

Cable T.V. Committee Meeting: April 14, 2026

Present: Richard, Jim, Lou, Jill, Kathy, John, Pat (excused at 5:05 PM), Danica

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:02 PM.

2. Adjustments to the Agenda

No adjustments are made.

3. Approval of Minutes

3.a March 24, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Richard suggested an amendment to change “clean out the studio” to “clean up the studio”.

Motion by Kathy, seconded by John, to approve the March 24, 2026 meeting minutes with the discussed amendment. Vote: Unanimous.

4. New Business

4.a Program Cost Estimate for City Council

Danica shared that she connected with the City’s CivicPlus account representative and the quoted cost to stream up to three channels to the City website was \$6,600.

Committee members encouraged Danica to reach back out and look for potential reductions to this estimate.

Richard asked Tony Vigue, an experienced local Public Access advocate, to provide a recommendation for startup costs for the program, and he suggested about \$50K.

Jim suggests that his estimate for costs would be \$100K if we are including the director in the estimate. The Committee determined that the Council is asking for a number above and beyond the cost of hiring a director.

Jill asked the duration that our estimate should cover. Jim’s presumption is that we should provide a number that would get us through the first year of operations.

Lou pointed out that we would not want to buy a lot of equipment and then find that the director doesn’t agree with the choices made. The Committee is in agreement that we would not make any purchases before a new director is hired.

John asked if we will need approval from the Council to spend money out of a Special Revenue Fund or if we can we spend what we need once we have money set aside for

our use. It was clarified that a budget is typically prepared for Special Revenue Funds, and staff has authority to approve certain expenditures that fall within the approved budget and are under a certain threshold. It was noted that per our ordinance, any unspent funds that are available above and beyond a proposed budget remain dedicated to Public Access.

Pat cautioned that the Council could choose to change the ordinance, though she doesn't think they will. She thinks that the Council may want to know both the cost estimate for focusing on public meeting coverage only and the cost estimate for a full revitalization of the program.

Richard asks what the director was paid. Danica shared that the FY27 requested budget for the position is \$70,198.56.

Danica explained that the City received a \$215K check in March for franchise fees from calendar year 2025, and that we will get our next check in March 2027 for fees from calendar year 2026.

John expressed concern that this check was deposited into the General Fund, meaning that the fund would not have any money in it until March 2027. Jim explained that accounting practices permit us to run a deficit in the Special Revenue Fund. Danica will get clarity from the Finance Department about whether the \$215K in CY25 funds will be transferred to the Special Revenue Fund.

Danica explained that the salary for part-time videographer coverage of City Hall meetings will be paid out of the Special Revenue Fund. She shared that Lee Cote, the University of New England's AV tech, has recently been hired to provide per-diem meeting coverage assistance.

Danica said that Headlight Audio, a company that the City's IT Department frequently uses for AV support needs, could be asked to put together an estimate of costs that we could use to inform our presentation to the Council.

Danica was asked how much of a \$215K check could be assumed to be unencumbered. Based on a quick calculation of building operational costs and salaries, it can be assumed that there would be about \$100K in funds that remain available. Richard said that he believes that the Council just wants to know that we aren't going to go over our allotted funds, and if the ordinance is honored, the \$100K of available revenues should more than cover any costs going forward.

Jim pointed out that there may be some building maintenance costs that we will also want to address with the revenues. Richard shared that Ray, who does maintenance at

City Hall, has visited the building and done a quick maintenance assessment. He did not see anything of major concern jump out at him during his visit and is starting to make plans to address the minor issues he saw.

John said that he would like the Council to confirm what the reason was for their request for additional information from the Committee. Because of the history of the franchise fees being diverted into the General Fund, he is worried that the Council may want to find another use for any funds that are above and beyond our estimate. Jill reminded the Committee that we have a new Mayor and City Manager and there is reason to have a more optimistic outlook.

Kathy suggested that we provide the Council the \$6500 figure for streaming, a \$50K estimate for equipment, and factor in any building maintenance.

Pat suggested asking for a rough number from Headlight so we can show that we did the work to price things out.

Jim expressed interest in including costs associated with making the Public Access building an originating site.

Jill suggested we confirm a second meeting at the end of the month so that we can review a proposal from Headlight.

Danica clarified that the Fiscal Year 2027 proposed budget creates a Special Revenue Fund moving forward, but we do not have any information at this time about whether the program will be reimbursed for any franchise fees that were previously diverted to the General Fund.

Lou said that getting a number from Headlight that is around Tony's number would give us more credibility since we would have two estimates to share.

John asked what we are going to ask Headlight to price out for us. Lou and Richard offered to attend when Headlight comes as they have insight into equipment and needs. Jill suggested that we consider telling Headlight what we want people to be able to do in rooms (editing suites, podcast room, etc).

Danica mentioned that we should consider software costs for video editing in our estimate to the Council in addition to any equipment cost estimates.

Lou motioned to have Headlight Audio come into the Public Access building for a tour, ask them to review our existing equipment, and come back to us with a recommendation. Jill seconded.

Pat was excused at 5:05 PM

Danica asked for clarification about how the committee would like to proceed if there is a cost associated with the visit. The Committee authorized her to determine if any quoted cost is reasonable and proceed with scheduling the visit.

Lou shared that he would like the quote to take into account two editing suites. Jill asked that the quote accounts for equipment that people can take out to film with outside of the studio and not just equipment for inside the studio.

Vote on motion: Unanimous

5. Other Business

Jim asked Danica if we could get CivicClerk implemented in FY26. Danica said that she will review the budget, but there likely isn't enough money available to do that until FY27.

Jill would like to be more hands-on in getting programming on the public channel using our archived footage. The Committee discussed ripping DVDs to get them to Danica to load onto Castus. She suggested that we add dates to the cablecast to ensure people know that this is archived footage.

6. Adjourn

Motion by Kathy, seconded by John, to adjourn at 5:22 PM. Vote: Unanimous.

Next Meeting: Monday, April 27, 4:30 PM