview

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

next.

Mrs. Macon stated that Mr. Scott's offer to discuss the compensation for the programming provider means that the budget should be revised by the Finance Committee before consideration by the Commission and the communities, starting on October 7. Mr. Kowalsky noted that Mr. Scott's offer to discussion reduced compensation was provided to the Commission in July, and Ms. Dahl stated her understanding that the offer was contingent on the Commission deciding not to issue a Request for Proposals for Programming Services.

9. Unfinished Business

No items of Unfinished Business were presented.

10. New Business

Recommendation of the Finance Committee – 2025 GWBCCC Budget

Motion by Phil Ross:

“That the Greater West Bloomfield Cable Communications Commission adopt its 2025 budget as presented by the Finance Committee and recommend its approval by the four communities.”

Voting YES: Boykins, Dorf, Dziuba, Gersin, Kowalsky, Levine, Macon, Riney, Phil Ross

Voting NO: Dahl, Joel Ross

The motion was approved.

Commissioners discussed Mr. Scott's offer regarding reduced compensation, the reasons for issuing the RFP, and the advantages of revising the budget to reflect reduced programing costs. Mr. Scott stated that his offer is not related to the RFP process and that presenting a reduced budget to the communities would be advantageous to the Commission.

Mr. Kowalsky suggested that in light of the new information regarding programming costs, the Finance Committee meet to revise the budget for adoption by the Commission and approval by the communities.

Motion Mr. Kowalsky, support from Mrs. Macon:

“That the Greater West Bloomfield Cable Communications Commission rescind its adoption of the 2025 budget, refer the budget back to the Finance Committee to discuss Mr. Scott's offer, and consider a possible revised budget on an expedited basis.”

Voting YES: Boykins, Dorf, Dziuba, Gersin, Kowalsky, Levine, Macon, Riney, Joel Ross,
Phil Ross

Voting NO: Dahl

The motion was approved.

Discussion focused on the scheduling of meetings of the committee and the Commission.

Ms. Dahl stated that the Commission is dragging out the RFP process.

Recommendation of the Commission Operations and Strategic Planning Committee –
Revision of GWBCCC Protocols

Motion by Mark Kowalsky:

“That the Greater West Bloomfield Cable Communications Commission revise Section D. 2) of its protocols as recommended by the Commission Operations and Strategic Planning Committee.”

The Chairperson noted that a motion to approve a committee recommendation does not require support.

Mrs. Macon noted her vote against this recommendation at the committee level and stated that she will be voting in support this evening. She added that the revision being recommended reflects current practice and suggested that all current practices be documented, including protocols currently being observed, and that protocols which align with current priorities be documented. She added that the behavior of commissioners should be changed to align with the protocols in place, specifically regarding the relationships between commissioners and the governing bodies which appointed them. She stated that these revisions are the start of an excellent process.

Voting YES: Boykins, Dahl, Dorf, Dziuba, Gersin, Kowalsky, Levine, Macon, Riney, Joel Ross,
Phil Ross

Voting NO:

The motion was approved.

11. Commissioner Comments

Mrs. Macon reported that the West Bloomfield Township Public Library will hold an open house on September 21 and noted the Library millage on the November ballot.

Ms. Dahl commended Mrs. Dziuba for her work on the RFP and added that the Commission is dragging its feet in the process, that in the business world moving slowly is not acceptable and should not be acceptable to the Commission. The creation of the tax-exempt non-profit organization has been on the agenda for too long, and commissioners have a responsibility to carefully review how every dollar is being spent because every dollar matters. All reports from contractors should be included in the meeting minutes. The Commission's stated commitment to open and transparent government is not true, and every dollar spent and every decision made should be posted on the Commission's web site. She noted that Michigan ranks very low among states in open and transparent government and stated that the Commission is not transparent. She stated that she does not care about the budget or financial reports and that every invoice

should be posted for the public to review along with a complete inventory of all equipment at Green Media Center to support the Commission's annual budget submission.

She added that the Commission has a golden opportunity to provide local news and develop the next generation of journalists.

The Chairperson thanked Ms. Dahl for her comments.

Mr. Kowalsky asked whether the City of Keego Harbor posts all invoices on its web site. Ms. Dahl responded that she is a candidate for City Council on the November ballot and that while the city does not post all invoices, more and more communities across the country are starting to do so. She stated that as a current member of the Cable Commission, she is starting by suggesting that the Commission post the information.

Joel Ross stated his hope that all commissioners take the RFP process seriously and objectively review all responses.

Mrs. Dziuba stated that the monthly Commission financial report includes the budget and funds expended each month and year-to-date.

12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by the Chairperson at 8:32PM.

The next meeting of the Greater West Bloomfield Cable Communications Commission is **THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2024, at 7:00PM at WEST BLOOMFIELD TOWN HALL, 4550 Walnut Lake Road, West Bloomfield, Michigan.**