

HIGHLAND, ILLINOIS
MINUTES OF REGULAR SESSION
TELECOMMUNICATIONS ADVISORY BOARD
CITY HALL, 115 BROADWAY
MONDAY SEPTEMBER 12, 2011
7:00 PM

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Marron at 7:07 PM.

Roll Call

Members present: Chairman George Marron, Vice-Chairman Jon Boulanger, and Board Member Sharon Rusteberg.

Also present: Councilman Neill Nicolaides, City Manager Mark Latham, Director Dan Cook, Operations Manager Steve Ferguson, and City staff member Andrea Enright.

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Marron noted that there should be a change from "of" to "if" in the August 8, 2011 minutes on page 2, third paragraph, line 2. Andrea noted the change to the minutes.

Vice-Chairman Boulanger made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 8, 2011 Telecommunications Advisory Board meeting; seconded by Chairman Marron. All voted in favor; the motion carried.

Reports

Updated List of Customer Sign Up and Installs Steve stated that HCS currently has a little over 150 customers and that he was meeting with Trouw Nutrition on Tuesday, September 13. He said that Korte Construction was connected and running.

Vice-Chairman Boulanger asked if there were any issues and Steve explained that installs have slowed down because of the delay in hiring a Headend Technician and the work that is being done with implementing the television services. Steve said that Council approved of the City using a recruiting firm to find a Headend Technician.

Mark said that he thinks some potential customers are waiting for the video services to be implemented and that on October 1 is the anticipated launch date. Steve explained that the television services will begin the beta testing shortly. Mark said that HCS staff is going back and analyzing the amount of return that has been received from the postcards that are being sent out and Steve added that there is about a 5% return on the postcards. Steve explained that HCS is looking at new marketing efforts.

Steve said that there are currently no service issues or bandwidth issues in regards to the installs.

Phase II Status

Steve said that construction is going well and that LCP 9 has been completed and post cards have been sent out. He said that for LCP10 and LCP05, most of splicing has been completed and testing for the cabinets will be completed in the next several weeks. Steve said that the decision was made for LCP07 to be converted to various LCPs by adding LCP18. He said that this would feed APEX, the middle school,

high school, and the new hospital. He said that this limits the size of the LCP and that HCs would be able to pick up several customers in that area very quickly.

Steve said that a lot of the aerial fiber has been completed in LCP03 and LCP07 and some of the underground is being worked on for other cabinets. He said that HCS should be on target for most of the anticipated dates, but the problem will be that there will be a delay in getting the fiber. He said that they will slow down on all of the work with the LCPs but they will continue to do the underground work so that HCS is doing everything else that they can to speed up the process. He said that fiber is scheduled to come in during October and that he received a phone call from Jamie Pickup with Graybar and she said that HCS was on target

Board Member Rusteberg asked if that was enough fiber and Steve said that it is enough to get HCS through the LCPs that are coming up and that there is fiber on hand to complete the construction to Troy.

Connection to Troy Update

Steve said that the boring is underway and that they are out by Saint Jacob. He said that they are expected to be at the end of route 4 by the end of this week. Steve discussed that Ameren is expected to go aerial from that point, but they are still conducting studies and HCS is still waiting to hear from Ameren on what the process, cost, or timeframe would be. Steve explained that HCS could be at a standstill now for several weeks unless they board advises that the workers go underground through the swamp since the ground is dry enough for them to do so. He said that HCS has the materials to do this and it will be about \$75,000 more to go underground at swamp. He said that the redundant line would be completely underground if they decided to do so. The board agreed that this is a good move since it could be months before everything was completed with Ameren.

Steve said that he does have to order an additional duct to go underground through the swamp. Board Member Rusteberg asked if there was enough money to do so and Steve confirmed that there was.

The board briefly discussed that this would make the redundant line even more reliable with it being completely underground.

Video Update

Steve said that HCS has downloaded well over 100 channels and that HCS is on target to hit the October 1st launching of services to residents. He said that the beta testing would begin soon and that on Wednesday, August 31 at 10:06pm the first feed came through ESPN. Steve said that inquiries both in person and on the phone have begun to pick up as a result of the upcoming television services.

New Business

Marketing Plan for HCS

Steve passed out the list of potential customers that HCS originally went after and explained that they will be going back to those businesses to get a definite answer on whether or not they want to receive services. Chairman Marron suggested that we offer free installation during the first pass through and then begin to charge people for installations after we exit their area. Steve agreed and said that is currently one of the plans that HCS has in regards to installations.

Steve said for the video kick-off, it has been discussed that HCS could host open houses to invite people in to see the video in order to generate mass sign-ups.

Andrea handed out the channel line ups and discussed each piece. She said that a flyer with pricing information was sent out with the trash services and that there is also a booth at the Farmer's Market so that people can stop by and ask questions. She said that she is working on ads to put in the Shopper's Review as well as working with the News Leader to see if there is a way to negotiate the pricing of ads. Andrea explained that a lot of the advertising that competitors do is in print; however, HCS cannot afford it. She explained that for 1/8 of a page it would cost \$528 per month for three months and \$25 more for color print. She said that if HCS wanted to purchase a full page then it would cost \$2150 per month for three months. She said that the lowest price they offered was a 2x2 and online for \$196 per month. Andrea explained that spending about \$1500 every three months for ads that run in a paper once a week may be better justified being spent in another marketing effort. The board suggested targeted mailings.

Staffing of Headend Technician

Steve explained that the City is currently working through another agency to help find a Headend Technician that meets our needs and fits within our budget. He said that as of right now America's Center is still supplying a technician and Fidelity is still helping with troubleshooting.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Telecommunications Advisory Board is scheduled for October 10, 2011 at 7:00 PM.

Adjournment

Board Member Rusteberg made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Vice-Chairman Boulanger. All members voted aye, none nay; the meeting adjourned at **7:33 p.m.**