

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, October 11, 2011

6:00 p.m.

1. Minutes of September 13, 2011
2. Old Business
 - a. New Programming
 - b. Council Web Page Information Update
 - c. Video Streaming Update
 - d. Candidate Forum Update
3. New Business
4. Public Comments
5. Committee Member Comments

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE MINUTES

Tuesday, September 13, 2011

Attending:

Councilor Kristen Hornbrook

Councilor Andre Cushing

Councilor Jean Lawlis

Resident Sally Leete

Susan Lessard, Town Manager (left at 6:55)

Matt Thomas – Firefighter/Paramedic Hampden

1. Minutes of July 21, 2011 – No changes or corrections were made to the minutes.
2. Old Business
 - c. Video Streaming Option – Matt Thomas discussed options with the Committee in regard how the community might proceed with trying out video streaming of Cable Channel 7 in the most cost effective way possible. Councilor Cushing gave a brief background on the history of the cable television equipment upgrade to digital and its ability to allow video streaming. Mr. Thomas explained that it would be possible to 'test' the application without spending much money by using a video streaming application called Ustream. In order to determine if this might work with the equipment, internet connection, etc. that the Town has, Mr. Thomas would need to acquire software and a few small pieces of equipment such as video cables. Motion by Councilor Cushing, seconded by Councilor Lawlis to allow Matt Thomas to expend funds to acquire software and peripherals necessary to test the Town's ability to bring Hampden Cable Channel 7 to Ustream. Vote 3-0

b. Public Comments

Matt Thomas, who serves as a Firefighter/paramedic for the Town of Hampden suggested that the current web host used by the Town – GovOffice – is somewhat limited in its functionality. He maintains the Public Safety website. The Manager explained that GovOffice was selected because it is the most cost effective at this time – and it is user-friendly and allows department staff to update their own sections of the website. Committee members indicated that the Town should look at options that might allow for a more robust website and do a cost/benefit comparison with the current website offerings.

The Town manager had to leave the meeting at 6:55 p.m. and Committee member Councilor Kristen Hornbrook completed the minutes for the remainder of the meeting, as follows.

Continuation of minutes taken by Councilor Hornbrook

Agenda continued with discussion beginning with item 2a under Old Business:

a. New Programming

Councilor Cushing discussed the difficulties due to lack of interns from NESCOM, however there are no shortage of ideas for programs to run on gov't access channel 7.

Councilor Cushing agreed to contact Rodney at NESCOM to try and line up others. Councilor Cushing will e-mail an update as soon as he is able to get in touch with Rodney.

Discussion about benefits to the community about locally produced programming. One idea was shared about possibly having Chip Swan give an update about the paving of Kennebec Rd.

No committee action taken on this item.

b. Council web page information

Short discussion regarding Councilor bios and photos for the website.

No committee action taken on this item.

d. Next Newsletter ideas

Committee went over the list of newsletter topics provided by Manager Lessard and discussion centered around ideas regarding a candidate forum for the candidates running in the November election. General feel of the committee is that a forum would be needed and talked about dates. Discussion around when to have the forum so that the announcement could be added to the October Newsletter . Dates selected are Tuesday, October 25th and Wednesday, October 26th. This would give time to contact candidates to discover which date works best. Also, newsletter with announcement would be received by citizens 2 weeks prior to the forum.

Discussion also regarding including 50-word profile of all candidates in the October Newsletter as well; questions regarding space for these bios due to the recent downsizing of the newsletter.

Motion by Councilor Cushing to authorize the addition of necessary space to include short profile/photo of all candidates for the November ballot.

Motion 2nd by Councilor Lawlis. Motion carries unanimously.

3. Public Comments:

Resident Sally Leete attended and said she is glad to see the Communications Committee moving forward with upgrades to improve visibility and information access (with regard to conversation earlier about live streaming on line) to the residents.

4. Committee Member Comments:

Councilor Cushing reflected on the importance of local programming and information access to improve/create connection with residents and the town officials as well as between residents. He talked about the very positive response when the town first began airing locally produced programming on channel 7.

Councilor Lawlis had no comments.

Councilor Hornbrook thanked everyone for attending. Meeting adjourned at 7:20

Respectfully submitted by Councilor Kristen Hornbrook



Susan Lessard <manager@hampdenmaine.gov>

Streaming video

4 messages

Matt Thomas <mthomas@hampdenmaine.gov>

Thu, Sep 15, 2011 at 7:11 AM

To: manager@hampdenmaine.gov

Hi Susan,

After a few hours of working on the video streaming yesterday, I had a few successes and a few problems.

First, I was able to stream the access channel video and I have a high degree of confidence that I could also add audio by getting the right cable (an inexpensive audio cable).

The issue, as Gretchen had warned me about, appears to be our internet bandwidth and possibly our networking equipment. Apparently our upload bandwidth on that network is insufficient to support constant streaming -- it will go for awhile and then bogs down. That will have to be fixed before we do any sort of streaming regardless of what solution or provider we use for streaming. I have no idea what increasing our Time Warner plan would cost.

Another option which would be to simply upload the meetings (not live) for viewing on the internet YouTube-style. This isn't the coolest solution, but it may be very expensive to get our network infrastructure and internet service up to the level to reliably stream.

Good news? We've only got \$35 in the project so far... :-)

Matt

Gretchen Heldmann <gheldmann@hampdenmaine.gov>

Thu, Sep 15, 2011 at 5:48 PM

To: Matt Thomas <mthomas@hampdenmaine.gov>, Susan Lessard <manager@hampdenmaine.gov>

A few questions I have are: Who is the target audience for this internet streaming? If it's people who don't have cable TV, is it because they are in an area where they can't get cable TV, or because they choose not to? I'm wondering if it's the former, if they are even able to get an internet connection that supports live streaming for it to work on their end?

Also - how many citizens have requested this? The Council Services Committee just this past Monday looked at one formal request received recently from a resident to fix the lights at the basketball courts, and all Councilors present (Councilors Brann, Lawlis, Shakespeare,

Hornbrook, and Wright) were in general agreement that the town shouldn't expend funds to upgrade the lighting because of one recent formal request and some here and there informal comments/requests over the years. Councilor Wright was the one to propose a fundraiser organized by that user group. So, I'm just curious if the same type of "rule" applies here regarding formal/informal requests made for this service? Just a thought.

Answers to these may help the town decide the direction in which it wants to move regarding upgrading network equipment or cable internet package.

Thanks,
~G

Gretchen Heldmann
GIS/IT Specialist, Town of Hampden
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On Thu, Sep 15, 2011 at 7:33 AM, Matt Thomas <mthomas@hampdenmaine.gov> wrote:

Fyi...

[Quoted text hidden]

Susan Lessard <manager@hampdenmaine.gov>

**Fri, Sep 16, 2011 at 10:22
AM**

To: Gretchen Heldmann <gheldmann@hampdenmaine.gov>

Cc: Matt Thomas <mthomas@hampdenmaine.gov>

Good Morning -

One of the reasons that the Town purchased the upgraded digital equipment for the local cable channel was so that we could eventually also have Cable Channel 7 viewed via the internet with video-streaming. The reason for this was so that a larger percentage of the population could also view local public meetings. This subject has been discussed by the Town Council for several years now - and listed as part of their goals and objectives as well.

I need to know from Time Warner what it would take to increase our bandwidth, if it is possible. Also - if it is possible to increase the bandwidth if the networking equipment we have is sufficient to handle it. Once we know that information - the Council can make an informed decision as to whether it wants to invest in this or not.

Thanks to both of you -
Sue

[Quoted text hidden]

Gretchen Heldmann <gheldmann@hampdenmaine.gov>

**Wed, Sep 28, 2011 at
9:42 AM**

To: Susan Lessard <manager@hampdenmaine.gov>
Cc: Matt Thomas <mthomas@hampdenmaine.gov>

Hello,

As discussed, here are the figures I finally received from Time Warner:

10mb download, 1mb upload: \$99.95/month
12mb download, 1.5mb upload: \$129.95/month
15mb download, 2mb upload: \$149.95/month

\$75 one-time installation fee, which could be waived if it turns out our modem equipment is already up to date.

We are currently paying only \$30.00/month, which is for our static IP addresses, and nothing for our current internet speed, because it is granted through the cable franchise agreement. The current speed is 8mb download, 512kb upload (kb is smaller than mb).

So the final monthly prices would actually be \$129.95, \$159.95, and \$179.95 respectively, once the \$30 static IP fee is added on - a minimum of \$100 more per month.

Those costs would address the bandwidth coming into and out of the building. The networking equipment may also be a bottleneck point as discussed, and some of that equipment may need to be upgraded. One piece of equipment in particular that may be a bottleneck is our firewall device, which runs at 10/100 speed, whereas many of our other devices have been upgraded and run at 10/100/1000 speed. A new firewall device could cost \$1,000.00 or more. Another thing to consider is the wear and tear so to speak, of constant streaming data traffic running through the devices. None of the devices when they were replaced were detailed out to be able to accommodate streaming data. I would need to do more research to determine if they could handle it, or if they would burn out faster, etc. This may require some consultation with Bricknet, which is another cost. If network equipment needs to be upgraded, I highly recommend that the town consider the future phone system needs that I've been talking about for years. Our current system was out of date when it was installed years and years ago, and our current system is maxed out with the number of lines and extensions it can handle. Newer phone systems work via an internet network instead of just a phone line, so it is something to keep in mind.

Any other questions please let me know.

Thank you,

~G

Gretchen Heldmann
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