

**STAFFORD COUNTY**

**TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION**

**January 28, 2010**

**I. Call to Order**

Public Information Administrator Cathy Riddle called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m. The commission met in the County Administrator's Conference room in the Administration Center, 1300 Courthouse Road.

**II. Roll Call**

The following members were present: Danielle Davis, Jim Minor, Joseph Moulton and Robert Thomas, Jr. Also in attendance were Marie Schuler representing Comcast, Paul Miller with Verizon, and Jaybo Johnson with Cox. Cathy Riddle and Michele Lansford, Public Information Office, and Jason Hill with the Department of Information Technology represented the County.

**III. Election of Officers**

Ms. Riddle opened the floor for nominations to elect a chair to serve in 2010. Mr. Moulton nominated Ms. Davis; Mr. Minor seconded the motion; it passed unanimously.

Ms. Davis opened the floor for nomination to elect a vice chair to serve in 2010. Mr. Minor nominated Alicia Knight; Mr. Thomas seconded the motion; it passed unanimously.

**IV. Presentations by the Public**

Mr. Daniel L. Rakes, 60 Shady Cove Lane, ask for the commission's help in providing DLS/cable service to the Widewater area. He said that the area is growing rapidly, and many of his neighbors need to work from home, and would benefit from having fast and low-cost Internet service. Ms. Davis told him that Mr. Minor is his representative on the commission, and that he and Ms. Schuler will follow up on the issue.

**V. Approval of November 2009 Minutes**

Ms. Davis moved to approve the November 2009 minutes; Mr. Moulton seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

**VI. Members' Concerns**

Ms. Davis asked Ms. Schuler and Mr. Miller when the County can expect responses from their companies about accessing service coverage maps. Mr. Miller said that Verizon will not make

the information available, and that the County should receive the letter soon. Ms. Schuler also indicated that Comcast would deny the request, and that their legal department is drafting a formal response.

Mr. Moulton asked them if the information is “business sensitive,” and proprietary. Both representatives responded in the affirmative.

Mr. Moulton requested that searchable Adobe versions of all cable television franchise agreements with the County be loaded onto the County Web site. Ms. Riddle and Mr. Hill told him they will research the possibility.

## **VII. Agenda Additions**

There were no additions to the agenda.

## **VIII. New Business**

### Public Access Channel

Ms. Davis asked Cathy Riddle how much money is in the public access fees account. She responded that there is \$15,694, which is not enough to cover the costs of broadcasting and taping the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission meetings.

Ms. Davis provided an overview of the work being undertaken by Alicia Knight and Pamela Haines to start up the public access channel – they are working with the Stafford County Educational Foundation; drafting a business plan for the non-profit 501C-3 that will manage the channel; and exploring ways to defray the costs for equipment and training. Mr. Hill and Ms. Riddle told the members that there is no space for additional equipment in the Board Chambers’ control room. Ms. Davis said that a local high school has agreed to allow access to their studio. Ms. Knight will report on their progress during the February 2010 meeting.

### Broadband

Ms. Davis spoke about the need for the commission to determine what areas of the County are covered, and to formulate a plan. She asked Ms. Riddle and Mr. Hill about if Stafford has received any Federal stimulus money. They replied that Stafford does not meet the definition of “rural,” and is not eligible for the funds. Ms. Riddle said she will send all the members an e-mail explaining the issue.

Ms. Davis brought up a piece of legislation passed in 1939 that concerns rural cooperatives, and said she will continue to research the law to determine if it will help Stafford obtain funding. She also said that the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission are looking into setting up “technology zones,” and that the Telecommunications Commission needs to work with them.

Mr. Moulton requested the amount of salary, per total number of hours, that Ms. Riddle, Ms. Lansford and Mr. Hill have spent working on behalf of the commission.

A discussion ensued about the fact that the Board of Supervisors deemed the commission to be critical to the mission of the County, wants the members to continue the work they're doing, and directed them to help the Economic Development office and the Economic Development Authority to draft a 10-point action plan for the technology zones and other telecommunications issues.

Ms. Davis said the Board is requesting a charter, vision, and goals and objectives from the commission, and suggested the members prepare that information as soon as possible. She also wants to have a PowerPoint presentation ready to present to the Board. The members who were present said they will send Ms. Riddle and Ms. Lansford their suggestions, and revisions to the charter.

Ms. Davis asked if the production contract with VTS is year-to-year – Mr. Hill replied that it is. She requested that he let her know when the Board is due to issue the next request for proposal.

Mr. Moulton asked what services VTS provides, to which Ms. Riddle replied broadcasting live and/or taping Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission meetings; formatting and airing PowerPoint slides that air on the government channels; and broadcasting and taping School Board meetings.

Ms. Davis wants the commission members to review the current VTS contract, and make recommendations to the Information Technology Department and Finance about what should be included in the document.

The commission members briefly discussed Comcast's fourth quarter report.

## **IX. Adjournment**

Mr. Moulton made a motion, and Mr. Minor seconded it, to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m. – the motion passed unanimously.