

URBANA PUBLIC TELEVISION COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

Date: March 9, 2018

Place: Urbana City Council Chambers
400 S. Vine Street, Urbana, IL

Members Present: Peter Folk; Carol Inskeep; Andrew Wadsworth; Dale Sinder; Chris Fuller

Staff Present: Jason Liggett; Jake Schumacher; Sanford Hess

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Folk called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm.

II. ROLL CALL

Attendance was noted. A quorum was present. Commissioner Polk notified the Clerk that she is travelling and might not make it to the meeting.

III. MODIFICATIONS TO AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as it stood.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the September 8, 2017 meeting were unanimously approved.

V. CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to the Commission the past two quarters.

VI. STAFF REPORT

Jake thanked the City staff (especially Jason), UPTV Commissioners and volunteers for their well wishes and support during his recent recuperation. He included a recent interview by Joey Wright of Jason in the Commission's packets.

Jason's e-mail of December 7 acted as UPTV's annual report for the year, highlighting activities and achievements. The annual membership meeting was cancelled and there has been some talk of holding one in July.

During the past six months programs have been produced by UPTV members including Linda Turnbull (C-U Day events), Lardell

Williams (The Spirit Man), Joseph Wilson (Ignite), Stuart Levy and Karen Aram (Boycott Divest Sanction; Worshiping Power; and The Role of Women in Stopping Nuclear War, a panel hosted by State Representative Carol Ammons), and Reed Baker and Lia Shoop (God's Word to Feed Your Soul Ministry). The Reverend E.V. Davis has returned with Saving Souls and Making Disciples, and Carletta Donaldson has resumed her valuable weekly recording of the University Y Friday Forum.

We hope to welcome back Renee Angelah (Health and Soulfull Being) in April.

Staff productions, with the participation of production intern Andrew Scolari, included: a variety of performances from the Sweetcorn Festival of 2017; the CU Pride Parade; a presentation by popular author Maggie Stiefvater at the Urbana Free Library, the Illinois Bicentennial Flag Raising Ceremony, the Airport Road ribbon-cutting ceremony, and Urbana Innovation (a Business and Development luncheon).

Jake read this note from Jason about some short features he has produced:

Many short features have come and gone in the last 4 ½ months, but I did just produce a feature on the Murals on Glass artists at the City building and Phillips Rec Center. I re-produced the features on Phil Edwards and Rhonda Foster so they aren't advertising an opening in the Fire Department, but just informing the viewers about the great people we have working in Urbana. I continue to cut up It's All About U segments. It's on my list to produce some new station IDs.

We entered 3 productions into this year's Best of the Midwest Regional fest:

Jacob Bernard - WEFT Sessions - Los Guapos -
(<https://youtu.be/eJgXMYsy4V4>)
Joey Wright / UHS Broadcasting - UHS Fall Sports Preview 2017 -
(<https://youtu.be/cgNXHOXrjcm>)
Jason Liggett - Urbana Fire Department Recruitment Video -
(<https://youtu.be/2QR9JVlQXHc>)

The latter was also entered into the national ACM Hometown Media Awards competition.

Jason will be traveling to the Wisconsin Community Media Spring Conference May 10th and 11th, in Oshkosh WI. In addition to attending the conference, he has been asked to be a presenter during a workshop on creating school-based media programs.

People are increasingly seeing UPTV as a community resource that they can utilize in their own missions:

--Jason is working with the University YMCA to help produce videos for their Leadership Awards Ceremony, after they contacted UPTV.

--Hannah Sheets and Eric Enger of Community Choices asked to meet with us to help develop TV programs for developmentally-challenged adults.

--The IL Campaign for Political Reform contacted UPTV and have provided us with two long-form programs from their 2017 Summit for Action and Civic Reform, one on the 2018 Illinois elections and one on Running for Office at the Grassroots Level.

--Also, after Comcast cut the weatherscan channel from their lineup in October, Jason received some feedback from viewers, so he tried to help fill that void with scheduled weather coverage, along with some national news, from 4 to 5 am weekdays and Ten Pm on Mondays. This is in addition to our frequent weather, news and sports breaks throughout every day.

Jason also has produced a couple of troubleshooting guides for viewers having issues with our livestream, which are now available on the City's website as well as on urbanapublictelevision.org.

Representatives of the Parkland and Champaign stations came to UPTV to join Jason for a webinar on new regulations concerning closed captioning from the ACM. (The upshot is that UPTV is not mandated to include CC at this point.)

We will be recording and rebroadcasting several times an Urbana City Administrator candidate forum to be held March 20.

We have just finished revising the UPTV underwriting brochure to be evergreen, it should go to the printer soon and to potential underwriters soon thereafter. We continue to solicit underwriting contacts and leads from the UPTV Commissioners.

Thanks to Dana Mancuso for nineteen years of service to UPTV as a Commissioner. Mark Schultz has replaced Dana in her position at the UPD and a new UPD program is in the works.

Jason reported on upcoming Urbana school sports broadcasts, as well as the commencements at the various schools.

Jason reported on UPTV's social media for the quarter:

--the most popular tweet was about a UHS basketball live-streamed broadcast;

--the most popular Facebook post was a video clip from It's All About U concerning the Vineyard Church, site of the MLK Celebration this year;

--the most popular YouTube video was the championship game from the 8th Grade basketball tournament.

A clips reel of highlights from the last quarter was shown.

VII. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

There was none.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. Viewer Complaint and Proposed Action

A viewer complained about a program in the "9/11 TV" series sponsored by one of our members. The program has been reviewed by City staff, and the contents seem to fall squarely within UPTV's free speech guidelines. Jason wrote a response to the viewer, Mr. Alsop, and although he replied briefly to Jason, we have had no further contact from him. There has been proposed a new policy requiring an on-screen identification around the program of the sponsoring member by name. This information has always been available to the public simply by contacting UPTV, but the on-screen identification would make it even clearer that the program is sponsored by a citizen member and not endorsed by the City of Urbana (although the program in question did already have such disclaimers that aired both before and after the program).

Chair Folk asked if the information about who sponsors a program is FOIA-able, and Jake replied that he assumed it was. Sanford asked if a member signed a document pertaining to the particular program sponsored; UPTV originally had a paper form for each program, but now the signed membership agreement to abide by the Policies and Procedures has replaced that. Sanford commented that we should be pro-active about letting prospective members know that their names will be shown on screen, were UPTV to take this proposed action. Jake agreed, saying that the Policies and Procedures would need to be amended yet again, and although he had not spoken to Legal yet, he assumed that all members would again need to re-sign a new document acknowledging the new policy.

Sanford clarified that this suggestion came from the Mayor. Her analogy was the letter to the editor in the newspaper.

Chair Folk said he understood the point, and that he was not particularly opposed to the concept, but he also wanted to recognize the value that the nation has put on anonymous free speech over the years.

Sanford stated he thought there was a difference between member-produced and member-sponsored content, and that this proposed action would only apply to the latter.

Commissioner Inskeep said she thought it was a good idea. She has at times when watching a program on UPTV wondered what member of the community had brought it forward. She thinks the proposed action walks a nice line, not restricting or censoring free speech, but asking people who use the resource to come forward by name.

Chair Folk asked if Legal had reviewed the proposal. Jake said he had wanted to consult with the Commission before proceeding. Sanford added that Legal had been involved, but only with evaluating the initial complaint. Chair Folk said that there are interactions that citizens have with their government that are not part of the public record. He said he would be in favor of a resolution supporting the on-screen before and after broadcast of a sponsor's name if that was already public information susceptible to FOIA. Jake said he could pursue with the Alliance of Community Media to what extent that member sponsorship was public information or whether it was confidential. Commissioner Inskeep also mentioned asking Legal about this particular issue. It was decided to table the issue until the next meeting. Commissioner Sinder asked if this were an entire series to which the complaint pertained or just an episode. Jake explained that the series in question was an umbrella title that comprised a number of programs from a variety of producers, and that in airing over 200 different weekly episodes of the series, this was the first one to draw a complaint.

B. Assumption of Some Cable Commission Duties

Jake reported that during his absence the Cable Commission was decommissioned by the City Councils of Urbana and Champaign. Nine duties were specified as ones that could be added to the UPTV Commission's duties. Sanford elaborated on the reasons: the language of the UPTV Commission's charge needed updating in other areas to reflect the absence of the Cable Commission, and the City Council had expressed some concern about some duties formerly handled by the Cable Commission going undone. In response, Sanford and Jason (as Acting Station Manager) selected nine duties from the extensive list of Cable Commission responsibilities which the UPTV Commission might be interested in assuming.

Jake suggested that the Commission might consider striking the language requiring annual hourly counts of programming by type in the annual UPTV report, as the compilation of that data was extremely onerous and those numbers little used. He suggested also that figures on the on-demand use of UPTV programs might provide more usable information given the direction of viewership

habit. Chair Folk asked about the dissemination of the annual report. Jake replied that while he was recuperating Jason sent a comprehensive email that served as the annual report, in that it detailed UPTV's activities during the previous year and plans for the upcoming year. Chair Folk asked if Jake was comfortable with the amount of work needed to produce a report like that, and Jake responded that he thought it was essential to evaluate and reflect upon the work UPTV has done each year, and to explore the possibilities for the year to come. He believes that the wording used for that Commission duty is the only place that the format of the annual UPTV report is so specified, and that striking the wording would thus provide staff more leeway to develop a more useful format for future annual reports.

Sanford asked on a more general level how the UPTV Commission felt about the overall charge of providing the City Council with advice, guidance and expertise on telecommunication issues, which had been seen (along with oversight of the cable operators) as a primary function of the Cable Commission. Commissioner Sinder said that since there had been considerable overlap in the two Commissions, and that the Cable Commission had had considerable difficulty in fulfilling those functions, he wondered if the UPTV Commission might not face similar difficulties. As the UPTV Commission is currently composed, he feels, there is a shortage of expertise and time with regard to fulfilling that requirement.

Chair Folk asked about what staff had presented to the Council as options. Sanford said there were three: to dissolve the Cable Commission, to retain the Cable Commission, or to dissolve the Cable Commission but explore moving some of the duties of that Commission to the UPTV Commission, and that the Council had chosen the third option. The question arose as to whether those responsibilities needed to be addressed on a proactive basis, or whether they should be in response to Council requests for information. Chair Folk wondered about the staff burden in maintaining these duties. He said that he did not feel comfortable responding just "yes" or "no" to adding these nine duties to the UPTV Commission. Jake suggested he come up with some suggestions for an approach to the suggested duties that would not result in the Commission losing its focus on UPTV in particular. Interest or expertise in general telecommunications issues has never been expected or required for citizens who may wish to serve on the UPTV Commission, and it seems that some of the suggested additional duties presume an expertise that Jake, at least, does not possess, and possibly some of the Commissioners as well.

Sanford thought that a dialogue with some of the Council members concerning their needs and expectations on these issues would be valuable, and concurred concerning not wanting to change the main focus of the UPTV Commission. Chair Folk said that tabling the issue would provide an opportunity for himself and other

Commissioners to pursue dialogue with both Council members and community members. He thought the approaching the Committee of the Whole should wait until after the Commission's next meeting, so the topic was tabled until then.

C. Open UPD Seat on Commission

Mark Schultz needs to apply for the position, with the UPD's blessing, and then wait for his approval by the City Council.

D. Equipment purchases

A mobile podium was purchased during the previous quarter for use by multiple City functions involving UPTV coverage, and a DSLR camera was acquired to replace the 2009 Pentax. Chair Folk asked about how the DSLR was used; Jason responded that it was shared by a number of City staff, and that he planned to investigate its use for video purposes. Chair Folk asked whether the DSLR was available for member use, and Jason replied it was not: he roughly allocates equipment between public, education and governmental access use, to alleviate scheduling conflicts. Chair Folk suggested seeing if there is member interest in UPTV acquiring a DSLR camera for public use. Jason agreed, and noted that the Media Commons at the University had professional-quality equipment for check-out use by anyone affiliated with the school.

X. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Chair Folk expressed appreciation for the staff work on the Cable Commission matters.

XI. SET THE NEXT MEETING DATE AND ADJOURNMENT

The next regular meeting was announced for June 8, 2018 at 12 noon in the Urbana City Council Chambers. The meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote at 12:59 pm.