

Council Proceedings

Council Special Meeting/Work Session

September 13, 2004

Pursuant to due call and notice, a Special Meeting/Work Session of the City Council of the City of Bemidji, Beltrami County, Minnesota, was held on Monday, September 13, 2004, at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall, Mayor Lehmann presiding.

Upon roll call the following Council members were declared present: Erickson, Zachman, Lehmann, Meuers, Hellquist, Johnson. Absent: Downs

Staff Present: Minke, Sherman,

Mayor Lehmann called the meeting to order and noted that the purpose of the meeting was to continue discussion regarding the possibility of expanding the city's cable access.

Councilmember Johnson reviewed the short-term goals set in December 2003 and highlighted the progress to-date. He noted that the council has expanded its cable access in recent months with the rebroadcast of council meetings three times during the week and the broadcast of monthly Planning Commission meetings.

Councilmembers reported positive feedback on those changes.

Johnson reviewed the long-term goals for expanding to a City of Bemidji cable channel with 24-hour access, discussed funding options and PEG access fees, staffing and equipment. Councilmembers provided positive feedback and support for expanding the project to improve public relations and encourage public participation.

It was noted that in 2004 this project would receive approximately \$10,000 of already generated revenue from cable franchise fees. Johnson felt that the City should consider purchasing necessary cameras, microphones and a character generator. He also suggested that the Council Chambers may need to be renovated to accommodate a studio. There was no proposal for additional staffing at this time, but it was suggested that the City might need to hire a project consultant to provide technical assistance to get started.

The City is permitted to charge a PEG access fee of up to \$1.00 for equipment and facility needs. Johnson provided a breakdown of fees to be generated from 25¢, 50¢, 75¢ and \$1.00 per month and suggested that the council give some thought as to how much they want to collect from subscribers for PEG access. He noted that the access fee could not be used to hire personnel to operate the channel.

Johnson noted that the City is required to notify the current cable providers (Charter and Paul Bunyan Telephone) of it's intent by November 1, 2004. Both cable providers have indicated their willingness to work with the City until it is up and running. Transition time was estimated to be 3-4 months. Johnson suggested that the city move forward by passing a resolution on October 18th.

ADJOURN

There being no further business presented for discussion at this time, motion by Hellquist, second by Erickson, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Shirley Sherman, City Clerk