

City of Lincoln

Telecommunications/Cable Television Advisory Board

Meeting Minutes – July 24, 2025

Members Present:, Jim Johnson, Steve Kiene, Tim Klein, Laurie Thomas Lee, Helen Meeks, Jamie Wenz

Members Absent: Ed Hoffman, Bennie Shobe

City Staff: Tim Sieh, Chris Triebisch, Beau Wolfe

ALLO: Andrew Vinton

Charter/Spectrum: Dayton Murty

Call to Order/Introduction

Chair Steve Kiene called the meeting to order at 4:04 pm. Kiene made note of the copy of the Open Meetings Act at the back of the room. Board members and guests introduced themselves.

Review and Approval of Agenda

Wenz moved approval of the agenda; Lee seconded; motion carried 6-0.

Minutes

Draft minutes of the April 24, 2025, meeting had been distributed prior to the meeting. Meeks moved approval; Wenz seconded; motion carried 6-0.

Old Business

Public Wi-Fi

Sieh led a discussion about Public Wi-Fi.

Wenz asked who has assumed the role formerly done by David Young, who previously worked with the City on fiber infrastructure and Right of Way issues, including conduit. Sieh said that Carl Steffen is the interim director of Information Services. Wenz asked whether it is worth having someone from our group meet with people in that division. Sieh said we should wait until there is a director. Wenz said that maybe we should table this discussion for now. Kiene agreed; consensus was to table this agenda item.

New Business

Review Access Channel Rules

The most recent version of the Access Rules had been distributed prior to the meeting.

Wenz said that there are clearly items that need modification, such as the mention of dropping off videotapes and DVDs at the studio.

After discussion, consensus was that for the Public Access we should hold off until the new franchise agreement is in place. We discussed the possibility of first forming a subcommittee for the Government and Educational Access Channels rules first, and reviewing the Public Access rules later, after the franchise agreement is renewed.

Kiene asked what the process is to accept an updated version of these documents. Sieh said that changes should be drafted and then brought back to the board for discussion and approval. Sieh asked what types of things need to be addressed. Wenz said that updates to the technology are the main thing. Meeks thought we should consider, and possibly eliminate, the section where there is studio space required. Sieh said that studio space is part of the franchise agreement.

We will consider updates at a future meeting.

Franchise Reports

Allo

Vinton reported for Allo.

Allo is having fun with the Mill telegraph district series this year. There was a big celebration last week. Two more concerts remain in the series.

Wifi conversion to version 7 is available for all Lincoln residential customers. Allo offers streaming services in partnership with DirectTV.

Allo is working with LPS using the SmartSchool application. An extension can be installed on ChromeBooks, which allows them to use excess bandwidth. If students can access line of sight on a router, then they can connect to the Internet.

Allo continues to build out in rural Lancaster County. Bennet is complete. A franchise agreement was approved by Roca last week.

Changes to the BEAD program are making it difficult for fiber providers to supply service; the focus has been changed to low-cost service. They are working to try to improve that; no guarantee.

Kiene asked about the 2GB option. Vinton said that there are lots of options for businesses to get more than 2GB, but residential is limited to 2GB.

Wenz asked whether traditional cable is still available from Allo; he couldn't find it on their website. Vinton said that it is still available, but streaming is the next generation.

Regarding SmartSchool, Wenz asked what kind of range students can get. Vinton said that it's variable; it depends a lot on the routers. It can also be affected by things like wall thickness. Vinto said that students in apartment complexes can probably connect as long as there is a neighbor close by that has service.

Charter/Spectrum

Murty reported for Charter/Spectrum.

Murty said that on May 16, Charter entered into a transactional agreement to purchase Cox Communications. They are early in that process. On July 2, an application was submitted for regulatory approval.

Murty said that Charter and Comcast have announced a deal with T-Mobile. That will roll out in 2026

Charter has a focus on programming partnerships. They offer over \$100 in value for cable customers to receive free streaming services; the company hopes to push more a la carte packages. They believe that is the business model for the future.

Charter has joined the "Invest In America" Trump Accounts Initiative, a program set up to help employees and their children.

Charter has an employee stock purchase plan; employees can set aside part of their paycheck and purchase stock with it.

Wenz asked whether Charter has completed their conversion to all Xumo boxes? Murty said that it is not complete. Wenz asked whether that is the goal. Murty said he thinks it's a better product, but he doesn't know of any plans to require conversion.

Lee asked how the merger with Cox is going. Murty said that there may be channel change notices and programming notices at some point.

Wenz asked whether there are Nebraska communities other than Omaha that use Cox. Murty said that there are about 20 communities. He has met with Blair, Gretna, and some others. He said that the merger will result in Spectrum approximately doubling their reach. He said that the only Nebraska community currently served by both companies is Fremont.

City Reports

Triebisch and Wolfe reported for the City.

Board Changes

Triebisch said that Demet Batur has resigned from the board, and the resignation has been accepted.

The mayor has appointed Brian Murray to the board; his appointment will be considered by the City Council at Monday's meeting. Bennie Shobe's reappointment to the board will also be considered at Monday's meeting.

We have two board vacancies; the Mayor has a name in mind for one of them but that will be announced later.

Streaming Viewership Report

Wolfe distributed the latest VOD and YouTube statistics, for the period 4/24/2025 to 7/23/2025

There were 362 VOD programs, totaling 186,255 views.

For LNKTV City and Health YouTube channels we had 150,550 views. (Lifetime total: 10 million).

New Mobile Streaming Truck

The City has purchased a Mobile Streaming Truck. Wolfe is excited about it. Wolfe said that there is commercial grade lighting. The front part of the truck will be their charging station for equipment; the cabin and back of the truck is where the bulk of their gear will be connected. They can also power up the TelePrompter for the Mayor.

The back seat passenger section has a desk and two wireless video inputs, which can be used for press conference, streaming to Facebook etc. The truck can handle up to eight camera inputs. There are two record decks.

Truck was tested today by connecting to city Wifi and using Beau's phone as a hotspot. They used the service for five hours on today's test, and it only used up 2% of the battery charge.

The goal is to have a nice social media vehicle. They wanted to keep everything local. They worked with BSA, and the truck came from Anderson Ford.

Wolfe said that three people can fit comfortably inside the truck.

Meeks asked whether one has to be commercially licensed to drive it. Wolfe said no; it's a Ford F-150. All three of the people in his department are comfortable with it. The department can set a limit; at 30 miles from charge end, the power shuts down just enough to get to a power station.

Triebisch said that the City traded in the old van. New one was an effort to modernize, as well as to become more energy efficient. He invited board members to stop by the truck after the meeting if they wished to see it.

Public Comments

None

Next Meeting

Next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 23, 2025 at 4:00 p.m.

Adjournment

Meeks moved adjournment; Lee seconded; motion carried 6-0. Meeting adjourned at 4:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Johnson, Secretary