



Hudson Cable Television Advisory Committee

Supplemental Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: October 11, 2011.

Meeting Location: HCTV Studios, Hudson High School.

In attendance: Abby Boysel, Pat Simons, Brian Suntken, and Nick Zaklanovich. Ex Officio: Kerry Paluscsak, Barbara VanBlarcum.

Not in attendance: Reed Stith, A.J. Stokes and Susan Terkel, Ex Officio: Dr. Dan Williams.

Meeting called to order by Chair Nick Zaklanovich at 6:42 P.M. Notes taken by Nick Zaklanovich.

I. Greeting of members and guests

Nick Zaklanovich greeted all of the members in attendance. No guests were present.

II. Further Review Subject Discussions – All

This was a supplemental meeting to discuss business that was not completed at the September 15, 2011 meeting. The committee started the meeting by examining a list of items that needed attention following the July 28, 2011 meeting.

1. Junior Leadership liaison.

Dr. Williams had suggested in July that the HCTV committee and Junior Leadership Hudson should work together towards our common goals. Since Dr. Williams was not present to elaborate on the idea, Brian Suntken suggested that we skip over this subject for now.

2. Discussions on target station needs for fund raising efforts.

The committee discussed the needs of the station for which the committee may be able to help raise funds. Kerry stated that the primary station need is the replacement of the existing four studio cameras. Pat asked if HCTV is a tax exempt entity at this time. Kerry replied that as an arm of the City of Hudson, HCTV is not looked at as an appropriate candidate for non-profit gifts and grants. Pat suggested an alternative plan would be to form a group such as “Friends of Hudson Cable” that could be a 501(c)(3) organization, separate from City affiliation.

Abby asked about the cost of four replacement studio cameras. Kerry said that during last year's budget work up, the cost was just under \$200,000. He thought that perhaps prices may have come down since then, but probably not to a large extent.

Nick asked if any contribution to the station would be tax deductible. Kerry said that it would depend on the amount of the gift and he was not sure if that was true at all, since HCTV is an arm of the City government.

Brian asked if the committee could go out into the community and solicit funding. Kerry answered that we could apply for gifts and grants. Brian asked if we could write a fund letter to every citizen in the City, if we wanted to, for the "Friends of HCTV". Kerry said that he was not sure if that was possible, and suggested that the City Solicitor should be contacted to answer that question. Brian said that he would be happy to work on fund raising efforts.

Pat said that tax deductible contributions are the main stay of charitable organizations and that we may have to go outside of the committee to create just such an organization that would be able to apply for 501(c)(3) status.

Nick said that he thought that someone on the committee already had such an organization in place. Barbara VanBlarcum said that she thought that Susan Terkel did have an arts & culture organization which may be able to be transferred to a different organization.

Brian suggested that we do a blanket appeal for funds and grants and just throw the request at anyone that we can think of. Brian said that he would talk to City Finance Director Jeff Knoblauch, City Solicitor R. Todd Hunt and Susan Terkel of the committee about the next step in getting going on soliciting funds.

3. Discussions on target station needs for grant efforts.

Kerry said that the replacement of the studio cameras remains the most pressing need for the station. Nick asked if Kerry was concerned at all about the video switcher unit. Kerry said that the switcher, even though it is no longer supported by manufacturer, is still less than two years old and it should last as long as the former switcher, which still operated after in excess of ten years service.

Kerry added that obtaining grants to underwrite regular station operations, not just large equipment purchases, would also be a benefit. Kerry said that, for instance, another editing station would be a quality request for a grant. He said that Public Access recording equipment is in good shape, but he could use some additional equipment in the area of editing.

4. Strategic plan for improvement opportunities for HCTV service.

Brian suggested that since it was Reed Stith who brought forward this idea, we should pass on this item until the next meeting.

Pat asked about the five-year plan and if it was renewed every year. Kerry answered that the five-year plan is an on-going development tool that is updated annually, and is intended to be a financial outlook for the coming five year period. Pat asked that the five-year plan be distributed when it was ready. Kerry said that he would do that.

5. Discussions concerning programming offerings of other PEG stations.

Nick said that he has done some research into what other PEG stations have to offer. He said that he would do some more research and have a synopsis to present at the next regular meeting.

6. Discussions concerning previous viewer surveys and possible future surveys.

Nick said that he had located copies of previous citizen surveys that had been done and would sift through those surveys and come up with a list of items that would still be relevant to the current operation. Nick said that he thought that it would be valuable to hear comments from the citizens of the community, and just by doing a survey, the awareness of the existence of the station could be raised.

7. Discussions concerning educating / re-educating the citizens about HCTV service.

Nick felt that the HCTV operation is not as well known in the community as it should be and the committee should work at promoting the existence and the capabilities of the station to the citizenry. Nick said that perhaps a city-wide survey of the citizens (mentioned above) would be a good first step to raising awareness.

8. Discussions concerning grants for oral history productions.

Susan Terkel had originally brought up the subject of grants for oral histories, but Brian also said that he has a passion for that subject, and said that he would speak with Susan about plans for the future. Brian said that it is better to do an oral history of someone in their own home, as they are much more inclined to relax when they are in their own environment.

9. Discussion of interface with HCER for production education classes.

Pat originally brought up the subject of an interface with HCER, but she said that Susan also had some ideas along that line. The suggestion is to create a video production class under the auspices of HCER to teach anyone interested how to create video programming.

Brian said that he really liked the idea of creating a class, but felt that whoever teaches the course should be compensated for their time. He suggested that Dan Gerbracht of the HCTV staff would be a great choice as an instructor for such a class, if it could be brought to fruition. Brian said that HCER receives proposals for classes that could be offered, and if they like the proposal, further negotiations commence.

Kerry added that HCER, as a part of the Hudson School System, would be welcome to use the HCTV studio and editing stations for a video production class. Pat added that contact should be made with some of the organizations in town to get their members interested in a video production class.

Nick said that perhaps the first step should be that initial contact be made with HCER, to gage their interest in working on developing a class. He volunteered to make that initial contact and then Pat said that she would work with Susan on the details, once the suggested class is accepted by HCER.

10. Discussion of production contest for school-age students.

A video production contest for school-age kids was originally brought up by Abby Boysel. Abby said that Dr. Williams had mentioned that the Hudson Rotary, of which he is a member, has funds to contribute to just such an effort, but the idea has to be more developed before it could be submitted for grant consideration. Pat suggested that getting the PTO / PTA of the community involved would be a plus. Barbara VanBlarcum added that she felt that the Hudson Rotary would also support the oral history project.

Brian said that he liked the “Where I was Reading” contest at the Hudson Library that accepted pictures from the public of reading locations. The top three judged pictures were turned into book marks and Brian thought that was a very classy and attractive contest. He felt that that kind of contest is what we need at HCTV, to attract participation by school-aged kids. He suggested that we could do something similar and come up with a creative theme for a contest. Brian suggested that we brainstorm the idea further at the next regular meeting.

Barb mentioned that the Hudson Garden Club has provided funds in the past to help with the cost of covering their meetings. She said that the funds have not been provided lately, Pat asked if there had ever been a blanket effort to contact all of the organizations in town. Kerry replied that such a contact plan had not been done in the past, simply because the station has enough funds to maintain operations. Now that the station income and costs gap is narrowing, it now may be necessary to look for other funding, like from the organizations in the City.

Kerry said that he would contact the City legal consultants to see if there was any legal problem with the committee undertaking fund solicitations, grants or out right contributions, to benefit HCTV. Nick said that he thought that checking with the lawyers was a good first step to getting the ball rolling on raising funds.

Pat said that we need to let the organizations know that there would be a benefit for them to support HCTV. Abby added that many of the people that attend the Concerts on the Green watch the concerts again on HCTV. Those people could also be a possible source for donations to HCTV. Brian suggested that the fans of the weekly Polka show could also be good prospective contributors.

11. Further discussion on committee responsibility assignments.

Nick suggested that with so many regular members not in attendance that any discussions about committee responsibilities should be delayed until the next meeting.

12. Discussion of Youth Wrestling programming.

Abbey reported that she has had conversation with the coach from the Kratos Wrestling organization, who had also had discussions with the wrestling coach from the High School, and they had developed some good ideas to produce programming. Abby said that she would help to implement their plan.

13. Discussion of former “Business Link” program and if/how it can be revived.

Barb said that the former Business Link program was done in conjunction with the Hudson Chamber of Commerce, who interfaced with the businesses in the community. The businesses involved would get a half-hour of station time that would tell the informational story of the business. Kerry said that the reason that the program lost momentum was that the value that the businesses saw from their contributions was diminished because their exposure was limited to the borders of the City. Kerry thought that it might be worth the effort to contact the Chamber to see if they had any interest in reviving the Business Link program. Abby asked if a business could promote itself via public access, as long as prices were not discussed. Kerry said that such an informational program would be acceptable. Barb added that the ground work for a public access effort with Western Reserve Music was started, but they felt that they did not have the right staff member to produce the program, so the idea has, unfortunately, went dormant.

Nick said that one of the ideas to be discussed later on was an interface between the station and Chuck Wiedie, the Hudson Economic Development Director. The suggestion is that promoting the businesses in the community could be a valuable tool for the City to attract more businesses to our town.

Kerry suggested that we should contact the Chamber of Commerce to see if they would like to revive the Business Link program. Nick said that he would contact Carolyn Konefal, the president of the Hudson Chamber of Commerce, to see if there is any interest in reviving the Business Link program. Kerry suggested that Chuck Wiedie should also be contacted to see if we could meet with both of them about resurrecting a potentially valuable asset to the City.

Pat asked if there has ever been an effort to quantify the value or the cost of the production time at HCTV. Kerry responded that the cost depends on the production. As an example, a production that involves the full studio utilization, with a full control room crew, would run into the thousands of dollars.

Abby asked if we could market HCTV exposure to new businesses coming into the City through the Economic Development office. Kerry said that he had discussions on that subject previously with Mr. Wiedie, and they felt that once a business is wooed to the city, they did not want to try to “sell them” another service. They felt that the best approach was to offer the exposure as an incentive to come to the City, rather than an added cost to the business after the move.

14. Discussions on video subject / music clearances for HCTV programming.

Nick asked if there were some legal problem if people are recorded for an HCTV production during community events. Kerry said that there is no problem with showing them on the station, since the video was recorded at a public event.

Nick also asked about background music at an event that becomes a part of the program. Kerry responded that the background music is incidental to the event, and therefore licensing is not an issue. Kerry added that one of the things that the City is looking at is obtaining a blanket BMI license that would permit any City event where live music is performed to be free of music license encumbrances. However, for television programming, there is a different type of licensing requirement than the BMI blanket license.

III. Committee Mission Statement

Nick suggested that the committee should consider developing a two or three sentence mission statement to develop a baseline goal for the future focus of the committee. Nick presented his random thoughts about the mission statement and then presented three suggestions for a starting point for the development of the statement. Brian said that following the last meeting, he went home frustrated because he did not see much value in having to reinvent the committee with a new mission statement. He suggested that the committee needs to do is what it had been discussing in the previous part of the meeting - starting to network outside of the committee and build relationships, not waste time on debating minute details of a two sentence mission statement.

Pat mentioned that she was under the impression that the mission statement development was going to be assigned to a subcommittee to develop, with the results brought back to the full committee for approval or for further discussion. Pat said that the subcommittee would submit their ideas to the other committee members via e-mail before the next meeting, so that the discussion can be carried out quickly during the actual meeting.

Kerry said that the station mission statement, in actuality the operations part of the station, will not change. It is, however, the focus or the mission of the committee that should be looked at and perhaps updated to reflect the new and future goals of the group. He also said that the legislation that Council spelled out as the establishment and purposes of the committee as written in Chapter 280 of the City Codified Ordinances may have reflected the committee's main focus when the station was created fifteen years ago, but parts of that legislation is no longer applicable, due to the evolution of the station and the government legislation in regards to cable providers in the community. In the current era, the committee is in a different position of support of the station and needs to come up with ideas to present to Council that will maintain current levels of programming and signal quality standards, generate more interest in HCTV in the community and try to find other opportunities for funding resources.

Kerry interpreted Nick's suggestion for a mission statement for the committee as a means by which the committee can help him, Barb and the staff do their jobs better and reach out to the community to let the community know, more efficiently, that HCTV can support the community's groups, organizations or their individuals. Kerry said that the station mission statement still applies to the station operation, whereas the committee ordinance does not reflect all of the potential help situations that the group could provide to the station.

Pat added that she needed to find inspiration in a mission statement, perhaps a "map" of where the group is headed so that everyone can follow the same "map".

Kerry mentioned that there are so many items that can impact the HCTV operation. For instance, the scenario of what would occur if Time-Warner ceased to exist? By all indications, HCTV would then also, cease to exist, as the station is solely funded by Time-Warner franchise fees. Pat then asked what would be the reaction with the reality of such a scenario coming to pass. Do we still try to keep HCTV in operation? This is an example of a need for a strategic plan that can be laid out to plan for contingencies that have not occurred, but could occur. Another concern, not as drastic as a collapse of the cable company, is the decline of business to the point that the franchise fees that fund HCTV would be impacted.

III. Committee Mission Statement, continued

Kerry mentioned that Wadsworth owns their own Public Access Station, and it could be possible that the City of Hudson would fund HCTV, if the Time-Warner franchise fees ever did stop flowing. Brian added that a “Friends of HCTV” organization seems to be a good idea for “a rainy day”. Brian asked if funds that may be raised by some fund raising effort, could those funds be counted on as being available only for HCTV. Kerry said that would be a question for the City Finance Director, but an independent 501(c)(3) charitable organization may be a better method for fund raising efforts. Pat added that when soliciting for funds, the group soliciting must have developed a specific use for the funds. She also said that the language in the Hudson Monthly article about the station was very inspiring to her.

Kerry said that the committee has been granted a pretty freer reign to do what is supportive of the station and the group should not tackle changes to the legislation at this time. Kerry suggested that anything that would involve Council action should go to Dr. Williams first, as he is our Council liaison.

IV. New Access Programming Ideas

Barb said that a presentation at the Hudson Library of author David S. Reynolds with his story about Uncle Tom’s Cabin is scheduled to be covered by HCTV. The station is devoting a lot of time to the coming election, including interviews with the Board of Education, Mayoral and Council candidates. Hudson Economic Development recorded a program featuring the Mayoral and Council candidates and the Hudson Rotary will also record their candidate forum. The League of Women Voters candidate forum will not be recorded.

V. Grants Opportunities

Pat asked about the grant target spreadsheet that Kathy Franks created some time ago. Nick said that he would send the information to Pat at the earliest opportunity. Kerry said that he may have the original spreadsheet copy of the document to circulate.

Nick said that once he sends the grant spreadsheet to Pat, the proposed subcommittee of Pat, Brian and Nick should schedule a meeting to start action moving on attempting to obtain grants for the station

VI. Once Around

Brian asked if the committee could vote on any issue without a quorum present. Kerry confirmed that a majority of active members must be present for any vote action to take place. Brian also said that he would like to see a stronger message concerning board member participation. He suggested that if a member misses two meetings, we have a consultation with that member and if three meetings are missed, the member would be dropped from the committee. Kerry added that such a change in committee operation would need to take the form of an ordinance change from Council.

The subject of the liaisons from the Hudson City Schools and the Western Reserve Academy came forward. Barb mentioned that at one time, those liaison members had a vote on the committee. Ever since the school liaison’s vote was eliminated, the attendance at the committee meetings by the school liaisons has ground to a halt.

VI. Once Around, continued

Pat asked if WRA does a lot of programming on HCTV. Kerry said that if it were not for the outreach that Barb performs to get the organizations to do programming, the amount of programming coming from the organizations would probably be half what it is right now.

Kerry added that informality of our committee is probably a good thing and he thought that we do not need to be as formal as the other City committees, such as the Planning Commission. Pat added that she felt that a few standing rules in regards to meeting attendance would be a good thing.

Kerry said that since the committee is looking towards some fund raising efforts, he would send a message to the City Finance Director and the City Solicitor, to see if they see any issues with an arm of the City government approaching businesses, groups and individuals for funds.

VII. Next Meeting Date

The next regular HCTV Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 17, 2011 at 6:30 PM in the HCTV Studios in Hudson High School.

VIII. Adjournment

With no further business indicated, the meeting was adjourned by acclamation. The meeting was adjourned at 8:42 P.M.