



Hudson Community Television Advisory Committee

Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: September 15, 2016

Meeting Location: HCTV Studios, Hudson High School.

In attendance: Don Drenski, John Funyak, Jeff Russell, A.J. Stokes, Thor Wasbotten and Nick Zaklanovich.
Ex Officio: Kerry Paluscsak and Barbara VanBlarcum, Dr. Dan Williams – Council Liaison.

Not in attendance: Michael Coburn.

Committee chair Nick Zaklanovich called the meeting to order at 6:35 P.M. Nick also took notes.

I. Greeting of members and guests

Nick greeted all in attendance. Guests included Mr. Frank Comeriato, Hudson Assistant City Manager for Operations, Mr. Kevin Powell, Hudson Assistant Public Works Manger – Utilities and Mr. Dan Gerbracht, HCTV Station Engineer.

II. Discussion with Mr. Frank Comeriato & Mr. Kevin Powell

Mr. Comeriato and Mr. Powell spoke with the committee about current and future concerns regarding funding for HCTV operations.

Mr. Comeriato explained his & Mr. Powell's background and explained why he had asked to meet with the committee. He mentioned that he had met with Station Manager Kerry Paluscsak and City Manager Jane Howington to discuss the items that he was about to present to the committee members.

The most pressing problem relates to replacement of the modulation equipment that connects HCTV to Time-Warner Cable. The HCTV signal has been severely distorted for several months due to component failures in the existing Time-Warner modulation equipment. Time-Warner claims that HCTV and the City of Hudson are responsible for the cost of replacement modulation equipment. Replacement would eliminate the current signal distortion problem with the HCTV signal that is present on Time-Warner cable. There is not a distortion problem with the on line access to the HCTV signal, only the signal that is sent out via cable TV to customers of Time-Warner Cable is impacted.

II. Discussion with Mr. Frank Comeriato & Mr. Kevin Powell, continued

Mr. Comeriato explained that some funds have been made available by the City to upgrade the modulation equipment for one of the HCTV channels. Following that, Time-Warner has said that upgrading only one channel is not an option and that the modulation equipment for all HCTV channels must be upgraded at the same time.

Mr. Comeriato explained that when looking at the incoming revenue from franchise fees and the expenditures, there are no funds left for capital equipment purchases. While previous large cost equipment functions have been funded in the recent past by an advance provided by City Council, Mr. Comeriato would prefer not to depend on funding capital equipment in that way.

He noted that the actual yearly contributions to the station far exceeds the contribution income estimate that is included in the station budget, which is a pattern that is a very good pattern that we all would like to see grow even more in the future. However, the operating costs of the station, into the future, when matched to declining future cable franchise revenues is a concern.

Mr. Comeriato's second point was the cost of producing programming for the station. While he did acknowledge that the HCTV sports productions do look first rate, the costs to produce sports programming for the station is a concern. The coverage of the government meeting coverage is also a cost concern.

He indicated that the City has submitted a grant request to the Burton D. Morgan Foundation to help in funding the cost of the modulation equipment upgrade. Mr. Comeriato said that more support like a Morgan Foundation grant is needed in the future and asked that if any committee members know of any similar sources that they be brought to the attention of the City. The City now has a designated person that will do the preliminary work in applying for grants, but suggestions are needed in regards to sources of grant funds for the station.

Looking forward, HCTV needs to plan for capital outlays for the next five years. Rapid advances in technology may make that capital equipment plan difficult to generate, but Kerry was asked to start working on a plan. Mr. Comeriato asked the committee members for their suggestions in regards to capital equipment needs for the station. The City is willing to invest in equipment that will improve station operations, but the administration does not want to invest in equipment that will not be used for a good amount of time, because of what the industry is doing.

Mr. Comeriato mentioned that the administration would like to see more volunteer and student volunteer involvement with the station. The City has been in touch with School Superintendent Phil Herman to get his input into getting students involved with the station, particularly considering that the station is located inside of the high school. Mr. Comeriato has asked Kerry to start working on getting more student and volunteer involvement, that would in turn free up staff for other tasks at the station and reduce costs.

The success of the City's Velocity Broadband internet service initiative may be directly tied to the continued growth of HCTV. As the City builds out the new system, they are keeping an eye towards residential participation in the program, simply because the fiber communication backbone will already be available from the service that will be provided to businesses. Mr. Comeriato suggested that City Council might want to move forward more quickly with providing Velocity service to residences, since the hardware is already in place.

II. Discussion with Mr. Frank Comeriato & Mr. Kevin Powell, continued

He also said that City Attorney Todd Hunt recently submitted a memo stating that any form of direct paid advertising on HCTV is not allowed, per the Ohio Revised Code. However, underwriting of productions for promotion is allowed and City Staff may be able to help in soliciting underwriting opportunities from community businesses.

The new Economic Development Director, Mr. James Stifler, has said that perhaps a simple “reach out” to the business people in town, people who have both businesses in town and in other cities, may be all that is needed to get support.

In summary, Mr. Comeriato said that he would like the committee to try to look forward and plan for technology developments that may be coming in the next five years. He is also interested in the committee’s help with a cross-training program, personnel team building and succession planning. Generating interest in student involvement is also something that the committee should be promoting as best they can.

All of the City operations are being analyzed in a refined way, with an eye towards making some adjustments in the cost of programming that could result in improvements and cost savings. For instance, sports programming does consume a large part of the HCTV budget. There may be opportunities to reduce the cost of sports programming to free up budget funds for other station endeavors.

Mr. Comeriato said that he would shortly generate a summary of the discussions that took place during this meeting, and would provide that summary to the committee members. He said that he was aware that a lot of information had been discerned during the meeting and the summary that he will provide will give the members reference for the points that were covered.

During time for questions, Jeff Russell asked Mr. Comeriato if he received our committee minutes. He responded that he had access to the minutes via the City web site, but he said that he had not looked at the archived committee minutes.

Thor Wasbotten asked if Council would be receptive to the committee meeting with Council members to come up with a plan to underwrite programming in general and sports programming in particular. Dr. Williams responded that he personally felt that Council would be supportive of such an action. Dr. Williams said that Council does have concerns over funding for the station, as no General Fund resources are currently going to HCTV. The five-year projections for the franchise fees that fund the station look to be steadily declining.

Thor asked if there would be any problem if the committee were to contact businesses that have already been contacted about the City’s Velocity Broadband initiative. Dr. Williams said that he saw no problem with that initiative. Mr. Comeriato added that the Friends of Hudson Community Television non-profit group would be a perfect way to engage Hudson businesses in underwriting plans.

Thor asked if there were any resources available that could research what other Public Access communities have done to fund their stations through underwriting. Mr. Comeriato noted Thor’s question and said that he would try to find out information on what other Public Access operations have done in regards to underwriting.

II. Discussion with Mr. Frank Comeriato & Mr. Kevin Powell, continued

John Funyak asked if the station could solicit companies in town to create programming about them in return for the companies underwriting HCTV productions. Don Drenski mentioned that we had tried such a plan a few years ago with the idea of "Business Link", but that idea never got off the talking stage due to lack of support from the Chamber of Commerce and the City.

Thor added that he liked the idea of creating productions, but thought that we should have research in place before we proceed, just to be sure that all of the efforts would comply with state law. Kerry added that the station needs to conform to the "PBS Thank You" model at the beginning or end of a program. Kerry said that carrying programs further as suggested should probably be handled through the Chamber of Commerce and / or the Economic Development Office of the City.

Jeff said that all PBS radio and television operations have "media kits" that spell out the details of underwriting programming on the associated stations. He suggested that HCTV should have such a "kit" available before diving into the underwriting effort. Mr. Comeriato said that someone from the City could find that information and provide it to the station and the committee.

Thor added that such an effort would be for incremental funding, not funding for the entire operation.

Don asked about the expansion of the Velocity Broadband service to residents. Mr. Comeriato said that businesses were the focus of the Broadband effort, with residences as a possible addition to the system, after the business community was fully served. Before crossing over to residences, City Council is funding a feasibility study to see if that effort would be advisable. If the study proves positive, residential service may come in the future, but may not be economically favorable to residents, at least initially. Dr. Williams said that Council will be looking at the Broadband system closely to try to make it available to as wide a market as possible.

Dr. Williams asked about the three HCTV channels and the costs of upgrading the modulation equipment for each or all of the channels. Kerry responded that the initial channel upgrade would cost \$6,000, only due to a lower quote that was received from Time-Warner initially. The two additional channel modulators would cost \$8,600 each to upgrade or \$23,200 to upgrade all three HCTV channels.

Barb VanBlarcum asked about the amount that has already been invested in changing over to high-definition playback capabilities. Kerry said that about \$40,000 has been spent to the high definition conversion effort.

Thor asked if there was any viewership information for each channel. Kerry said that the subscriber number (5,293) is all that is available for Time-Warner, but not individual channel viewing information. Dr. Williams asked if losing one channel would cut into that subscriber number.

Thor commented that it would not be the destination that would be the target, but the content that is being provided and if that content would be driving viewership and the subscribership number. He added that ideally, you never want to give up real estate and cutting back to two HCTV channels would most likely mean that the third channel would never come back.

Thor added that with the changes in broadcast, cable and internet television viewing technology and viewer habits, would it be considered less of a service if HCTV would offer fewer channels. Thor said that that thought should drive whatever decision is made for the future upgrade of the cable signal service.

II. Discussion with Mr. Frank Comeriato & Mr. Kevin Powell, continued

Mr. Comeriato said that the initial discussion that he had with Kerry about the modulator distortion problem on Time-Warner Cable was that all of the current HCTV programming could be presented on one channel, if we really had to. Of course, only having one channel would greatly restrict the variety and repeatability of the available programming, government meetings and bulletin board information.

Barb said that if all of the HCTV programming was only on one channel, serious decisions would have to be made in regards to scheduling programming around that one channel restriction and feedback from the community would probably be needed in planning such a restrictive schedule.

Kerry added that it would be possible to maintain the current programming that is seen on the Public Access channel, and then supplement that programming with the government meetings, shortly after they occur. His thought was that since the meetings are streamed live via the Internet and are available on demand on line, perhaps a restricted play on a single HCTV channel may be sufficient.

Kerry did say that the volume of information that is available on the Bulletin Board channel probably dictates that it continues to have its own channel. An equipment upgrade savings of \$9,000 could be realized if one HCTV channel was sacrificed, and any future upgrade equipment cost would be reduced if less than three channels are being used by HCTV.

Dr. Williams asked Mr. Comeriato what he would like from the committee as a result of the above listed discussions.

Mr. Comeriato said that his intention for this meeting was to present the issues to the committee and give the members time to think about them. He said that he would provide a question-and-answer type of summary that would allow the members to comment on each discussed issue. With the comments returned from the committee members, a consensus can then be generated. He stated that he would submit the summary to the members in a week's time following the meeting.

At this point, the cost allocation for the upgrade of one channel's modulation unit is set by the City. It is reasonable to believe that a grant will be approved that would cover the costs of a second channel's modulator upgrade before the end of the year. The third channel modulator upgrade is "out in space".

John asked about the time line that is required to make a decision on the modulation equipment upgrades. Mr. Comeriato responded that his feeling was that Time-Warner would want to do upgrade at least two HCTV channels initially. However, he is concerned that the expiration date on the quote from TWC was coming up quickly (October 8) and extending beyond that may result in the loss of the previous quoted prices and a possible increase in the upgrade costs.

Mr. Comeriato asked what would happen if HCTV would just stop using a channel. Kerry responded that TWC would be contacted to notify them of the change and TWC would probably allocate the unused channel to some other signal/service. Mr. Comeriato asked if HCTV pays to use the three channels on TWC. Kerry said that no charge is currently in place, but that may change after Charter Communications takes over TWC after the first of the year, 2017. The station's current arrangements are grandfathered in with Charter Communications and should not be affected by the Charter acquisition of Time-Warner.

II. Discussion with Mr. Frank Comeriato & Mr. Kevin Powell, continued

Thor asked if the committee was being asked to just provide input, or if we are being asked to provide an opinion on how the station should move forward on the upgrade options. Both Dr. Williams and Mr. Comeriato said that they would like the committee to provide recommendations to Council on the matter.

Mr. Comeriato added that the citizens also need to be aware of what, if any changes are made to the HCTV service and the citizenry will expect that Council, along with the committee, has looked at the situation and proposed a proper resolution.

Kerry added that because a quote is already in place, the City's Public Access interests would be preserved, but that Charter / Time Warner would not entertain new construction for any new Public Access operations.

Dr. Williams added that the 5-Year plan budget had just become available and asked if the committee members had seen it. Mr. Comeriato said that it had just been released the day of the meeting and that he would supply the committee members with copies of that budget plan.

Kerry said that the \$70K advance that came from Council is included in the budget for the upgrade to HD playback capabilities that included the broadcast transmission equipment, the blade server. Station Engineer Dan Gerbracht added that the controller, the streaming equipment, the routers and the replay machine were also included in the advance expenditure. The TWC cable modulator upgrade, which has only come up as a pressing problem in the past few days, is not included in the existing advance from Council. Payback of the advance will begin in 2017, and no further capital equipment is included in the budget for 2017.

Dan G. expressed an opinion that he thinks that it would be a waste to go to two channels. \$45K was spent to upgrade the station's equipment with three channels allotted for that upgrade, so he felt that it would be a shame to now lose a channel that has already been upgraded, only because of the Time-Warner modulator problem.

John asked if the equipment that was purchased, and may become redundant if only two channels could be used elsewhere. Dan G. said that the return policy on the equipment has already expired.

Barb added that reinterpreting the channels could be done to allow for community programming to be concentrated on one channel and then business focused programming, perhaps supported by the Community Development office of the City, could be the other channel's main focus, as long as they are kept as "infomercials".

Kerry asked that the use of web content for streaming a channel (not appearing on Time-Warner) would still fall under the restriction of only non-commercial content. Mr. Comeriato said that he would have to get an opinion from the City Solicitor to find out if streamed programming is still restricted to non-commercial content via the Ohio Revised Code.

Nick asked if eliminating broadcasting of the city meetings would be a problem, considering that the Granicus recordings are the official record of those meetings. Mr. Comeriato answered that the Granicus system would continue to create the official meeting record, the meetings would just not be provided on Time-Warner if the station channel count were reduced.

II. Discussion with Mr. Frank Comeriato & Mr. Kevin Powell, continued

Kerry said that the station is not required to provide cable programming of the City meetings as is done currently, but he thought that it would be a disservice to the community to not have the meetings available for cable TV access. Having to program the meetings into the schedule, considering that varied length of the meetings would be a problem, with the meetings butting up against the regular public access programming.

Nick asked if there were still plans for a rider on the fees for the City's broadband service would be shared with the stations, as indicated by the City Manager Jane Howington at a previous committee meeting. Mr. Comeriato answered that the rider fee would only come into effect if the Velocity system expanded out to residential customers. Mr. Powell added that residential service of Velocity would have an impact on Time-Warner residential service, so that is when the rider fee on service would be appropriate.

That concluded the update from the City Administration. We thanked Mr. Comeriato and Mr. Powell for joining us and invited them to stay for the rest of the meeting. They agreed to stay.

III. Approval of Previous Informal Meeting Notes

The notes from the May 19, 2016 and the July 21, 2016 informal meetings were approved as written and will be posted to the City web site. The May and June meetings were held informally due to a lack of a quorum of committee members at the meetings.

IV. Station Manager's Report, Kerry Paluscsak

Kerry reported that the football season is under way and the new HD Upgrade equipment made the program look great. Thanks to Dan G. for his hard work in installing all of the new HD equipment and getting it "on the air". Great job, Dan!

As part of the goal of working with the School System, Kerry is working on a project in the Press Box at Veteran's Memorial Stadium to ease the access of video contact sent out by HCTV to be displayed on the stadium scoreboard.

Kerry is working on a five-year plan for equipment upgrade, even though there is no capital allocation. The care that the HCTV staff and volunteers take with the station's equipment should extend the life of the equipment well beyond the normally expected equipment lifetime. The proposed capital plan will be a "placeholder" for future replacement equipment purchases, when it is needed.

Council will be reviewing the Public Works budget on October 25, 2016. HCTV is now part of the Public Works group, so the station budget will be part of that review.

Kerry reported that he just received an update on the number of cable subscribers in Hudson in August 2016. There are currently 5,293 subscribers to Time-Warner Cable in the City. The subscription fees from those subscribers are the primary means of support for HCTV. Two years ago, TWC had 6,400 subscribers in Hudson, but the current number does show an uptick in subscribers, adding 33 subscribers since the start of the year. Finance Director Jeff Knobloch will also receive the TWC subscriber information, so if a sharp drop in the numbers is seen, adjustments can be made quickly to the station spend.

This year to date, HCTV has provided 1,884 hours of programming to the community with 572 hours of original programming. Since the beginning, HCTV has presented 202,429 hours of programming for Hudson.

V. CAP ACT Update

No new information relating to the CAP Act was available. With the Presidential Election coming up in November, no substantial action on the Act is expected until after the first of the year.

With that in mind, Kerry suggested that we delete CAP Act updates from the future meeting agendas until Congress makes some movement towards acting on CAP. In the meantime, Kerry will forward any information that he gets from the CAP Act lobby organizations to Nick for distribution to the committee members.

VI. Time Warner / Charter Comm. Update

Changes have been very transparent in the implementation of the Charter Communications acquisition of Time Warner Cable. Charter will be reviewing all of their projects and any further Public Access service will probably not proceed, HCTV is grandfathered in and will be able to continue service as they have in the past.

VII. Public Access Update – Barbara VanBlarcum

Barbara said that Public Access activity had slowed down for the summer months, but has picked up since school has resumed. Barb reported that many requests for Bulletin Board have recently been received and the Genealogy group from the Hudson Library & Historical Society has started recording their meetings.

A new volunteer producer, that had recorded programs years ago has now moved back to Hudson and plans to take on the Case Barlow Farm web site and marketing as a promotional project. That same producer will also be producing an infomercial about Cleveland Electric Labs, a temperature control equipment company located in Twinsburg.

Another local producer is creating a program about a recent presentation at the Barlow Community Center concerning non-addictive pain treatment as a way to reduce the chance of a dependence on addictive drugs.

The Ultimate Game Challenge is returning after a several year hiatus and has produced several new programs, the first of which will start airing on the station in a few weeks. The first game that will be featured on the show is Connect Four.

Ms. Ren of the King House in Hudson will be producing a new “Inn Chat” program featuring a conversation with local veterinarian, Keith Caldwell.

Barb reported that the Advisory Committee had a successful day when they appeared at the Hudson Farmers Market Community Day event. Many contacts were made during the event and a Public Access program that is currently on HCTV was developed from the visit. Comfort Spa is a new business that was contacted at the Community Day event and they expressed an interest in producing a program concerning health care.

The 2016 Art on the Green event was recorded and a program about the annual art show is currently airing on HCTV.

VII. Public Access Update – Barbara VanBlarcum, continued

Barb and Meg Andrus from the HCTV staff recently recorded the life stories of seven World War II veterans at Laurel Lake. Those interviews will start airing on the station next week. Plans are in place to interview more veterans in the near future to get their stories. Barb added that the produced programs are being shared with the U.S. Library of Congress as part of their World War II Oral History collection.

VIII. Community Organization Liaison

No further efforts have been made in the area of community organization liaison. Nick said that he would send out a new e-mail blast in the next few weeks to previously contacted and newly selected organizations to entice them to use HCTV as a valuable, free resource to promote their organizations. Nick added that attending and recording at events in town seems to be a great way to promote the station. While recording at the Art on the Green and Farmer's Market, many people stopped to ask about the station and the live streaming capabilities of the station are always promoted via these "out in public" sessions.

IX. Friends of Hudson Community Television

Nick repeated that both the Internal Revenue Service and the State of Ohio Attorney General's Office have approved the 501(c) 3 designation for the Friends of Hudson Community television.

With the organization in place, there is a need for another organizational meeting for the Friends of group to get things moving on grant writing and fund raising. Nick mentioned that the Hudson Library and Historical Society has a comprehensive database on hand to research grant opportunities available to the Friends group. While the committee members are welcome to join in the Friends effort, the plan is to include non-committee members in the non-profit support effort.

X. Election of Officers

While it was the intention to elect new officers at the past two meetings, the lack of a quorum of voting members of the committee at those meetings precluded the election from going forward. At this meeting, we were able to accept nominations for Chair and Vice Chair of the committee. Jeff nominated Nick for another year as Chair and John seconded the nomination. Nick was elected to another year as committee chair by a voice vote.

Jeff was nominated by Thor for re-election to Vice Chair, but he declined the nomination. Jeff then nominated Thor for the Vice Chair position, and Nick seconded the nomination. However, Thor declined the nomination due to his travel and work schedule. Nick nominated John for Vice Chair of the committee and Thor seconded the nomination. John kindly accepted the nomination and was elected as committee vice chair by a voice vote.

XI. Previous Meeting Follow Up

Nick reported that the Malabar Farm program that was under production with Western Reserve Academy Historian & Archivist, Tom Vince is not yet complete. An additional interview with the daughter of Louis Bromfield in the next week (at Malabar Farm) may lend more information on the Hudson connection to the Bromfield story and the reason why the program was being made. It is hoped that Bromfield's daughter can supply more information on the two adopted brothers who lived with Bromfield and attended WRA.

XI. Previous Meeting Follow Up, continued

Nick reported that another program featuring Tom Vince was recorded last week on the campus of WRA. Mr. Vince's presentation to the Daughters of the American Revolution concerned the history of Women's Education in Hudson.

The first Hudson Heritage Association meeting of the season was also recorded last week, again featuring Tom Vince. The subject for that meeting was a history and walking tour of Markillie / St. Mary's Cemetery and the storied histories of those two historic properties.

Nick mentioned that the committee had previously talked about contacting Hudson High School Principal Brian Wilch to spur interest in producing a program involving the high school students in an open discussion format.

Thor reported that on October 20, he would be hosting a discussion program at Kent State University discussing current events. He said that many students have approached him prior to the program and mentioned that their lives have been touched by the heroin epidemic. He would like to share that program with the local media, but he would like to do a similar discussion program in Hudson.

Thor thought that a program about the heroin epidemic would be a good idea, with just the high school students, or a community wide discussion of this serious epidemic that has exploded in the past few years. Thor said that he would be more than willing to spearhead the effort to create such a discussion program. The previous Kent State events that he has been involved with included discussions on terrorism, racism and how social media effects everyday life. Thor said that the Kent events are packed with student attendees because the student body really wants to talk about issues.

Thor felt that such a program could be a real drive to viewership of the station and would be an important opportunity to discuss important matters in the community across all generations. The City's involvement would be minimal, but we would think that the City administration and Council would support such an effort.

Thor mentioned that a recent Kent discussion asked the 150 students that attended if they believed that they would not be living in a democracy in their lifetime. Sixty percent of the attendees raised their hand, which was a disturbing result. Thor thought that we are missing an opportunity to have these discussions with our kids on issues that they feel are important and issues that they want to discuss.

Dr. Williams asked what would be the next step in getting a discussion program series going. Thor said that we would have to interface with the High School and perhaps the Hudson City School administration to get their approval in getting the students involved. After that, perhaps the discussions could branch out to include the citizens of the community as a whole, at which time Council and City administration support in carrying out the program and promoting it would be needed.

Kerry said that he has reached out to Principal Wilch in the past about producing programming, but Mr. Wilch's problem is that a High School teacher would have to have time allocated to any project, and the demanding schedules of the high school teachers would make allocating the needed teacher resources difficult to arrange.

XI. Previous Meeting Follow Up, continued

Thor said that he would not need teacher involvement to create the discussion programs and that all he would need is the room, a little publicity and the blessing of the Board of Education to produce the program. Kerry suggested that perhaps an informal contact with School Superintendent Phil Herman would be all that would be needed to get the ball rolling on making a program. Nick said that he would contact Principal Wilch about the project and Thor added that he would reach out to Superintendent Herman to try to create interest in moving forward.

Thor mentioned that the October 20 discussion program at KSU has been moved to a larger auditorium to accommodate the expected crowd. Barb asked if the KSU discussion would be recorded and then could be aired on HCTV.

Kerry suggested that it might be possible that in conjunction with the Hudson schools, the KSU discussion could be held in the High School auditorium, HCTV could provide recoding coverage of the event, and KSU could take the program feed and connect it to their remote program vehicle. Thor responded that the only problem with that plan would be that he doubted that the KSU students would want to travel to Hudson for the program.

Dan G. suggested inviting the school officials to the October 20th event at KSU or Barb providing previous KSU discussions to the officials. Thor said that the former programs are available on line. Dr. Williams said that he liked the idea of getting the Hudson schools interested to get the idea moving.

Dr. Williams asked if anyone was covering the upcoming Hudson Green on Green event. Nick said that he had recoded the event in the past, but was unavailable to be at this year's event.

Nick asked about the upcoming Hudson Schools Hall of Fame Induction event. This year concerns the Sports Hall of Fame induction. The stadium portion of the Hall of Fame celebration will be recorded as part of the full football game coverage. Barb said that NPR reporter Kabir Bhatia would be interviewing some of the inductees and Dan G. & Nick reported that they are available to record the event.

XII. Once Around

Don said that after all of the discussions about the future channel designations for HCTV, the committee had not decided on a recommendation to Council on how to proceed. Dr. Williams suggested the committee have another meeting shortly to generate a recommendation. Mr. Comeriato said that he would send out the five-year plan to the members and would send a prioritized list of the issues that were discussed during this meeting. The list would break out the pressing issues from the long-term issues, so that the committee can focus on the most pressing issues first. He said that the five-year plan and prioritized issues list would be sent out in the week following the meeting. Since the five-year plan was already available in Mr. Comeriato's possession, Dan G. made copies of the plan at this point in the meeting and distributed the copies to all of the attendees.

Don mentioned that it would be difficult to gather a quorum of members for a follow-up meeting under short schedule. Kerry said that decision concerning the channels needed to be made quickly and an e-mail response from the members could be included in the public record as a recommendation from the committee.

XII. Once Around, continued

Nick said that the pressing decision from the discussions is the number of channels that should have modulation equipment upgraded. Thor responded that his feeling was, that the number of channels that should be upgraded, was two, one channel for community programming and the other for bulletin board information and then research ways to underwrite the operation of the channels. Don agreed and said that he thought that going to two channels would be the right thing to do. Jeff said that he was concerned that the time from receiving the five-year plan (a minute and a half) and having to decide on the fate of the three channels was too tight. He said that he was leaning towards keeping all three channels but would like some time to consider the options.

Dan G. said that if it would help, he could provide the breakdown on how the \$70K, which has already been spent on the upgrade, was split out between the three channels. Dan G. said that he would send that information to Nick for distribution to the committee members.

A.J. Stokes said that two channels would be his choice, noting that a lot of information can be presented on one screen so some condensing of information is possible.

Mr. Comeriato reminded everyone that the City does not have the funds to upgrade all three channels. With that in mind, he also felt that it was not acceptable to continue to broadcast a signal that looks as poorly as the current signal that is presented on TWC. While the City would like to upgrade and keep all three channels, the funds just are not there to do so. He said that the ultimate decision is if we keep one or two channels and that three is not an option due to the budget constraints. He also added that going back to Council for equipment needs is not helping because it is adding debt. Combined with the projected decrease in franchise funds, directly affects the station's bottom line, which is projected to go negative in 2021.

Barb asked for clarification on the grant application with the Morgan Foundation. Mr. Powell said that the Foundation would not decide on the grant until January 2017 and if approved, funds would not become available until the end of February 2017. Mr. Comeriato added that the restriction that TWC has placed on the channel upgrade, the inability to do one channel at a time, also complicates the matter.

Thor added that the current crisis in channel upgrade could spur planning for the future to look at generating underwriting for sports programming and general programming that could offset some of the projected future budget shortfall.

Nick said that in his opinion, he would hate to lose the third channel, but based on the restrictions as explained during the meeting, he did not see a choice that allows the City to keep all three current channels active and upgraded. Nick suggested that the wide differences in City meeting lengths could give the opportunity to interspace the Bulletin Board announcements in the gaps between meetings, rather than just displaying the program schedule as is done now on channel #16.

Dan G. asked if the community could be made aware of the channel dilemma and could be asked to help. Mr. Comeriato reminded us that no fund solicitation is allowed. He said that taking one of the channels and pointing towards the Internet seems to be the natural progression of TV service anyway. Thor responded that the target audience is, for the most part, not yet on line, so the progression to the Internet cannot be considered as that advanced at this time.

Don made a motion that the committee recommends that the station reduce to two operating channels, because of the modulator upgrade problem. Nick seconded the motion. No further discussion was brought forward. The motion carried by a five to one vote with Jeff voting no.

XII. Once Around, continued

Mr. Comeriato said that the City would start the process of what needs to be done. He said that he would communicate with City Manager Jane Howington in the morning concerning the decision and would discuss with her the marketing ideas that came out of the discussions.

Mr. Comeriato thanked the committee for extending the conversations and for supplying a suggested solution to a time-sensitive problem that was unexpected and needed to be addressed.

Nick wanted to add that he is not at all happy with the way Time Warner has handled the situation. He and Kerry both have contacted TWC on several occasions over many months. After all of that fruitless contact, to require a decision on all three channels on short notice is unacceptable. Nick added that the modulators that are causing the signal distortion that are the basis of the current dilemma are actually Time-Warner's equipment and the fact that they are requiring the City to pay to have the equipment upgraded, on short notice, is something that Time-Warner Cable should be ashamed of themselves for doing.

Dan G. asked if the City upgrades only two channels, what happens to the rest of the grant money that has been requested from the Morgan Foundation for the equipment upgrades. Mr. Powell responded that the remaining grant funds could be used for programming projects and can be used to expand to two channels that could be pushed in the direction of exposure on the Time-Warner system.

Kerry added that they are hopeful to get the schools involved in producing programming, which could be presented on an additional channel while also possibly collaborating with Akron and/or Kent State University to present programming that all would be able to share. Mr. Comeriato added that the City would look at new partnerships down the road.

Nick said that as we look further into streaming as being less restrictive in regards to underwriting, he felt that the City Solicitor should be asked for an opinion on what restrictions would be in place on a stream-only presentation that would still be a City entity. Thor added that he envisions that someone in the community will be interested in underwriting sports programming, since it is the most popular portion of the HCTV presentations, and other underwriting opportunities will be hard to develop immediately, since the station has no sales department.

Kerry added that the cost of doing sports amounts to a little less than \$8-10K per year in just people costs. While it is a significant cost, Kerry added that as part of the partnership between HCTV and the schools, we need to be cognizant of the benefits that HCTV gains from the partnership, compared to what is put into the partnership, such as sports, music concert and school special event programming. Mr. Comeriato added that there is no mandate from the schools on what programming they would like, but perhaps a more diverse mixture of school-oriented programming, with more involvement from the students, is the best way to go.

XIII. Next Meeting Date

The next scheduled HCTV Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 17, 2016 at 6:30 PM in the HCTV studio at Hudson High School.

XIV. Adjournment

With no further business indicated, the meeting was adjourned at 8:57 P.M.