

City commission has proposal to broadcast meetings

By Tom Betz

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City commissioners had the idea of broadcasting commission meeting via cable television as one of the goals, and has proposals from the two cable companies in town about the cost and options.

Marty Melia, Eagle Communications representative, was at the city meeting on Sept. 20, to discuss the proposal for broadcasting the meetings.

City Manager Doug Gerber said he had talked with both Eagle Communications and S&T Communications over the past months about the project and had quotes from both.

"I have quotes from both companies that accomplish the same thing," he said. "I felt it would be good to have Melia come and talk about this to see if we are going in the right direction."

Melia said what the proposal is for closed circuit cable television

and the signal would not be going over the air. It would be restricted to a cable channel, and he said for Eagle that would be Channel 9 that is used for the roll around and used for some live programs including weekly radio programs.

He said Gerber asked how Eagle might do this for the city and said they had a similar set up out at the radio station where they used a fixed surveillance camera to broadcast programs on Eagle at the same time they were broadcast on the radio station.

For the city Eagle would bring fiber optic cable to the administration building. He said he showed Gerber the equipment set up at the Eagle office on 11th. The signal is sent out to the head in out by the radio station and fed into Channel 9.

"We will have fiber to the city building," Melia said. "We would have two fiber lines extra the city could use for Internet access if that

would be an option."

Gerber said it had come up that S&T has all the city business and Eagle had inquired to see what it might take to get a piece.

"We would like to get the Internet service," Melia said, "or we would have a minimal charge for putting the meetings on our Channel 9. We feel strongly about our Internet service and feel it would be a benefit to the city."

Melia said the city meetings were broadcast with audio only some 30 years ago. He said it was done at the same time and through a phone line carrying the audio to the radio station where it was broadcast live.

The Eagle proposal total would be \$7,546, and includes \$3,797 to do the fiber extension and about \$1,248 for the broadcast costs including eight microphones, cables, stands and sound mixer.

"The proposal includes \$2,500 for a fixed position camera," Melia

said. "We can go either way. What we use is a fixed position digital surveillance camera.

"We do have this in Hays with a different type camera and setup. This camera would not be manned and we would create a control button at the manager's position."

He said the microphones are not high end, but are good quality. The channel mixer would allow the microphones to be adjusted for each person.

"We want to have decent audio," Melia said, "not a fancy multi-camera system."

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Commissioner Dave Daniels said he had seen the Hays broadcast and the camera changed at times from showing all five to showing three.

Melia said Hays has two cameras and it is a manned system.

"We are looking at a fixed camera," he said. "The idea is it would

be as automatic as possible. Doug would hit the button and it would be on and when done he would hit the button and it would be off."

Commissioner Annette Fairbanks asked if this would only be seen by Eagle customers and what percentage of the city are Eagle customers.

Melia said it would be their customers and they have a little under 50 percent of the cable customers in the city.

Gerber said he had talked to Melia about whether the signal could be transferred to the other company.

Melia said he has not talked to the Eagle people about that option.

Daniels said Melia was wanting a little more money for broadcast costs.

"We would like a little monthly fee if we are not able to work out a favorable program," Melia said,

"Unless they get the city Internet," Billinger said. "Would people

on the Internet be able to see the meeting?"

Melia said that might be possible in the future, but it would not be available on the Internet at this time.

A question was asked that if it was a live simulcast would it be rerun at another time.

Melia said they are looking for a way to do that for this and other shows Eagle has.

Daniels asked if Eagle could rebroadcast the meetings now.

Melia said that is not available now.

Gerber asked if the commissioners felt the proposal was on the right track.

Commissioner John Garcia said it looked like a reasonable amount.

The other proposal presented by S&T would be about \$18,310 as submitted by Start Raving Solutions of Leewood.

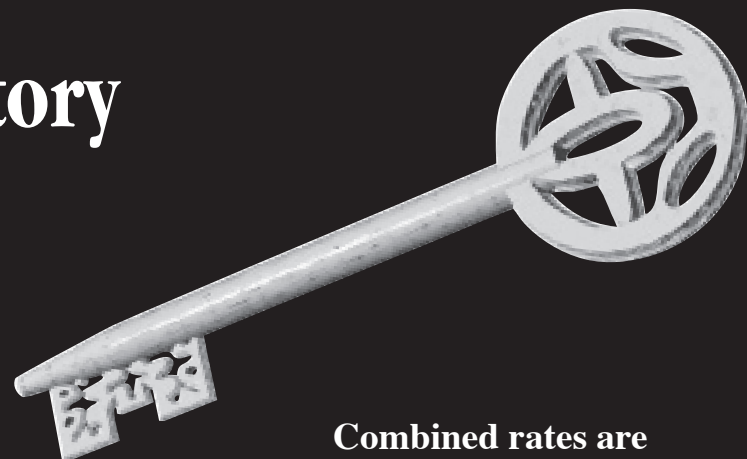
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