



**Portsmouth
Cable Commission Meeting
3:00 p.m. – November 3, 2005
Portsmouth High School - Principal's Conference Room**

**The Portsmouth Cable Commission met on Thursday, November 3, 2005 at 3:00 pm
for Media Room Tour and 3:30 pm meeting**

- I. Call to Order** - The following were present:
- John Gregg, Chairman
 - John Bohenko, City Manager
 - Louis Vinciguerra, Commissioner
 - Jeffrey Landry, Commissioner
 - Kathleen Pearce, Commissioner

Also present were Alan Brady, City of Portsmouth Webmaster and City Attorney Bob Sullivan. Also present from the School Department were Robert Lister, Superintendent; Stephen Zdravec, Assistant Superintendent; Forrest Ransdell, Principal; Pamela MacArthney, Career/Tech Director, Sherri Carver; Media Teacher and Matt Tobey, Media Technician.

Prior to the meeting the Commissioners toured the School's Media Room. Chairman Gregg thanked the School members for allowing them to visit.

John Gregg Chairman called the meeting to order at approximately 3:35 p.m.

Meeting with School Officials concerning Educational Access Television:

The following questions were discussed:

1. What kind of video production programs/classes are offered to students and what uses are made of video production equipment by faculty and students?

It was reported that the high school is seeing a very regular increase in the use of video equipment outside of our media TV program where equipment is checked out as a presentation method and as a way to complete projects. It is useful to the curriculum and knowledge they gain outside of the media program. Chairman Gregg asked how many students are involved in the programs. Generally there are 20 per class for a total of 60 at any given time. The most we had the last quarter was 60, and that is our limit. Sherri

Carver stated this quarter she had six independent study students that come in having their own ideas and work on their own. She serves as an advisor to them. Media II is an over subscribed course. There are always more students wishing to take it than there is room. A function of our resources is that we can teach 12 sections per year, 12 one-quarter sections of media. For a single teacher that's 80 students. If we had more staff then we would have the ability to expand that offer. Chairman Gregg asked Forrest Ransdell if he thought there would be a demand for it. Mr. Ransdell answered yes.

Pamela MacArtney explained what they would like to do is develop a state approved two-year program, and to get approved by the Dept. of Education, they need to offer students 540 hours of instruction training - half the first year, half the second year, to have a fully qualified teacher and the right equipment in order to apply for a two year status. The school is moving toward that a program much like the one offered for Culinary Arts, auto tech, and building trades.

Kathy Pearce asked what the two year state approved program would enable the students to do after graduation. Pamela MacArtney stated that careers are part of the curriculum and presented the Commissioners with a copy of Competency Program Profile for Career Technical Education. The State requires that the school build a curriculum around competencies in all two-year programs and career development is part of the program.

Louis Vinciguerra asked "how can we, the Cable Commission, help you with this?" Forrest Ransdell answered they have not gone that far as to identify exactly where you can help us.

Superintendent Lister stated the school has arrived at a point that would make some kind of partnership with the city beneficial. There is a new building, a new media facility, two very talented people who work in the program, interested students and and a principal who has experience acquired at other schools in sharing school and community TV.

Chairman Gregg mentioned that he saw some pretty impressive computer production capabilities in the media room and asked how they were being used. It was reported that the end product produced was being used to meet classroom assignments, for the pleasure of the student and shared with others.

Sherri Carver answered that they have an assignment for all work done on computers and cameras. Media I will do interviews, documentaries and typically what we do is set deadlines as in the real world, air it in front of the class, they take copies home with them. All projects are based on an assignment, they need to come up with pre-production, brainstorming, an outline. They cannot just go out and film whatever. It needs to be structured. We have discussed trying to air on Channel 22.

City Manager stated what needs to be discussed are the forthcoming ascertainment hearings which will lead to a determination on receiving two or three additional channels

for the city. The present government uses a lot of the available time for televising city and school board meetings. The issue of co-mingling public access with government and educational programming would be of some concern because who is sponsoring the content programs that may be on public access. We would be open to having a separate educational channel.

John Gregg stated that sometime after the turn of the year that the formal part of the ascertainment would begin and would allow the school to formally identify their needs.

Forrest Ransdell stated that he could see the school being able to utilize an educational channel extremely well, both from distribution, news, information, notices through the broadcast of events, sports, concerts.

City Manger John Bohenko stated that the schools need to come to the ascertainment hearing and make their case because that is how the commission can then build a case in negotiating with Comcast. He also mentioned that one thing to remember is that this High School serves Rye, NewCastle, Newington and Greenland and that they are franchised by Comcast as well. He suggested there may be an opportunity to develop some collaborative effort with these other communities.

John Gregg explained that in building the case for a channel, it is important to identify the purposes, benefits and expenses needed to both to set it up and ongoing. Alan Brady stated that a scheduling plan is important as well.

Pamela MacArtney stated it seems like scheduling, equipment and personnel would be considered. Forrest Ransdell stated he did not think they would have any challenge at all in developing a list of things we would program on that channel. City Manager stated that would be good to enter as evidence at the next ascertainment hearing.

Kathleen Pearce stated the discussion so far has been around high school media programming, and asked if there had been any discussion with other schools in the district regarding how they can use this.

Forrest Ransdell answered no, we are the only building that is wired for internal broadcast and at this point do not have the capability of broadcasting across the district to other buildings other than via the Internet.

Matt Tobey stated it would be a simple set up to have a modulator set up so that if we set up our video feed to go back into the system, not only would it go back into our system it would go out to the entire community. He wondered if this would be incorporated into building the new Middle School i.e. to have TV's in every room. It was pointed out that this would have to be addressed at a later date.

2. Are you currently using any Video/DVD in the classroom – how and for what purposes? See answer to No.1 above.

3. Would you like the possibility of being able to program your own educational programming on the current Channel 22, during school hours?

Forrest Ransdell explained that they need to come to an agreement of the kinds of things we want to put on 22.

Matt Tobey explained that basically the projects done in the classroom needs to set the standards of the target audience as the audience of Channel 22, which is the community, it is only aired to Portsmouth and Portsmouth Communities, which is our target audience.

Alan Brady stated that televising sporting events has worked out well. Chairman Gregg asked if they had some sense of the amount of production you are generating will generate and how that would fall into Channel 22 of even Ch.23.

Matt Tobey stated he didn't see going full forward with this until it is integrated and change of structure of program from where it currently stands which takes resources.

4. Going one-step further do you see a need for a separate educational channel?

Alan Brady asked if the school would be interested in sharing the government channel. Daytime programming could be achieved by having modulator here and sending the signal to City Hall which would be the hub and broadcast it. For example, the school could broadcast educational programming between 7:30 A.M and 2:30 P.M.

Interest in doing so was expressed. However, it was pointed out that the 7:30 AM to 2:30 PM time slot would not be useful for the many parents who work.

Kathy Pearce asked if the channel could be available in the afternoons and therefore viewable by students after school is out. Sherri MacArtney stated radio station does their student programming from 3:00-5:00 because students are out of school.

City Manager stated meetings typically are not started until 6:00 PM at the earliest thus presenting an opportunity for the schools prior to that time.

Louis Vinciguerra stated the more we fill Channel 22, the stronger our case for obtaining another channel. Alan Brady stated that he believes Comcast is looking to see at least 12 hours of scheduling each day.

5. If a separate educational channel were needed, what equipment would like to have and what would you be likely to broadcast?

Sherri Carver answered equipment needed a Studio, Control Room, talked about the idea of a news show, announcements, students putting to use what they are learning.

Referred to Studio 14 a program done in the early 90's a magazine show where students were separated into groups, 3 segments each, the 4th group actually put the pieces together. They talked about community events and happenings in the school. They went to the other schools, not just the high school. Talked about other curriculum doing things, such as Poetry in Motion where the English students would write a poem and other students would create a video based on the poem, get together and have a viewing. Things like this could be potentially for the air.

Forrest Ransdell stated they have a listing of studio equipment that would be needed for a basic studio.

City Manager stated the important part would be to take the information you have and when the Commission decides on the next ascertainment hearing, shouldn't we put a lot of actual specifics on record and have an exhibit. The key is put all these thoughts into writing and present them at the ascertainment hearing.

Forrest Ransdell then stated that if they could get assistance from Comcast or Verizon in supplying the school with the studio equipment, he did not see the use of the studio limited to just the school during the day. There are other issues that would have to be resolved but there was no reason in his mind that if that studio exists, it should not be available to community groups as well. There would have to be responsibility after school hours for managing that space.

John Gregg asked if it would be an issue if community people or government wanted to go into the school during the day to use it. Forrest Ransdell explained that it is about having somebody to manage that studio space, Sherri and Matt can't stop teaching during the day because somebody wants to come in and film. There would need to be someone else to manage the studio space.

City Manager stated most people have daytime jobs and therefore people volunteering and using the studio would be mostly at night.

The Superintendent indicated they would have to take this up with the School Board, but he recognized there would be benefit in a partnership. He didn't think there was any way the schools could, on their own, invest the money necessary to set up the cameras, lights and other things needed. A partnership sounded like a good idea - that this would be for the benefit of the entire community.

6. If you are not interested in your own or even sharing the current channel, would you be interested in an on demand system, specifically for educational programming?

Alan Brady stated this has been answered already.

7. Would you like to ask any questions?

Bob Sullivan asked what the time line is for the Cable Commissioners regarding the meetings and requests you are making. Chairman Gregg stated specific dates have not been set for ascertainment hearings. Thinking about February or March, would like to do it after the Capital Budget process is completed.

City Manager asked if it would be useful to make sure that before the Commission sets its next date for public hearing that we touch base with the Superintendent to make sure they are available.

Chairman Gregg stated we would get back to you on the date. Chairman Gregg asked how we could start working together using one channel even more rapidly, should we leave it that both would think about it and compare notes, or start to work out a process seeing how we can do that.

Forrest Ransdell stated that as the schools begin to work on creation of a 2-year program, they will probably want a community/industry advisory counsel to work on those programs, and that it might be helpful for someone from the Cable Commission to be represented within that group.

John Gregg closed the meeting by stating that had been very enlightening, and that the Cable Commission would be happy to work with the school.

Discussion:

Chairman Gregg stated there are three things on the public side of the meeting to continue.

Approval of Minutes – Minutes of the October 6, 2005 meeting were accepted as presented.

Chairman Gregg asked if there were any additions to the topics to be discussed on December 1st in Manchester and Bedford.

Louis Vinciguerra asked if we would be able to find out from them the percentage of taxpayers and people in the towns that actually use the public access channel and view it. What percentage of the population of the City actually use it?

Kathleen Pearce said there are two points: 1.what percentage of population is producing shows and what percentage of population is viewing it. Alan Brady said it could be tracked.

Chairman Gregg asked the Commissioners to get questions to Alan.

Alan Brady informed the Commissioners they would be leaving City Hall at 11:00 a.m., the meeting in Bedford starts at 1:00 pm. which is the formal one. Manchester is more informal, a general conversation. There is a van available and he will be mailing out information.

Chairman Gregg suggested spending a few minutes on what they learned today.

Louis Vinciguerra said he didn't realize they had so much. The fact they can use Channel 22 now, no reason to delay till the new contract. Alan Brady stated they use it every Saturday.

City Manager stated it would be important for them and we need to send them a letter when we have the ascertainment, a key for us long term, we need a document from them.

Kathleen Pearce stated her concern of their only talking about the high school, what about the rest of the school departments?

City Manager suggested putting that into a letter to them.

Louis Vinciguerra asked Alan if Verizon would have the capability to offer the same channels as Comcast. Alan Brady answered yes.

Chairman Gregg referred to the notice the City Manager received from Earl Pearce of Verizon that they will be rolling their new internet and phone services in Portsmouth beginning November 17th.

MOTION made by Jeff Landry to close the public session and have a non-meeting with counsel. Seconded by Louis Vinciguerra. Motion passed, and non-meeting was held.

V. Non-Meeting with Counsel regarding Legal Representation:

VI. Adjournment:

MOTION made by Jeff Landry to adjourn. Seconded by Louis Vinciguerra. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine E. Boucas