City of Blaine
City Council Workshop

January 13, 2025 | 5:30 PM
Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Square Drive NE
Blaine, MN 55449

AGENDA

NOTICE OF WORKSHOP MEETING
In accordance with the provisions of Section 3.01 of the Blaine City Charter, a Council Workshop meeting is scheduled for the following purpose:

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

3. New Business

3.1. 2025-19 Closed Session Pursuant to MN Statute 13D - Blaine Atlantic Funding LLC/City of Blaine Litigation
Sponsors: Erik Thorvig, Community Development Director

3.2. 2025-20 Closed Session Pursuant to MN Statute 13D.05 Subd. 3(b) - Attorney Client Privileged Discussion Regarding Lexington Water System Interconnections
Sponsors: Michelle Wolfe, City Manager

3.3. 2025-21 Alternative Revenue Sources
Sponsors: Jason Zimmerman, Finance Director

3.4. 2025-22 Cable Merger Update
Sponsors: Michelle Wolfe, City Manager

3.5. 2025-23 Federal Legislative Agenda
Sponsors: Michelle Wolfe, City Manager

4. Other Business

5. Adjournment

City of Blaine
Staff Report
File Number: 2025-19

Agenda Date	Status
January 13, 2025	
In Control	**File Type**
City Council	Workshop Item

New Business - Erik Thorvig, Community Development Director

Agenda Item # 3.1

Closed Session Pursuant to MN Statute 13D - Blaine Atlantic Funding LLC/City of Blaine Litigation

Background

Legal counsel representing the City of Blaine in litigation with Blaine Atlantic Funding, LLC will provide an update to the city council on the status of the ongoing litigation.

Staff Recommendation

Questions for Council

Attachment List

None

City of Blaine
Staff Report

File Number: 2025-20

Agenda Date	Status
January 13, 2025	
In Control	**File Type**
City Council	Workshop Item

New Business - Michelle Wolfe, City Manager, Kevin Sandstrom

Agenda Item # 3.2

Closed Session Pursuant to MN Statute 13D.05 Subd. 3(b) - Attorney Client Privileged Discussion Regarding Lexington Water System Interconnections

Background

The city's legal team will discuss litigation related to the City of Lexington and our water system. The trial is scheduled to begin January 27.

Staff Recommendation

Questions for Council

Attachment List

None

City of Blaine
Staff Report
File Number: 2025-21

Agenda Date	Status
January 13, 2025	
In Control	**File Type**
City Council	Guest Speaker

New Business - Jason Zimmerman, Finance Director

Agenda Item # 3.3

Alternative Revenue Sources

Background

As noted by members of the City Council at various stages of the 2025 budget process, among peer communities in Minnesota, Blaine is the only city that continues to rely predominantly on the imposition of a property tax to fund general government functions including police and fire operations. With rapidly increasing demands for services and infrastructure amidst constraints on traditional revenue sources, identifying and implementing alternative revenue mechanisms can help diversify the city's income portfolio and address funding gaps.

Alternative revenue streams can help diversify the city's income, reduce over-reliance on the existing property tax levy, and provide dedicated resources for critical projects. These approaches not only enhance fiscal resilience but may also be structured to allow for more equitable contributions from residents, businesses, and visitors who benefit from local services. This discussion will focus on identifying and evaluating potential revenue sources that align with Blaine's Strategic Priorities of:

- Financial Sustainability
- Economic Development
- Infrastructure Management
- Organizational Health
- Collaboration & Engagement

Representatives from the City's Municipal Advisory Firm, Baker Tilly will present to City Council and be available for any questions.

It is anticipated that this topic will be on the February 10 workshop agenda for a more detailed follow-up discussion with Council.

Staff Recommendation

Questions for Council

Does Council have specific questions or policy considerations around any of the alternative revenue sources presented? Staff anticipates a series of further meetings and discussions based on Council feedback.

Attachment List

1. Alternative Revenue Sources Presentation

Alternative Revenue Sources for Minnesota Cities

City of Blaine, Minnesota

January 13, 2025

Topics

Mindset for Discussion: Principals of Sound Tax Policy

I. Electric and Gas Utility Franchise Fees

II. Special Service Districts

III. Special Assessments for Defined Improvements

IV. Local Option Sales Taxes

V. Other: Budget neutral revenue adjustments

Principals of Sound Tax Policy

Simplicity

- Easy to comply with and administer.

Transparency

- Clearly define what taxpayers are paying for.

Fairness

- Avoid picking winners and losers.
- *Aligning payments and benefits.*

Stability

- Consistency and predictability.
- Property taxes are considered the most stable.

I. Franchise Fees

- Minnesota Statutes, Section 216B.36 authorize cities to require electric and gas public utilities to obtain a "franchise" to operate on public property.
- Cities may require other terms and conditions, *including obligations to pay municipal or franchise fees.*
- May be used "to raise revenue or defray increased municipal costs accruing as a result of utility operations, or both"
- Imposed as a flat monthly fee or percent of use.
- Municipalities may use fees for any public purpose.
- Fee included on monthly utility bill.

ELECTRICITY CHARGES	RATE: Res Underground		
DESCRIPTION	USAGE UNITS	RATE	CHARGE
Basic Service Chg			$6.00
Energy Charge Winter	1312 kWh	$0.113640	$149.10
Fuel Cost Charge	1312 kWh	$0.020229	$26.54
Sales True Up	1312 kWh	- $0.000150	- $0.20 CR
Affordability Chrg			$2.12
Resource Adjustment			$11.49
Subtotal			**$195.05**
City Fees			$3.55
Transit Improvement Tax		1.25%	$2.48
Other Special District		0.25%	$0.50
City Tax		0.50%	$0.99
County Tax		0.15%	$0.30
State Tax		6.875%	$13.65
Total			**$216.52**

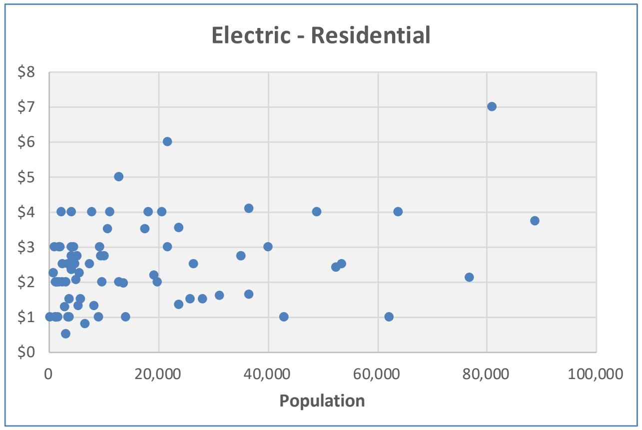
Comparable Cities

City	Residential	Small C&I Non-Demand	Desginated Use	Approximate Annual Revenue	Street Assessments	City NTC Rate
Bloomington	$4.00	$2.00	Transportation	$7.5M	Yes	40%
Brooklyn Park	$7.00	$6.50	Capital Projects	$7.1M	Yes	47%
Burnsville	$1.00	$7.50	Facilities	$5.2M	Yes	43%
Eagan	$1.85	$10.00	Climate and Sustainability	$1.5M	Yes	34%
Eden Prairie	$4.00	$3.50	Pavement Management	?	Yes	28%
Edina	$2.40	$2.50	Conservation / Trails / GF	$3.1M	Yes	28%
Lakeville	$6.00	$16.00	Fire Department	?	Yes	30%
Minnetonka	$2.50	$2.50	Bury Electric Lines / Trails	$4.0M	No	35%
Plymouth	$2.12	$1.60	Capital Projects	$2.9M	Yes	24%
St. Louis Park	$6.75	$6.75	Street / Parking / Sidewalks	$5.0M	Yes	44%
Woodbury	$3.25	$3.50	Parks and Trails	$2.5M	Yes	28%
Coon Rapids	4.0%	4.0%	General Fund	$4.0M	Yes	37%

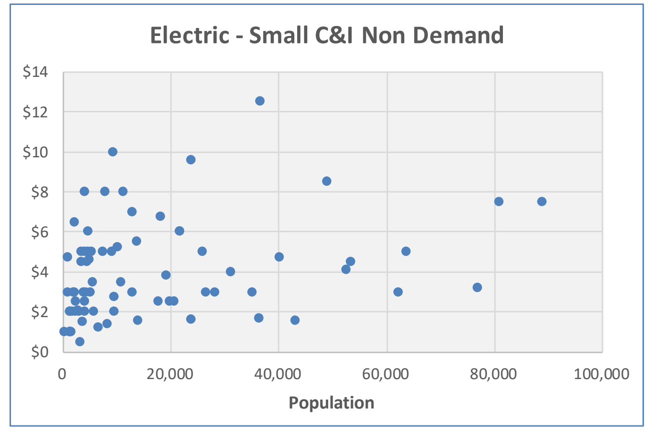
**The franchise fee amounts above are taken from various sources with dates as far back as 2019. As a result, they may not reflect the most current fee charged by the City.*

Monthly Electric Franchise Fees

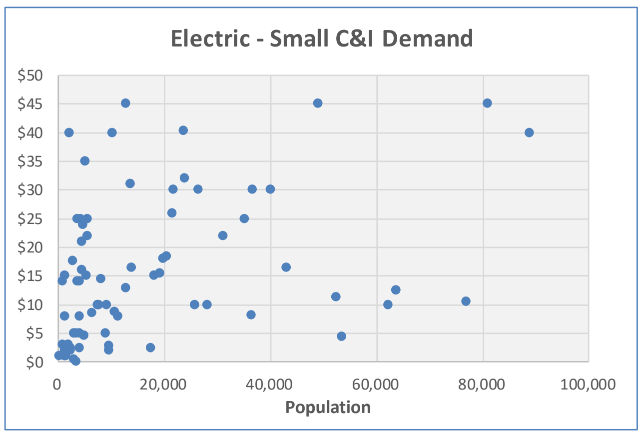
- ✓ Examples of flat monthly charges
- ✓ Primarily Xcel Customers



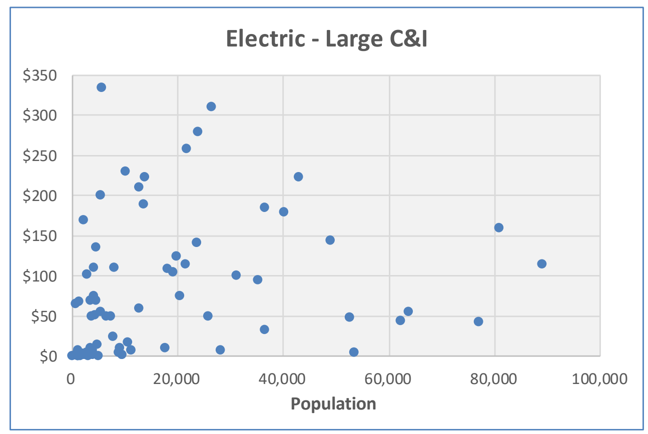
N=	78	Minimum	$0.50
Mean	$2.43	Maximum	$7.00
Median	$2.30		



N=	78	Minimum	$0.50
Mean	$3.89	Maximum	$12.50
Median	$3.00		



N=	78	Minimum	$0.50
Mean	$15.19	Maximum	$45.00
Median	$12.50		



N=	78	Minimum	$0.50
Mean	$76.03	Maximum	$335.00
Median	$50.00		

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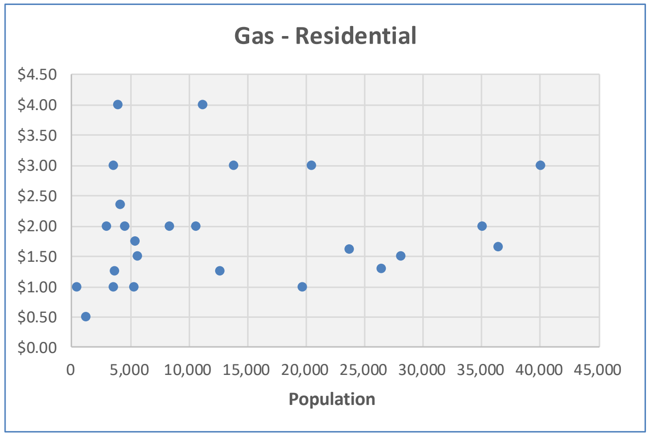
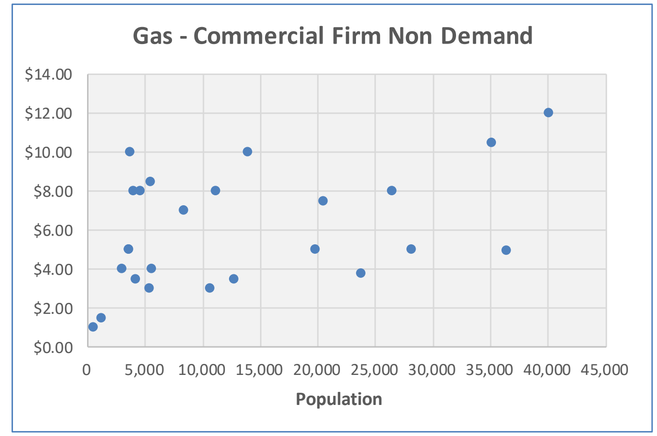
Monthly Gas Franchise Fees

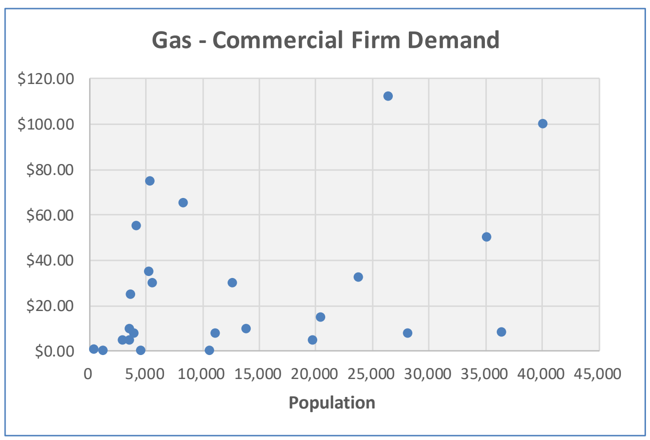
- ✓ Examples of flat monthly charges
- ✓ Primarily Xcel Customers



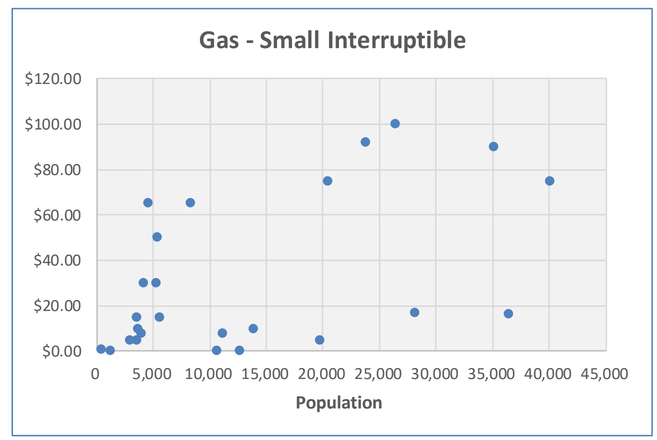
N=	25	Minimum	$0.50
Mean	$1.95	Maximum	$4.00
Median	$1.75		



N=	25	Minimum	$1.00
Mean	$5.99	Maximum	$12.00
Median	$5.00		



N=	25	Minimum	$1.00
Mean	$31.48	Maximum	$112.00
Median	$20.00		



N=	25	Minimum	$1.00
Mean	$35.79	Maximum	$100.00
Median	$16.75		

Example Revenue Estimates

		Equivalent Increase in Monthly Bill by Customer Class				
Electric Customer Classes	**Approx # of Premises**	**3.0%**	**3.5%**	**4.0%**	**4.5%**	**5.0%**
Residential	6,532	$2.50	$2.75	$3.25	$3.75	$4.00
Small C&I: Non-Demand	486	$3.00	$3.50	$4.00	$4.50	$5.00
Small C&I: Demand	214	$24.25	$28.50	$32.50	$36.25	$40.25
Large C&I	49	$740.00	$867.00	$990.00	$1,112.50	$1,235.00
Estimated Annual Revenue	**7,281**	**$724,000**	**$834,000**	**$960,000**	**$1,094,000**	**$1,193,000**

Gas Customer Classes	Approx # of Premises	3.0%	3.5%	4.0%	4.5%	5.0%
Residential	5,237	$1.25	$1.50	$1.75	$2.00	$2.25
Commercial Firm: Non-Demand	510	$7.50	$8.75	$10.00	$11.25	$12.50
Commercial Firm: Demand	1	$292.00	$341.00	$390.00	$437.50	$485.00
Small Interruptible	3	$59.75	$70.00	$80.00	$89.75	$99.50
Medium & Large Interruptible	2	$1,126.00	$1,313.00	$1,500.00	$1,690.00	$1,880.00
Estimated Annual Revenue	**5,753**	**$172,000**	**$203,000**	**$235,000**	**$265,000**	**$298,000**

Franchise Fee Considerations

Advantages

- Acknowledges cost of utilities in City rights-of-way.
- Diversifies City’s funding sources.
- Tax-exempt properties contribute.

Disadvantages

- Flat monthly fee (versus percent of use) is regressive.
- Could be considered less transparent.

II. Special Service Districts

- M.S. 428.01 – 428.10 authorizes municipalities to establish special service districts
- Defined area within the city where special services are rendered, and the costs of the special services are paid from revenues collected from service charges imposed within that area.
- Services not provided throughout the city or provided at an increased level than for the rest of the city.
- Special services authorized in some city ordinances have included street and sidewalk cleaning, snow and ice removal, lighting, signage, parking, parking enforcement, marketing and promotion, landscaping, and security.

II. Special Service District Examples

Crookston (1991) - Downtown storefront improvements; and 1997, to fund citywide flood control

Duluth (1993) - Improve safety, cleanliness, and economic vitality of the downtown waterfront

Mankato (1998) - Provide and maintain free parking facilities for customers of businesses in district

Minneapolis – 15+ districts to provide decorative lighting, banners, security, cleaning, snow and ice removal, and landscaping (varies by district)

New Ulm (1985) - Provide free on-street and off-street parking

Rochester (2005) - Marketing, physical enhancements, and promotion of special events within the district

Saint Louis Park - Six districts as of 2014 to provide general upkeep, snow removal, landscaping, lighting, banners, and waste removal

III. Special Assessments for Defined Improvements

M.S. 429.021 lists dozens of improvements in which municipalities can assess all or a portion of the cost. Only a handful apply to the City of Blaine:

Streets	Storm and Sanitary Sewers	Streetlights	Recreation	Trees
• Streets, sidewalks, pavement, gutters and curbs • Sewers or other street drainage and connections from sewer, water, or similar mains to curb	• Acquire, develop, construct, reconstruct, extend, and maintain storm and sanitary sewers and systems	• Install, replace, extend, and maintain streetlights and street lighting systems and special lighting systems	• Acquire, improve and equip parks, open space areas, playgrounds, and recreational facilities	• Plant trees on streets and provide for their trimming, care, and removal

IV. Local Option Sales Taxes

- Local Option Sales Tax laws will likely be amended during the 2025 Legislative Session.
- Probable Outcome: Projects must have a regional significance, provide economic benefit and be approved by the voters at a general election.
- There is currently not an option to impose a sales tax on a portion of the City.
- Revenue estimates from the University of Minnesota Extension Office:
  - 0.5% sales tax would generate approximately $5.5 million annually.
  - 48% would be incurred by non-residents of Blaine.
  - The average resident would spend an additional $35 annually on taxable good and services.
  - Capitalized Revenue: $5.5 million annual debt service over 20 years at 4.0% = $75 million.

Discussion

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City of Blaine
Staff Report

File Number: 2025-22

Agenda Date	Status
January 13, 2025	
In Control	**File Type**
City Council	Workshop Item

New Business - Michelle Wolfe, City Manager

Agenda Item # 3.4

Cable Merger Update

Background

Since the last time this item was discussed, the cable commission has had further discussions about this topic. Attached are the minutes from the North Metro Telecommunications Commission workshop of November 19, 2024. The Commission agreed by consensus to discontinue the CCX merger discussions. As liaison to the cable commission, Councilmember Massoglia would like to update the city council and discuss other potential options. Representatives from NMTV and Attorney Mike Bradley will be present for this discussion.

Below is some background information from the 10/21/24 workshop packet (minutes also attached):

The City Council previously discussed this topic and authorized a letter to be sent to CCX TV, requesting the opportunity to explore the option of merging cable commissions. CCX TV responded that they would be open to such a discussion. North Metro Cable Commission has had discussions about this topic, with a recent vote resulting in a tie. The commission will be discussing the topic again this month. Councilmember Massoglia is Blaine's representative on the Commission, and would like the opportunity to update the council on the status of these discussions.

Attached for reference is the packet from a recent workshop where North Metro Telecommunications Commission discussed the proposed merger of NMTV with CCX.

Below is the narrative from a previous workshop discussion in 2023, as background:

History and Background

Blaine is a member of the North Metro Telecommunications Commission. The Commission operates North Metro TV and offers community television programming:
Community television is a form of mass media in which a television station is owned, operated or

programmed by a community group to provide television programs of local interest, known as local programming. Community television stations are most commonly operated by non-profit groups or cooperatives.

The Commission was created through a Joint Powers Agreement, with the following General Purpose Clause:

The general purpose of this agreement is to establish an organization to monitor the operation and activities of cable communications, and in particular, the Cable Communications System (System) of the parties; to provide coordination of administration and enforcement of the franchises of parties for their respective System; to produce, edit and transmit video programming for the parties of this agreement; to make video production, editing and studio facilities and equipment available to the citizens of the parties to this agreement through the operation of a Community Media Center; to promote the development of locally produced cable television programming; to ensure public access to emerging telecommunications technologies; and to conduct such other activities authorized herein as may be necessary to insure equitable and reasonable rates and service levels for the citizens of the Members to this agreement.

The commission is also governed via by-laws. The full joint powers agreement and bylaws are available on the North Metro TV website:
https://northmetrotv.com/cable-commission/by-laws-of-the-north-metro-telecommunications-commission/

The cable commission operates North Metro TV (NMTV). NMTV offers news and sports coverage, broadcast and streaming of local meetings, and a variety of services and classes.

NMTV consists of the following seven cities:
Blaine
Centerville
Circle Pines
Ham Lake
Lexington
Lino Lakes
Spring Lake Park

The joint powers agreement between these cities was signed in 1980. The first franchise was signed in 1983. Additional history is available via the NMTV website: https://northmetrotv.com/cable-commission/north-metro-telecommunications-commission-a-brief-history/

The current Executive Director of North Metro TV is retiring in January 2024. The cable television landscape has been changing with the advent of streaming and satellite television. Given these and other considerations, Councilmember Massoglia would like the city council to consider exploring options for the future of NMTV.

One option is to explore joining with Northwest Suburbs Cable Communications Commission. Established in 1982, NSCCC currently offers its services as CCX Media for the northwest suburbs of Minneapolis. These suburbs include:
Brooklyn Center

Brooklyn Park
Crystal
Golden Valley
Maple Grove
New Hope
Osseo Plymouth
Robbinsdale

Exploring options will involve working collaboratively with our North Metro partner cities, NMTV staff, CCX staff and member cities, cable commission attorney(s), and possibly other cable commissions and individual cities.

Below is a brief outline of information regarding NMTV:

NMTV receives revenue primarily from franchise and PEG fees. Franchise fees are paid by the cable companies doing business within the defined geographic area. Pursuant to Section 611 of the Communications Act, local franchising authorities may require cable operators to set aside channels for public, educational, or governmental ("PEG") use. PEG funds collected are typically designated only for capital expenditures.

Commission Funding: Franchise and PEG fees

- Franchise fees = 5% of gross revenue – there are no spending restrictions related to these fees
- PEG fees are currently $3.30 per subscription per month – spending restrictions, related to use for capital expenditures, are expected as part of the franchise renewal
- NMTV currently has a settlement agreement that allows us to use PEG fees for operating expenses until franchise renewal
- Franchise fees have remained fairly steady - growth has been offsetting loss of subscribers; NMTV's current franchise fee stability likely due to an older population and growth in the total number of households
- Attached are two reports related to PEG and franchise fees
- Metro/industry wide – many commissions are experiencing revenue loss due to competition from streaming, satellite, and other technologies

Structure

- Member cities receive some funding back from NMTV annually for qualified expenses (see attached Franchise Fee Chart)
- NMTV owns its building and other assets ($4.6 million in total assets as of 2022 audit.)
- Currently in a good financial position
- Debt – Existing equipment certificate (will be paid off in 2024 resulting in $230,000 of annual expenditures freed up)
- NMTV members have weighted voting; voting is determined based on the number of cable subscribers per city (one vote for every one thousand subscribers or portion thereof, with each city having at least one vote). The number of votes per city is determined based on subscriber

numbers in December. In December 2022 the number of votes for each city for the calendar year 2023 was determined. Total votes were 17; Blaine has 8 of the 17 votes
- As of December 2022, Blaine contributed 54.98859% of combined PEG and franchise fees to the Commission
- That represents Blaine's 2023 percentage of assets (Blaine's share if the commission dissolved or Blaine left the commission)
- Income for 2022, both PEG and franchise fees, was $1,882,695; Blaine's portion was $1,035,267.50.

Budget

2024 NMTV Budget: $1,991,494

Beginning Fund Balances Total: $1,341,748

Estimated Revenues:

Franchise Fees	$1,150,000
PEG Fees	$ 565,000
Other income	$ 35,000
Interest income	$ 50,000
Income from Reserve Funds	$ 191,494

	$1,991,494

Estimated Expenditures:

Operating Expenses	$1,420,610
Capital Expenses: Equipment/Building	$ 190,618
Capital Expenses: Bond Payment	$ 230,266
Capital Expenses: PEG Fees to Cities	$ 150,000

	$1,991,494

Year End Fund Balances Total: $1,150,254

Services provided by NMTV

Below is an outline of the service areas provided by NMTV. The attached document "North MetroTV Services and Responsibilities" provides a detailed overview.

- VideoEngineering
- Channel Management
- Video-On-Demand
- CityMeeting Coverage
- Closed Captioning
- Meeting Podcasts

- Meeting Transcription Service
- Staff Program Production
- Educational
- Commercial
- Drone Services
- Franchise Administration

Options: Future of the Commission

Currently, a number of factors are in place that provide a window for discussing the future of the commission. The rationale for reviewing options for the future of the commission at this time includes the following:

1. Status of cable subscriptions and revenues
2. Executive Director retirement January 12th, 2024
3. Opportunities for economies of scale
4. Opportunities for enhanced services

NWSCC/CCX: Councilmember Massoglia has proposed exploring a merger with Northwest Suburbs Cable Commission/CCX. In a conversation with their Executive Director, it was indicated that NWSCCC/CCX would consider and discuss this concept once approached by a city or entity wishing to engage in conversation about joining or merging. If the parties are interested in entering discussion, due diligence would be conducted. This due diligence would include an analysis of the impact of a merger, including pros and cons and how operational differences between the two organizations would be addressed.

Additional options could be explored if the above merger idea is not feasible. For example, consideration could be given to filling the Executive Director position by hiring from within and not replacing the backfill position, resulting a cost savings. In addition, there are individual cities near the North Metro TV area, and they could be approached to join NMTV. Work could also be done to identify any other commissions for a possible merger.

Next Steps

If council is supportive of exploring a possible merger with NWSCC/CCX, and/or other options, Councilmember Massoglia will take steps to open discussions with that organization and the city's partners with NMTV.

Staff Recommendation

Ask questions and provide feedback to CM Massoglia as Blaine's representative on the Cable Commission, and to City Manager Wolfe as the city's representative on the NMTV Operations Committee.

Questions for Council

General update on the merger opportunity.

Attachment List

1. NMTC Workshop Packet September 18 2024
2. Oct. 21, 2024 Council Workshop Minutes
3. Cable Commission Workshop Minutes Nov 2024

NORTH METRO TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION WORKSHOP

September 18, 2024
6:45 P.M.
200 Civic Heights Circle
Circle Pines, Minnesota

AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL
2. OLD BUSINESS
    a. Merger Discussion **pp. 2-12**
3. NEW BUSINESS
4. OTHER BUSINESS
5. ADJOURNMENT

NORTH METRO TV

TO: CABLE COMMISSION

FROM: ERIC HOUSTON & DANIKA PETERSON

SUBJECT: MERGER REPORT

DATE: 9/5/2024

On July 29, representatives from the Operations Committee and North Metro TV staff met with representatives from the NWSCCC Executive Committee and CCX Media staff to informally discuss a potential merger. The Operations Committee subsequently authorized the Interim Co-Executive Directors to work with the CCX Executive Director to create a document comparing the two organizations. The full comparison document appears on the following pages.

This is a summary of some of the most pertinent points from that document:

- Our two cable commissions are governed by different legal statutes.
    - **NMTV** negotiates the cable franchises for its member cities, but each member city grants its own franchise.
    - **NWSCCC/CCX** is itself a franchising authority and grants a single cable franchise for the entire territory of its member cities.
- The membership and voting structures of our two cable commissions differ.
    - **NMTV** has a 7 member commission, 1 member for each city. Voting is weighted, with each member city receiving 1 vote for every 1,000 cable subscribers or fraction thereof. Matters are decided by 51% of the votes cast and the affirmative vote of a majority of the commissioners or the affirmative vote of ¾ of the appointed cable commissioners.
    - The **NWSCCC/CCX** cable commission is made up of 18 members, 2 members for each city. Matters are decided by a simple majority. CCX itself (the television production arm of the NWSCCC) is governed by a separate board of 15 members: 1 member per city, 4 at large members, and 2 board members elected by public access volunteers.
- Both commissions derive their budgets in the same way: each city contributes all of its Franchise and PEG fees to the commission.
- The two commissions have different PEG Fees. The PEG fee is a per subscriber fee paid by the cable company to the commission.
    - **NMTV**'s PEG Fee is $3.30 per subscriber. Thanks to an agreement with the cable company, it may be used for both capital and operational expenses. This would likely change during franchise renegotiation, but will remain as is with the proposed five year extension.
    - **NWSCCC/CCX**'s PEG Fee is $1.36 per subscriber. It may only be used on capital expenses.
- The two commissions are experiencing different rates of decline in cable subscribers.
    - **NMTV** is seeing a 4.2% annual decline in cable subscribers.
    - **NWSCCC/CCX** is seeing a 5.7% rate of decline in cable subscribers.

- The estimated household growth for the two commissions differs.
    - **NMTV** member cities expect to experience 31% household growth from 2020 – 2050.
    - **NWSCCC/CCX** member cities expect 20% household growth from 2020 – 2050.
- The two commissions' franchises are at different points in the renewal process.
    - **NMTV** is considering a five year extension of the current franchise.
    - **NWSCCC/CCX**'s franchise expires at the end of 2024.
- The two commissions pay their staffs at different rates. On average, NWSCC/CCX pays its staff 29% more than NMTV.
- Budgeting philosophies and priorities can vary across organizations.
    - **NMTV** has stayed within budget for each of the last four years.
    - **NWSCCC/CCX** has intentionally drawn from its reserves to cover $1.9M over the last four years. Its reserve fund still complies with the Office of the State Auditor's guidance to retain between 35-50% of expenditures in reserves.

	Northwest Suburbs Cable Communications Commission	North Metro Telecommunications Commission
Nonprofit	Yes, CCX Media is a nonprofit	No, North Metro Television is not a nonprofit
Legal Statute	NWSCCC is a 238 joint powers cable commission. NWSCCC is a franchising authority with the authority to grant a franchise for the entire territory of its member cities.	NMTC is a 471 municipal joint powers commission. NMTC manages and negotiates the cable franchises, but each member city grants the franchise.
Status of Cable Franchise Agreement	Expires at the end of 2024	Expired; have been in franchise negotiation since 2020. The commission is considering a five year extension of the current franchise. Each city has its own franchise.
Commission makeup	• (18) 2 commission directors for each member city with equal voting rights • Matters are decided by simple majority • There is no provision regarding elected officials The Cable Commission oversees the franchise and the CCX building (which it owns). It does not have oversight over CCX Media. *Note: many cities are represented by an elected official. For example, Robbinsdale is represented by its mayor and a city council member. Brooklyn Park, however, is represented by a city staff person and a resident.*	• (7) 1 commission director for each member city w/weighted voting • Voting is weighted with each member city receiving 1 vote for every 1,000 cable subscribers or fraction thereof • Matters are decided by 51% of the votes cast and the affirmative vote of a majority of the commissioners or the affirmative vote of ¾ of the appointed cable commissioners • Commissioners are elected officials The Cable Commission oversees the franchise and North Metro TV.
Nonprofit board makeup	(15) 1 board member per city, 4 at-large board members appointed by NWSCCC, 2 board members elected by Create (Public Access) volunteers This board supervises CCX Media. It is not answerable to the Commission.	Does not have a nonprofit board.

Executive Committee	There are two Executive Committees: one for the Cable Commission and one for the CCX (Nonprofit) Board. Cable Commission • Sevenmembers, elected from amongst the Cable Commissioners • No specified term limits CCX (Nonprofit) Board • Five members, elected from amongst the board members • Officers may not hold their position for longer than 2 consecutive years	• Four officers, elected from amongst the cable commissioners • Officers may not hold their position for longer than 2 consecutive years
Operations Committee	• Does not have an Operations Committee	• The Operations Committee is comprised of the city administrators/managers from each member city • The Operations Committee supervises NMTV staff and advises the Commission
Meetings	The Cable Commission meets quarterly 7:30 a.m. at CCX Media, NWSCCC followed by CCX Media Board meeting, followed by Executive Committees	The Cable Commission meets quarterly on the third Wednesday of the month at 6:00pm. Meetings are February, June, September, and December. The Executive Committee meets quarterly on the first Wednesday of the month at 6:00pm. The Operations Committee meets monthly on the Tuesday before the first Wednesday of the month at 11:00am.
Location	6900 Winnetka Avenue North Brooklyn Park, MN 55428 *building owned	12520 Polk Street NE Blaine, MN 55434 *building owned
Counties Served	Hennepin County	Anoka County
Communities Served	Brooklyn Center, Brooklyn Park, Crystal, Golden Valley, Maple Grove, New Hope, Osseo, Plymouth, Robbinsdale	Blaine, Centerville, Circle Pines, Ham Lake, Lexington, Lino Lakes, Spring Lake Park
Population	356,048 (approx.24 % cable penetration)	129,470 (approx.18 % cable penetration) *Note: penetration is percentage of eligible households with cable service*

Staff	25 FTE + approx. 30 crew/part-time	9 FTE + approx. 35 crew/part-time
Channels	Channel 12/799 (SD/HD) programs by staff Channel 20/859 (SD/HD)programs by public Channel 16 (SD) city-related *Note: CCX does not provide its cities with HD channels. City meetings air on cable in SD only.*	Channel 14 (SD) programs by public Channel 15/859 (SD/HD) programs by staff Channel 16/799 (SD/HD) city-related
OTT	Amazon Fire, Apple TV, Roku, iPad, iPhone, Android	Amazon Fire, Apple TV, Roku, iPad, iPhone, Android
Budget	$3.9 million Commission (of which 3.5M is CCX budget) *Note: the remaining $400k goes to building expenses and some legal fees.*	$1.675 million for 2025 (operate as one entity)
Budget Source	Each city contributes all Franchise and PEG Fees	Each city contributes all Franchise and PEG Fees
PEG and Franchise Revenue	Paid to NWSCCC 2019: $5,107,280 2020: $5,162,150 2021: $4,765,183 2022: $4,482,716 2023: $4,163,106 Franchise Fees are 5% of gross cable system revenue. PEG Fees are a per cable subscriber fee.	Paid to NMTC 2019: $2,105,966 2020: $1,962,565 2021: $1,946,985 2022: $1,882,692 2023: $1,778,583 Franchise Fees are 5% of gross cable system revenue. PEG Fees are a per cable subscriber fee.
Rate of Decline	-5.7% annually	-4.2% annually
PEG Fee	$1.36 per subscriber Can only be used for capital expenses.	$3.30 per subscriber Can be used for capital and operational expenses.
Budget	2019: NA 2020: $5,238,402 2021: $5,499,993 2022: $5,156,423 2023: $5,285,644 2024: $4,288,375	2019: $1,756,193 2020: $1,735,414 2021: $1,661,294 2022: $2,080,552 2023: $2,041,422 2024: $1,991,494

Funds Returned to Cities	CCX returns 5% of its Franchise Fees to its member cities as “city grants.” 25% of that amount is divided equally among the nine member cities. The remaining 75% is distributed in proportion to each city’s percentage of cable subscribers. On top of this, each city also receives an additional $20,000. 2019: $396,453 2020: $381,943 2021: $375,406 2022: $376,681 2023: $369,606	NMTV returns a set amount of money to its member cities each year. That amount is decided upon during budgeting and is distributed in proportion to each city’s percentage of cable subscribers. 2019: $400,000 2020: $400,000 2021: $225,000 2022: $200,000 2023: $150,000
Budget Shortfalls (Expenses not covered by cable revenue or interest)	2020 - $287,911 2021 - $574,940 2022 - $362,052 2023 - $709,010	2020: $0 2021: $0 2022: $0 2023: $0
Reserves	$4M	$1.2M
Budget Approval	The CCX (Nonprofit) Board approves its own budget. Neither the member cities nor the Cable Commission have input or approval.	Approved by each member city.
Staffing Levels	Down eleven staff members since 2021. Staff members retired or left for other jobs and were not replaced for budgetary reasons. All staff members were production related. Two were PT/FT staff, receiving benefits.	Down two staff members since 2022. Both retired. Accountant/HR was replaced by outsourced accountant. Executive Director roll has not yet been replaced.
Staff Salaries	$149,000 Executive Director $104,000 Video Engineer $94,000 News Director $110,000 Sports Director $72,000 Studio Manager $77,000 Programming Coordinator $85,000 Special Events Coordinator $76,000 Municipal Producer $69,000 Sports Producer $69,000 News Producer $23/hr PT Sports Crew $21/hr City Meeting Staff	$102,909 Executive Director $75,940 Video Engineer $77,001 News Director $77,001 Sports Director $67,745 Studio Manager $66,102 Programming Coordinator $66,102 Special Events Coordinator $59,862 Municipal Producer $55,078 Sports Producer $47,902 News Producer $22/hr PT Sports Crew $20.60/hr City Meeting Staff *Note: On average NMTV employees are paid 29% less than CCX employees*

Commission Withdrawal	• Member cities must remain part of the commission a full calendar year (January to December) following the year appropriate notice is given • Withdrawing member cities forfeit all rights to commission assets	• A member city may withdraw from the commission the year after appropriate notice is given • Withdrawing member cities forfeit all rights to commission assets
Administration	2 FT staff, 2 PT staff	1 FT staff
Tech Services	• 3.5 FT staff • Free tech support to all cities • Arranging and supervising bids • Editing bids • Supervising contractor installs • Station maintenance • On call	• 1 FT staff • Free tech support to all cities • Arranging and supervising bids • Editing bids • Supervising contractor installs • Station maintenance • On call • Purchase and install equipment on behalf of city halls
News	• 8 FT staff dedicated to news • Produce daily stories for web • Produce daily, 10 – 15 minute news segment for cable channel	• 1.5 FT staff dedicated to news • Produce frequent stories for web • Produce bi-weekly segment for channel • News department also leads election coverage
Sports/Events	• 4 FT staff, 30 PT staff • 120 games/events televised in 2023 • 39 other events televised: concerts in the park (17), dance recitals (9), commencements (8), city parades (5) • Games/Stories are free to view • Biweekly sports cast airs year round • 16 High Schools Covered: Armstrong, Benilde-St. Margaret's, Breck, Brooklyn Center, Champlin Park, Cooper, Hopkins, Maple Grove, Osseo, Park Center, Providence, Totino-Grace, Wayzata, Heritage Christian Academy, some West Lutheran, Maranatha • Average of 7.5 games per year per school in 2023 *Note: CCX covers several private high schools in the same manner as their public high schools, including one school that is not in any of their cities.*	• 2 FT staff. 30 PT staff • 147 games televised in 2023 (94 high school, 48 USA Cup, 5 grade school football championships) • 8 additional events: parades (5), graduations (3), • Games on web are behind NSPN.tv paywall/subscription service • Weekly sportscast airs during school year • 3 High Schools Covered: Blaine, Centennial, Spring Lake Park • Average of 31 games per school in 2023

Cities	• 2 FT staff, 11 PT staff • 401 meetings covered in 2023 • Staff city council meetings	• 1FT staff, 4 PT staff • 316 meetings covered in 2023 • Staff city council meetings & Anoka County Board meetings
Election Coverage	• 20 forums in 8 city halls covering 43 races in 2022 • Candidate Statements in 2022: 83 different candidate statements, each 45 seconds long aggregated and organized by city on the CCX website	• 22 forums in 2022 • Candidate interviews in 2022: 33 different candidate interviews, each about 15 minutes long aggregated and organized by contest on the NMTV website. • Candidates also get to submit a response to an NMTV written questionnaire that is also published on our webpage
Scheduling	• No dedicated scheduling staff • Departments are expected to schedule their own programs	• 1 FT • Schedules all channels, including city channels and city meetings
Closed Captioning	• CCX is currently rolling out closed captioning of city meetings for the first time • 5 to 6 cities now have captioned city meetings, live and on demand • The goal is to have all city meetings captioned by the end of 2024 • Captioning is not available for staff programs (news, sports, etc) or public access. The goal is to begin captioning staff programs in 2025.	• Closed Captioning provided for all programming on Channels 14, 15, and 16. • 10,710 Live Captioning Hours for City Channels provided in 2023 • 10,710 Post Captioning Hours for City Channels provided in 2023 Hours for City Channels provided in 2023 • 627 Combined Live and Post Captioning Hours for NMTV (Channel 15) • 484.5 Post Captioning Hours for Public Access • Percentage of Cable Programming Captioned in 2023: 100% • Percentage of Online Programming Captioned in 2023: 100%
City Meeting VOD	• All city meetings hosted on CCX servers and available on the CCX website • CCX staff bookmarks city meetings at city request	• All city meetings hosted on NMTV servers and available on the NMTV website • NMTV staff bookmarks city meetings at city request

Podcasts	• CCX does not offer podcasts of city meetings	• Podcast of City Meetings provided by NMTV staff and hosted by NMTV at City request • 55 City Meeting Podcasts created in 2023 (Sept – Dec) • Podcasts available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Google Podcasts, Podbean, Amazon Music, iHeart Radio, and Pocketcasts
Transcripts	• CCX does not offer transcripts of city meetings	• AI transcriptions of City Meetings provided by NMTV staff at City request • 27 City Meeting Transcripts created in 2023 (Nov – Dec)
Cablecast Programs	• 1,746 New Programs • Other data not available	• 1,174 New Programs • 28,024 Total Cablecast Programs • 23,382 Total Cablecast Program Hours • 9,399 Programs Cablecast on City City Channels • 8,238 Cablecast Program Hours on City Channels
Create/Public Access	• 1.5 staff members + internship program • By appointment, some classes advertised. • 3-4 Annual Producer meet-ups/educational opportunities for community • Training hours in 2023: 147 hours (Classes: orientation (58), studio (41), portable camera (18), editing (30)) • Approx. 120 members in 2023; completed training for 58 new members in 2023 • 1177 total programs submitted for 2023: 482 locally produced programs in Create studios, 695 programs submitted by non-members • Facilities for volunteers: 2 studios w/1 green screen, podcast studio, 5 edit suites, equipment check-out	• .75 full time staff • Equipment Training classes offered by appointment • 6-10 scheduled classes per year for Movie History and Internet Literacy Series. • Training hours in 2023: 29 hours (Classes: Studio (25), portable camera (4)) • Movie History: 18 students, 27 class hours • Internet Literacy: 100 students, 150 hours • Station Tours: 20 attendees, 20 hours • 46 active members in 2023 • 184 non-members using station facilities, staff, and equipment or attending classes • 571 total programs submitted for 2023: 297 programs produced by members, 274 produced by non members • North Metro TV keeps a library of classes available VOD. In 2023, we had 161,745 VOD students for 17,419 class hours. • Facilities for public use: 2 editing studios (with tape dubbing equipment), 2 studios w/ 1 white

		wall and 1 green screen, equipment check-out
Digital/Social Presence	• 1 FT staff • Website (2) • YouTube (2 pages) • Facebook (3 pages) • Instagram (3 accounts) • Twitter/X (3 accounts)	• Website • YouTube (2 pages) • Facebook (1 page) • Instagram (1 account) • Twitter/X (1 account)
Website	• 1,278,931 website visitors in 2023 • Highest month: March 144,607 visitors	• 63,356 website visitors in 2023 • Highest month: August 10,000 visitors
Digital Reach	176k subscribers for YouTube Sports • 6,455,511 views in 2023 • $28,655 generated • 799,481 hours watched in 2023 • Highest: March w/767,957 (65 percent decrease over 2022) 6.41k subscribers for YouTube News/Cities • 1.360,456 views in 2023 (48% increase over 2022) • 29,061 hours watched in 2023 (59% increase over 2022) • Highest: March w/222,795 views 16K followers on Facebook—CCX Media • Top story 154,778 accounts reached • 1520 FB posts in 2023 193 followers on Facebook-CCX Sports* (brand-new page!) 1.2K followers on Facebook-CCX Create 658 followers for CCX Sports on Instagram 429 followers for CCX Create on Instagram 2048 followers for CCX Media on Instagram 7020 followers on CCX Sports on Twitter/X • 849 tweets with 1.5M impressions and 27K clicks 4130 followers on CCX News on Twitter/X • 1,389 tweets with 624K impressions and 9,732 clicks 411 followers on CCX Create on Twitter/X	9.58K subscribers for YouTube 4.5K followers on Facebook 105 followers on Facebook-Sports 226 followers on Instagram 40 followers on Twitter/X
Email subscription service	• Constant Contact • 7088 weekly subscribers that can subscribe to a newsletter curtailed to their choice of city, school, or sports content (17 combinations possible)	No email newsletter

For-Hire	• 2 FT staff members • Custom production services for schools, cities, nonprofits and others • $58,480 invoiced in 2023 for 27 projects • Clients: Anoka Hennepin Schools, Minnesota State, City gov'ts, Nonprofits, North Memorial, small local businesses	• 0 FT staff members • Made $52,266 in 2023 • Clients: Met Council, CCX, CTN, National Sports Center, League of Women Voters, schools, dance studios, chambers of commerce, and others.
For Sale	• Digital Downloads or Dubs $20 each Made $2,432 in 2023	• Digital Downloads $16 (graduations, games) • Home movie transfers: Home TV Movie, Film, Photos/Slides, Audio tape, DVD duplication, Record family stories. • Local residents can transfer their video tape home movies for free. Transfers are also available for a fee. • In 2023, NMTV staff transferred 965 video tapes, 889 film reels, 8008 slides and photographs, and 353 DVDs. • Hire for a class or speaker • Made $23,517 in 2023
Video Format	1080i 59.94	720p 59.94
Drone	CCX does not have a drone.	NMTV has licensed and insured pilot on staff.
Estimated Household Growth	Estimated 20% from 2020-2050	Estimated 31% from 2020-2050
Debt	None	None
Age/History of Commission	Commission founded circa 1980	Commission founded in 1980

City of Blaine
City Council Workshop

October 21, 2024 | 5:30 PM
Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Square Drive NE
Blaine, MN 55449

MINUTES

NOTICE OF WORKSHOP MEETING
In accordance with the provisions of Section 3.01 of the Blaine City Charter, a Council Workshop meeting is scheduled for the following purpose:

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Sanders at 5:30PM.

2. Roll Call

PRESENT: Mayor Tim Sanders, Councilmembers Terra Fleming, Leslie Larson, Chris Massoglia, Tom Newland, and Jess Robertson.

ABSENT: Councilmember Lori Saroya.

Quorum Present.

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager Michelle Wolfe; Community Development Director Erik Thorvig; City Planner Sheila Sellman; Police Captain Russ Clark; Finance Director Jason Zimmerman; Human Resources Manager Lori Carbajal; Public Works Director Nick Fleishhacker; City Attorney Tom Loonan; Communications Manager Ben Hayle; and City Clerk Catherine Sorensen.

3. New Business

3.1. 2024-459 Closed Session Pursuant to MN Statute 13D.03 Subd. (1)(b) - Labor Negotiations Update
Sponsors: Scott Johnson, Director of Administrative Services

After a motion and second, the council moved into a closed session to receive an update on labor negotiations.

3.2. 2024-460 Closed Session Pursuant to MN Statute 13D.05(3)(c)(3) - Discuss Property Purchase Offers Related to Properties Identified as PID 21-31-23-24-0009 and 21-31-23-24-0014

Sponsors: Erik Thorvig, Community Development Director

After a motion and second, the council moved into a closed session to discuss property purchase offers.

3.3. 2024-495 North Metro TV (NMTV) - Merger Discussion Update

Sponsors: Michelle Wolfe, City Manager

City Manager Wolfe stated the City Council previously discussed this topic and authorized a letter to be sent to CCX TV, requesting the opportunity to explore the option of merging cable commissions. CCX TV responded that they would be open to such a discussion. North Metro Cable Commission has had discussions about this topic, with a recent vote resulting in a tie. The commission will be discussing the topic again this month. Councilmember Massoglia is Blaine's representative on the Commission, and would like the opportunity to update the council on the status of these discussions. If council is supportive of exploring a possible merger with NWSCC/CCX, and/or other options, Councilmember Massoglia will take steps to open discussions with that organization and the city's partners with NMTV.

Councilmember Massoglia provided further background information on this topic and reported city staff and CCX staff had met. He commented on the differences between NMTV and CCX. He reported this topic will be discussed again by the CCX team at their next meeting, which will be held on November 19.

Ms. Wolfe reported this topic would be further discussed by the Council in November where the pros and cons of a potential merger will be addressed.

Councilmember Newland commented on how the CCX coverage area was quite large. He indicated with NMTV, Blaine was the largest stakeholder within the group. He questioned if staff had investigated other options that would keep the city's footprint closer to the immediate area.

Councilmember Massoglia explained NMTV recently signed a contract to provide Fridley with meeting coverage and noted Fridley could be asked to see if they want to join the cable commission.

Councilmember Robertson asked what the push was to make a change.

Councilmember Massoglia stated this had to do with economies of scale. He discussed how franchise and peg fees were declining because more and more residents were dropping cable. He indicated another reason to consider the merger was to elevate the city, not that Blaine was a Top 10 city. He commented on how CCX had a larger reach throughout the metro area.

Councilmember Newland reported NMTV was founded in 1983 and at that time cable was a booming industry. He explained it made sense to put together this commission to help direct where things were going. However, the cable industry was now seeing a decline and noted this trend was universal. He anticipated CCX would feel this decline and asked it was wise for the city to join a different entity given the fact the decline was imminent.

Councilmember Massoglia indicated public access was very important and what the cable commission was trying to push for was to have fees charged to broadband subscribers. He stated these fees could then be helped to fund public access. He anticipated the federal government would have to address this issue.

Councilmember Newland asked if conversations had begun with local legislators.

Councilmember Massoglia stated it was his understanding a bill was drafted last year that would allow cities to opt in to collect PEG fees on internet.

Danika Peterson, NMTV, reported this bill gained some traction last year and made it to the floor, but got cut with the omnibus bill. She discussed how this bill would be monumental to cities.

Councilmember Newland stated he would like to see the city pursuing some type of funding solution versus just merging.

Councilmember Robertson supported the city asking more questions regarding the new funding source. She commented on the responsibilities the city had for being the largest stakeholder in NMTV. She then discussed how different the north metro was from the west metro. She indicated she did not want the city of Blaine to do any damage to another community through this process and she supported the city continuing to have dialogue on this topic. She asked if the NMTV representatives had any strong opinions on this matter.

Eric Houston, NMTV, thanked Councilmember Massoglia for bringing this topic up. He stated this has been a large learning experience for NMTV when considering options for the commission. He explained a potential merger was a large question mark and there were questions that remained unanswered. He indicated it was difficult to determine which way to move forward and he appreciated the council's dialogue. He stated he was looking for knowledge on the goals that need to be addressed by Blaine, along with the other six member cities.

Ms. Peterson reported if NMTV were to merge, while keeping the existing building and staff members, she did not see how funding could be saved, given the fact CCX's wages were 30% higher.

Mr. Houston stated he understood there was interest in expanded services for the city of Blaine, and being able to expand its footprint in the metro area. He reported if this were important to the council and the other six member cities this would be a reason to pursue the merger aggressively.

Councilmember Fleming requested further information on what NMTV meant by expanding the city's footprint. Mr. Houston stated this would mean Blaine's programming was available to the west metro and vice versa. He indicated this would mean there were more eyes on the video content that was being created by Blaine, as well as high school sports.

Councilmember Massoglia commented on the pros and cons noting the digital reach for the city would be expanded. He reported CCX has 1.2 million visitors to their website, while NMTV has 63,000 visitors. He believed being a part of CCX would put the activities and events occurring in Blaine on the radar of peer cities across the metro in a positive way.

Ms. Wolfe stated she would want to understand where viewership was coming from.

Councilmember Massoglia understood this to be the case, and noted staff would have to take a deeper dive into the finances of a potential merger. He indicated CCX was very interested in a merger, but stated the six member cities were not as interested.

Councilmember Newland questioned how the city's cable budget would be impacted by a merger.

Councilmember Massoglia stated he did not anticipate expenditures would increase. Ms. Wolfe reported this would depend on what formula was negotiated with CCX. Mr. Houston indicated this was a difficult question to answer given how a merger was somewhat speculative.

Councilmember Newland commented there were some attractive cities within the CCX viewership. However, he noted if a broadband fee were charged, the merger may not be needed.

Ms. Peterson encouraged Blaine to further consider what their goals were when it comes to cable television. She reported she has a staff of talented TV producers and there were options depending on what the cities goals were.

Mr. Houston explained NMTV serves at the pleasure of Blaine and the other six member cities. He stated whatever the city decides, NMTV would do everything in its power to see it through to a beneficial end.

Mayor Sanders thanked Mr. Houston and Ms. Peterson for attending this meeting and sharing their feedback.

4. Other Business

Ms. Wolfe shared updates regarding an additional item on the Council agenda, Walter's CUP amendment update and proposed changes to pickup days, and the possible removal of a pier at Lochness Park.

5. Adjournment

The workshop was adjourned at 6:59PM.

NORTH METRO TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

APPROVED MINUTES

Workshop – November 19, 2024

CALL TO ORDER

Chair B. Goodboe-Bisschoff called the North Metro Telecommunications Commission workshop to order at 6:08 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Directors Present: Chris Massoglia; Blaine, D. Love; Centerville, Nici Dorner; Circle Pines, Jesse Wilken; Ham Lake, Brandon Winge; Lexington, Dale Stoesz; Lino Lakes, Barbara Goodboe-Bisschoff; Spring Lake Park

Directors Absent: None

Others Present: Mike Bradley; Legal Counsel, Eric Houston; Interim Co-Executive Director, Danika Peterson; Interim Co-Executive Director

OLD BUSINESS

- The Commission discussed a potential merger with the Northwest Suburbs Cable Communications Commission/CCX Media. The Commission agreed by consensus to discontinue the merger discussions.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

Brandon Winge; Secretary, NMTC

City of Blaine
Staff Report

File Number: 2025-23

Agenda Date	Status
January 13, 2025	
In Control	**File Type**
City Council	Workshop Item

New Business - Michelle Wolfe, City Manager

Agenda Item # 3.5

Federal Legislative Agenda

Background

The City of Blaine has contracts in place with two federal lobbying firms. It is important to establish the city's legislative agenda as a means to set goals for our lobbyists.

In terms of federal lobbying, our recent focus has been on congressional directed funding/"earmarks". For 2024, staff reviewed the capital projects/equipment plans and worked with our lobbying team to identify potential options for funding. Another focus for our federal lobbying has been grants. Staff's suggestion for 2024 is to continue with these efforts for funding sources. Staff met with the team from The Ferguson Group to review our capital plans and other city priorities. TFG prepared a plan that identifies potential federal grant programs, including congressional directed spending ("earmarks"), which could be pursued during the year. The Ferguson Group will be our primary resource for grant programs, and they assist staff with identifying top prospects for earmark funding as well as grants. The Jacobson Law Group will focus on supporting our 2025 federal earmark requests. Staff has been working with our federal lobbying team to determine which of our projects have the best opportunities for successful earmark funding and begin preparations for submission. We will report back to council with the top options. During the workshop discussion council can provide feedback on the projects listed in the attached "Federal Agenda Priorities 2025" prepared by TFG.

Since December, we have created two tracking/prioritization documents (attached "Grants 2025" and "Earmarks 2025"). The grants document will be used to track throughout the year as federal grants are announced and evaluated for potential eligibility/application. The Earmarks document was created to assist with evaluating and prioritizing the projects we believe are most likely to gain support with our delegation. Our lobbyists at TFG are actively researching and speaking with appropriations committee staff to assist with that process. We will also be asking our lobbying team with Capitol Hill to weigh in with their thoughts. Currently, TFG has indicated that they believe the 800 MHz radio replacement project is an excellent candidate and would be competitive. They continue to evaluate other projects. We may have additional informational updates at the workshop and may need a quick additional discussion at future workshops to finalize the projects to be submitted.

As with state legislation, if we become aware of any federal bills for which we should take a position to have our lobbyists represent, we will bring the matter to the attention of the council as outlined in the attached State priorities document.

Attached for review is the year-end report from Jacobson Law Group (now doing busienss as Capitol Hill Associates . Year-end reports from TFG and our state lobbying firm were included with the December 16 agenda packet. The city reviewed the state legislative agenda at that same meeting.

Staff Recommendation

Questions for Council

Provide input and feedback for the city's 2025 state and federal legislative agendas.

Attachment List

1. Federal Agenda Priorities 2025
2. Blaine 2024 Lobby update Capitol Hill Assoc
3. Grants 2025
4. Earmarks 2025

City of Blaine, MN – 2024 Federal Agenda Priorities

Public Works	Action Item	Possible Funding Sources / Advocacy Opportunities
Pedestrian Ramp & Signal Upgrades	Upgrade pedestrian ramps, intersection signals, and trails for ADA compliance.	• Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Planning Grant • FY25 Transportation-HUD Highway Infrastructure Projects (HIP) Appropriations Earmark
Stormwater Utility	Construction of or improvements to storm water drainage systems, outfall replacement, ponds, and other structures.	• Sewer Overflow and Stormwater Reuse Municipal Grant • FY25 EPA State and Tribal Assistance Grants (STAG) Appropriations Earmark
Water Utility	Replacement of water mains, survey of lead service lines, remediation of PFAS/PFOA chemicals, upgrades to remote monitoring system (e.g., fiber optic plant and SCADA system).	• FY25 EPA State and Tribal Assistance Grants (STAG) Appropriations Earmark
Sewer Utility	Rehab of wastewater lift stations, trunk lines, and SCADA system upgrades.	• Sewer Overflow and Stormwater Reuse Municipal Grant • FY25 EPA State and Tribal Assistance Grants (STAG) Appropriations Earmark

Community Development	Action Item	Possible Funding Sources
105th Avenue Redevelopment Plan	Soil and groundwater remediation of brownfield sites within the plan area.	• EPA Brownfields Program Cleanup Grants
Northtown Redevelopment Plan	Provide infrastructure (e.g., water and wastewater, roads, etc.)	• FY25 Transportation-HUD Economic Development Initiative (EDI) Appropriations Earmark
Workforce Development	Address City's Industrial businesses' needs for skilled training	• DOL Apprenticeship Building America (ABA) Grant

Safety Services	Action Item	Possible Funding Sources
Mobile Command Vehicle	Purchase of new mobile command vehicle or technology retrofit of existing asset to provide increased security for events (e.g., USA Cup, 3M Open).	• FEMA Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) • DOJ COPS Technology & Equipment Grant • FY25 CJS-DOJ-COPS Appropriations Earmark
New Fire Station	Construction of new SBM Fire Station	• FY25 Transportation-HUD Economic Development Initiative (EDI) Appropriations Earmark • Advocacy (H.R. 1814/S. 977 – FIRE Station Act)
Mental Health Counseling	Improve the delivery of and access to mental health and wellness services.	• Law Enforcement Mental Health & Wellness Act (LEMHWA) Program • COPS Hiring Program (CHP)

Parks & Recreation	Action Item	Possible Funding Sources
Blaine Wetland Sanctuary	Remediation and protection of wetland sanctuary.	• Interior Department Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program • Land and Water Conservation Fund: State and Local Assistance Program (LWCF Stateside)
Trail Connections	Repair and management of existing trails (bike and/or pedestrian), construction of new trails, or connection of existing/new trails.	• FHWA Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program (ATIIP) • FHWA/MN DNR Federal Recreational Trails Program Grants • FY25 Transportation-HUD Highway Infrastructure Projects (HIP) Appropriations Earmark

Finance & Technology	Action Item	Possible Funding Sources / Advocacy Opportunities
Election Security and Voter Access	Improving the physical security of the elections office through installing improved locks, cameras, and security systems.	• DHS Preparedness Grant • Byrne JAG Local Grant

Municipal Bonds	Support preservation of tax-exempt municipal bonds and the reinstatement of advance refunding.	• Support the Local Infrastructure Financing Tools (LIFT) Act (H.R. 8396)
Cable Franchise Fee Regulations	Monitor changes in cable franchise fee legislation and regulation.	• Support the Protecting Community Television Act (H.R. 907/S.340)

City of Blaine, MN

Subject: Update on Federal Lobbying Efforts for Congressionally Directed Spending

Date: December 17, 2024

Sen. Tina Smith actively advanced our proposal for a mobile command post for the Blaine Police Department through the Congressionally Directed Spending process. Her office has shown significant support, helping to move our project forward in the legislative pipeline.

However, Congressman Tom Emmer's office, while not opposing our request, has chosen to prioritize projects specifically focused on infrastructure in the current funding cycle. This means that our proposal was still under consideration but not among the top priorities for Emmer's office.

Our discussions with congressional staffers focused on the recent money for Hwy 65 and the priority being given to “Bricks & Mortar” infrastructure projects. The staff member focused on Congressionally directed spending in the coming year has agreed to meet with us and help craft a 2025 proposal by providing feedback an evaluating the City’s request.

Grant Opportunities 2025

GRANT NAME	ACTION ITEM	DEPARTMENT	FOCUS	PRIORITY	STATUS	% COMPLETE	TEAM MEMBER(S)
EPA Brownfields Program Cleanup Grants	Soil & groundwater remediation of brownfield sites within the plan area.	Community Development	105th Ave				
FY25 Transportation-HUD Economic Development Initiative (EDI) Appropriations Earmark	Provide infrastructure (e.g. water and wastewater, roads, etc.)	Community Development	Northtown				
DOL Apprenticeship Building America (ABA) Grant	Address city's industrial businesses' needs for skilled training	Community Development	Workforce				
DHS Preparedness Grant Byrne JAG Local Grant	Improving the physical security of the elections office through installing improved locks, cameras, and security systems.	Finance & Technology	Election Security/ Voter Access				
Support Local Infrastruce Financing Tools (LIFT) Act (HR 8396)	Support preservation of tax-exempt municipal bonds and the reinstatement of advance refunding.	Finance & Technology	Municipal Bonds				
Support Protecting Community Television Act (HR 907/S340)	Monitor changes in cable franchise fee legislation and regulation.	Finance & Technology	Cable Franchise Fee Regulations				
Interior Department River, Trails, & Convervation Assistance (RTCA) Program Land & Water Conservation Fund: State & Local Assistance Program (LWCF) Stateside	Remediation and protection of Wetland Sanctuary	Parks and Recreation	Blaine Wetland Sanctuary				
FHWA Active Transportation Infrastruture Investment Program (ATIIP) FHWA/MN Dnr Federal Recreations Trails Program Grants FY25 Transportation-HUD Highway Infrastructure Projects (HIP) Appropriations Earmark	Repair and management of existing trails (bike and/or pedestrian), construction of new trails, or connection of existing/new trails.	Parks and Recreation	Trail Connections				
Safe Streets & Roads for ALL (SS4A)_Planning Grant FY25 Transportation-HUD Highway Infreastructure Projects (HIP) Appropriations Earmark	Upgrade pedestrian ramps, intersection signals, and trails for ADA compliance	Public Works	Pedestrial Ramp & Signal Upgrades				

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GRANT NAME	ACTION ITEM	DEPARTMENT	FOCUS	PRIORITY	STATUS	% COMPLETE	TEAM MEMBER(S)
Sewer Overflow & Stormwater Reuse Municipal Grant FY25 EPA State & Tribal Assistance Grants (STAG) Appropriations Earmark	Construction of improvements to storm water drainage systmes, outfall replacement, ponds, and other structures.	Public Works	Stormater Utility				
FY25 EPA State & Tribal Assistance Grants (STAG) Appropriations Earmark	Replacement of water mains, survey of lead service lines, remediation of PFAS/PFOA chemicals, upgrades to remote monitoring system (e.g. fiber optic plant and SCADA system)	Public Works	Water Utility				
Sewer Overflow & Stormwater Reuse Municipal Grant FY25 EPA State & Tribal Assistance Grants (STAG) Appropriations Earmark	Rehab of waterwater lift stations, trunk lines, and SCADA system upgrades	Public Works	Sewer Utility				
FEMA EmergencyMgmt. Performance Grant (EMPG) DOJ COPS Technology & Equipment Grant FY25 CJS-DOJ-COPS Appropriations Earmark	Purchase of new mobile command vehicle or technology retrofit of existing asset to provide increased security for events (e.g. USA Cup, 3M Open)	Mobile Command Vehicle	Safety Services				
FY25 Transportation-HUD Economic Development Initiative (EDI) Appropriations Earmark Advocacy (HR 1814/S977 FIRE Station Act)	Construction of new SBM Fire Station	New Fire Station	Safety Services				
Law Enforcement Mental health & Wellness Act(LEMHWA) Program COPS Hiring Program (CPH)	Improve the delivery of and access to mental health and wellness services	Mental health Counseling	Safety Services				

2025 Earmarks

ACTION ITEM	EARMARK	DEPARTMENT	FOCUS	RANKING	STATUS	TEAM MEMBER(S)
Provide infrastructure (e.g., water and wastewater, roads, etc.)	FY25 Transportation-HUD Economic Development Initiative (EDI)	Community Development	Northtown			
Repair and management of existing trails (bike and/or pedestrian), construction of new trails, or connection of existing/new trails.	FY25 Transportation-HUD Highway Infrastructure Projects (HIP)	Parks and Recreation	Trail Connections			
Upgrade pedestrian ramps, intersection signals, and trails for ADA compliance.	FY25 Transportation-HUD Highway Infrastructure Projects (HIP)	Public Works	Pedestrial Ramp & Signal Upgrades			
Construction of or improvements to storm water drainage systems, outfall replacement, ponds, and other structures.	FY25 EPA State & Tribal Assistance Grants (STAG)	Public Works	Stormater Utility			
Replacement of water mains, surveys of lead service lines, remediation of PFAS/PFOA chemicals, upgrades to remote monitoring system (e.g. fiber optic plans and SCADA system).	FY25 EPA State & Tribal Assistance Grants (STAG)	Public Works	Water Utility			
Rehab of waterwater lift stations, trunk lines, and SCADA system upgrades.	FY25 EPA State & Tribal Assistance Grants (STAG)	Public Works	Sewer Utility			
Purchase of new mobile command vehicle or technology retrofit of existing asset to provide increased security for events (eg USA Cup, 3M Open)	FY25 CJS-DOJ-COPS	Mobile Command Vehicle	Safety Services			
Construction of new SBM fire station.	FY25 Transportation-HUD Economic Development Initiative (EDI)	New Fire Station	Safety Services			