

TRANSCRIPT/MINUTES

ITAC Hearing, December 5, 2016, County Board Room, 7:00pm

Frank Jazzo: To begin this process, we last had a franchise hearing with ten years ago. So this is not, if we have any slip-ups on parliament any or whatever, please forgive us. This is not what we usually do. We do, readvise the county on, it is, information technology needs and matters that affect the county.

But, historically, the information technology advisory commission started as the cable commission. Going way back when there was a single cable provider with about 35 channels.

So, really very fortunate to have two strong provider force Verizon and Comcast. We are here tonight to consider a renewal of the Comcast certificate.

That is what we are here. We are here to hear from you the public to comment on it. And from the ITAC. So, do I have a motion to adopt our agenda?

So moved.

Second.

All in favor.

All right.

Our agenda will be, are you going to post the, we have the agenda projected?

Rob.

Okay.

Just to set forth, I guess, what we are looking to do as some of the framework to this evening is, we are going to basically review the significant terms of the, conditions of the Comcast franchise agreement renewal, the certificate, will be calling it the certificate.

We will also give you the opportunity to comment. But, we are probably going to have the public hearing portion open between, around 7:15 to 9p.m. as long as we can try to accommodate all of you.

I think that you have, Rob Billingsley, who is the county cable administrator will be receiving the speaker list.

Basically, helping to frame what is in the agreement. And, we are also going to have an opportunity to hear from ITAC members tonight. And, and, I think that, I think that we have taken an opportunity to introduce ourselves to our right, your left is Anita Nolan. To my immediate right is May and Martha

Moore and Robins to her left. David husband. Ken cone, Phil Collin, who may be known to some of you out there. Got Dan Loreda, and, bill Lang. And, I think that is certainly a quorum.

I think that we are at full strength. We are waiting on Josh. I think he will make it. Yeah, I think that he will try to make it. We are pretty close to full strength at this point. Anyway, I think that with that, I think that I will hand it over to Rob Billingsly, to fill us in a little bit about what is in the certificate.

Okay. Good evening. Make an adjustment. County staff consider the franchise agreement with Comcast to be an excellent one. The creation of this agreement did not begin with the negotiations between Comcast and the county. It started with a process authorized by the board in 2011 to determine technical programming and other future needs. This included several direct civic engagements with thousands of residents, on-line and statistically valid surveys. And an open ITAC hearing, which I mentioned that one in 2012. Builds a series of details of group of focus meetings on government education and business non-profit, art, faith-based organizations and neighborhood associations as well as broadband communication needs.

The county used that public input as a starting point in our discussions with Comcast for the franchise agreement. Neither party dictated terms but there was a give and take on both sides. And so the significant features of the agreement are as follows. To begin with, we got something that not too many jurisdictions have, that is a hi-definition availability, of hi-definition public education government channels.

That provide three channels. That will be hi-definition and three that are standard definition.

There is a franchise fee. That franchise fee ten years ago was subsumed under something called the Virginia telecommunication tax or the Virginia communication tax. It is a 5 percent fee that goes directly from Comcast to the county's, I mean the state's tax, department of taxation.

There are also studio facilities for AIM to continue, where they are located now at no cost for the year of 2017.

Then after that, they will be paying for their space. For the first six months of 2018. This is because we have been informed by Comcast that they are moving.

Sometime in that year, and, if I may reveal it may be on the corner of north courthouse road and the boulevard.

We also continue to get PEG and network capital Grant funds. These are funds to provide for equipment or building or construction having to do with peg networking and program usages.

We will use the same formula, \$1.38 per subscriber per month and will be paid out once a year, after the year in which it is based on.

There will continue to be free Comcast basic TV service to schools and county buildings, but with the ability to add up to six locations per year. The results of an important fiber use agreement. I say it is important because there are some vital connections between network operating center, of this building, and a similar one in this area as well as connections to county facilities, which we call Sequoia building, 2100 Washington boulevard. And these house important offices for department of health services. As

well as for schools. There are additional network facilities that will continue from Comcast, the Comcast institutional network or I-net 5 that will continue but only to the locations where we do not yet have Arlington's own connect Arlington fiber. We expect that to be built out by the end of 2017. The ones that do have a locations, the county buildings an schools that do have fiber going to them, will be relinquished within 30 days of signature of the agreement. There are also about a half a dozen virtual private network connections, modems that monitor water utilities, for the county. And, this is a five year term. And, it expires in 2021. The same year that our Verizon agreement also expires. I want to express that, if there is anyone in this room that doesn't get a chance to make remarks today or still wants to comment or send comments to us, they can do so at cable@arlingtonVA.US. Mr. Chairman, that is the end of my remarks on that topic. [Inaudible]

Did anyone hear any of that? [LAUGHTER] Okay. I will repeat it if you would like. So, written materials to be submit Ford the record shall be provided to the ITAC staff coordinator, that is me, with the speaker slip, when submitting materials, you would need to have 13 copies. In order to do that at this meeting. Again, if you want to submit that after this meeting, that is fine. Submit it to the e-mail that I have.

All right. 6 Do I have a motion to adopt it, the hearing procedures. All in favor. Adopt the procedures. All right. That brings us to you all! And, Rob, do you have speakers for us? Who will be the first speaker?

There shall be Bennett cob.

All right. Bennett. Please. One additional comment. If people could come up in twos, we will call two names at a time after each person has spoken, then we'll add two more. Bennett cob and Miriam GENARDI. Hold on. All right. We'll wait until he is ready for you. You ready? All right. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you members of the committee. I want to emphasize that I am speaking as a private citizen. And not as a official representative of any organization. I'm very proud to be an Arlington citizen and member of the Arlington independent media, AIM. There is a reason why AIM has earned award after award for its media activities and why it has attracted the participation of hundreds of Arlingtonians, of different ages and interests. Because aim has successfully managed the difficult combination of facilities, finances, knowledge and people to create a first class organization. 7 Most recently, aim survived the extremely challenging and complex FCC process, to obtain an FCC license with FM radio station. Hundreds of other jurisdictions have tried and failed to obtain this precious community asset. Aim television is aim TV and radio. WERA, 96.7 is one-year-old tomorrow. And it is approaching 100 programs. All created on a non-commercial basis by volunteer producers. The funding made possible by these franchise agreements is essential to aim and I urge you to support aim's wishes in this matter. Thank you.

Thank you.

Good evening. Thank you chairman. I learned recently about all of the hard work that you do. I very much appreciate it. I, too, am an Arlington resident. I lived here for 16 years. I raised my children here. One thing, I ran for office. I volunteer at the school, running around constantly trying to stay involved and contribute. One thing I found was that you can't make every meeting and if you don't have the resources, sometimes, your voice can't be heard. I found an opportunity for many citizens to share their voice through Arlington independent media where I joined the Arlington weekly news team. The

Arlington weekly news has been on the air since 1982. I honor and would like to mention Don Hammond, who was the 8 producer and spent a good time of his life volunteering in that city, studio to give citizens an opportunity to share what they were doing in the opportunity. Citizens that otherwise would not have been heard particularly because they don't want the news coverage that we see in mass media. On my segment, this is sustainable scoop, I have covered everything from schools and wellness, trees and traffic, big business and small business, our show, the Arlington weekly news has spotlighted worker, volunteers, artists an innovator, not to mention the amazing students that exist in Arlington county that are really changing the world. The Arlington weekly news, comes on every single week without fail. The volunteers of the Arlington weekly news, they basically put between preparations and execution and then getting it up on YouTube, so that the many viewers and also the businesses that participate can be seen, and spend hundreds of hours a month. The Arlington independent media staff supports us every step of the way and some of us have had state of the art training and many people have gone on to pursue careers. It is a real educational facility as well. Just as transportation and education are a source of pride, access to trusted and reliable balanced media is what aim provides. I hope that the I it AC committee will continue to put strong support on, into 9 Arlington independent media. In fact, if you increase it, we could use some more help. This week, we are interviewing Phil, he is Arlington county's recycling and environmental manager to talk and celebrate the hard work that Arlington is doing and their successes in recycling. I thank you for your time and appreciate your support.

Thank you, Miriam. All right. Our next two speakers.

Norton and Ken.

All right. I'm mark, I'm speaking as a resident of Arlington. I have been a resident of Arlington over 30 years. I am also a member of aim. Aim has been an incredible part of my life. Their writers group has helped me to write two books. I currently work on the Arlington weekly news. On a Teleprompter. More importantly, I teach, I study and teach health. I do a segment on the Arlington weekly news called the health moment. The whole idea is to communicate those things to the people of Arlington, that are necessary to maintain, regain and maintain a good healthy brain. Arlington has the slogan of fit Arlington. I tried to offer information. I tried to offer help to the residents of Arlington. It is Arlington independent media that gives me that opportunity. I kind of understand that you are between a rock and a hard spot here. 10 But, I, I do feel that Arlington independent media is a great value to the citizens and residents of Arlington and, I'm just here to, to support Arlington independent media and to urge you to maintain whatever support you can for aim. Thank you.

Thank you.

Good evening. Thanks for the opportunity to address the group here today. My name is Ken AVIS. I'm an Arlington resident. And you can tell by my accent. [LAUGHTER] Professional musician and for the past year, I have been a broadcaster on WERA radio. Before this past year, I never in a million years dreamt of being a radio broadcaster but admired many people who were. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak and for your support of aim and previous negotiations, and the current negotiations. I think I would like to say, that the continued support that is going into the future is particularly critical of realizing the full potential of aim and of the new radio station which is someone mentioned one-year-old tomorrow. It is still a baby. And it is getting to the feet fairly quickly at this stage. I think it is important to me, and I think it is important to the people of Arlington and the people of Arlington and the business of Arlington and various groups in Arlington. With the new radio station, I

would like to speak about the perspective of what it meant to me as an Arlington resident. 11 And what it means for the rest of us and what it can mean and what the potential is. I won't be talking about aim's other roles as an educational organization teaching people like me with no knowledge how to do radio broadcast and how to make TV programs. Nor, about the TV franchise directly, because other people have been involved much longer time can do that much better. But, do, they have about 100 programs in the first year, which broadcast every week. They are split between about 50 percent talk radio and 50 percent music radio. We reach potentially 700,000 people in this area. We don't know yet how many we are reaching but know the number is growing all of the time. Of the music programs, which I'm most interested in, 20 percent are focused on local music from Arlington and DC area, and my own program, Kelli radio is presented over 300 local artists in less than a year given them radio time, high quality performers an also presented venue owner, club owner, presenters, and people from the theatre arts as well. We have given the platform for so many professional musicians and platform for venues that helps them to thrive in this area. Create interest outside of Arlington in DC as well the same. We need a radio station like this, I was told by someone from DC counsel member. It is important that it supports local businesses, provides the platform and, it makes Arlington 12 a cool place, a cool factor to Arlington, that is a factor which so many other places from Austin to Nashville to Columbus, Ohio. I discover is really important attract and retain people. And businesses. And I think that is part of the potential. But in one year, we are just beginning. What I am really begging for is for continued to support for allowing us to get on our feet and keep moving. Thank you so much for the help on the negotiations. It is going to be a challenge for the next year and the years to come. We really need people to be aware of what we can deliver in WERA and then Arlington independent media.

Thank you. Thank you so much.

Our next speaker is Ken and Arthur.

Good evening. I've been involved in aim programs since the early 1980s when we moved here. Participated in them. That is wonderful. It is the very fabric of Arlington society that have aim part of it. But, I just like to comment on aim's benefit for the youth of Arlington county. I've watched them take people, sometimes very young, but definitely teenager, high school, children, and what they can learn. My own younger daughter, who went to WL and HB and graduated in 2008, participated a number of years in a number of programs 13 in front and behind the cameras. The information she got, the experience she had working with a very professional staff that aim is, really held her in good instead. Then, she went on to college and, that experience and the knowledge she gained, and enabled her to graduate six months earlier from college and really, exceeded whatever expectations she had of what she was going to college for. Just expanded her world. And, I think every youth in Arlington has that opportunity and, we would be at a great loss if we didn't have that in Arlington. Arlington, aim is a part of Arlington. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you so much.

Arthur Munson.

Are there any Comcast decision makers? Anywhere in the place? I don't think so.

Behind you. Behind you. Actually.

Behind me.

Are we sure?

Hello. It is going to be okay to laugh. I got a couple of things here. One question I had on the actual stuff that you have read, aim pays rent for the first six months of 2017 it said.

2018. I may have misspelled.

2018. Then what?

That is as far as Comcast is willing to commit. I shouldn't be answering questions, this is your 14 Testimony.

Well, okay. That was, that is a question that I think that should be asked, what happens after the first six months of 2018. Okay. As again, be ready to laugh. I'm an entertainment guy. I'm kind of hoping that the actual Comcast decision makers, sometime will be visited by three ghosts. I don't care what the first two ghosts show them. But I want to have the third ghost to show them, nice furniture and nice equipment. Set out in the rain due to eviction. And, they wake up and realize the support of the facilities, the location, where the content can be created is a part of the service that Comcast provides their customers. Who can always come. They don't necessarily have to join AIM. They can be a guest. We have had, in addition to the people that Miriam mentioned, is having been on the show, we have had county board members, one ITAC person. And, various other people there. I also have to correct Miriam, I was born in Arlington. And, AWN, goes back to 1981, rather than '82. The other thought I want to put out, a Comcast charges for their services. Which is appropriate. But, the content creator force Arlington independent media, the volunteers do not charge for their services. And the producers pay for the privilege of providing their 15 services. It is something that I want put into the record. As to why I'm here, I compose the theme music back in April of 1981 for the Arlington weekly new, and I worked with Don Hammond off and on. And, when he learned that he was dying, of cancer, this spring, he asked me if I could keep the show going. That is why I'm here.

All right. Thank you. Okay. The next two speakers are Charles Smith and Lauren Epstein.

Good evening, members of the ITAC commission. I'm Charles Smith. I have been a member of Arlington community television, Arlington independent media since 1991. For a number of years, I served on the ITAC, Frank, Mary. Dr. Belcher, of course. Bill came after I did. I had the pleasure of working with a phenomenal group of people that I know what you all do and I know that, I know the time and energy that you give it, it is really appreciated. Not just with the franchise agreement but, with monitoring the county's other technology efforts. Having citizen eyes on that. Some level of transparency is helpful. But the whole, you know, computer infrastructure of the county, it is emergency response system, all of that, need citizen eyes to help advise. So, thank you for that. Tom Whipples, excellent 16 leadership. Dr. Pelton excellent leadership, Frank being a FCC lawyer, communications lawyer, is, his leadership is obviously excellent. And, you know, that is appropriate in a community like Arlington which is, very intelligent place. We kind of citizens demand the best and we produce the best. And you heard of commentator talk about the level of programming. We have been recognized over and over and over the past 20 years as being among the best, if not the best year after year, facility. This facility. You know, facilities are important. But really the people are what makes aim in our community viable. And so I think, no matter where we are, no matter how it plays out, over the life of this franchise agreement, we are going to be okay because we have very resourceful people who are committed. You heard about the

involvement of time and commitment that people have paid over 40 years. Or 35 years in some cases, so, I think that we'll be okay. Technology is changing. I was talking to Marie. Who is a valuable member of the community, and Comcast gives to the community about the changes that we have seen. Dr. Tom Whipple used to talk about directly accessing programs, and, now that is the Norm. To, to dial-up a program and to see it at your leisure. 17 We provide that. And you can go to web site. So, as we go forward, as there is trouble in the future. We just are going to ask for your continued support in that effort. Because I think that we'll be okay with your continued support, thank you very much.

Thank you, Charles. Appreciate it. Thank you Mr. chair. It is a weeknight. Work gets done after five o'clock. I guess, you are home with your families, listening to WERA. Watching a television show. I move to Arlington in 1992. To, go to graduate school and work in a government and I was fortunate enough to land a show about 6-7 months ago, a radio show, the program is called, you are hired about jobs and careers. This past summer, a good friend of mine, Arlington resident, Brendan divine separated from the military. His family expanded. He had new kids and needed to get a job. So he consulted me and asked for advice on what he should do. I said, you know, this would be a great topic for my radio show because we talked about jobs and careers. So I put together a show around him. With, someone from military.com and a officer from the military officers association of America. And, it was a great show. And about two weeks later, I found out that the woman from military.com had gotten him a job. And, he was able to take care of 18 his family. So there is a lot of value in what we do beyond the, it feels good and it looks good and sounds good. The folks here are making a difference in people's lives. And I know, without a doubt, that Brandon's life is different because he now has employment. Because of WERA, he has 245 employment. Thank you for your time.

Thank you.

Next two speakers are Anne carper and Deborah shul.

Good evening. Thank you for being here and listening to us. We really appreciate your review of the agreement. I am Anne carpenter, a resident of Arlington. I grew up around here. Whenever we traveled a lot when I was a child. I have been in Arlington off and on since 1974. I think. I have worked locally in the arts and at cultural institutions and have been involved with county programming in the past. They have two things that I want to kind of highlight this evening, one is that aim really is, breaking new ground. And, independent media. It is kept up with trends, they have kept up with technology. It has continued to train and connect people. And adapted to really rapidly changing media environment. Reaching out to residents all throughout Arlington and ensuring that they have affordable training and the means to communicate with one 19 another. But, the, the one thing that I think that perhaps used to be emphasized a little bit more this evening is the fact that aim actually creates community. It does that through its programming. It does that through training, and it does that now also through the radio. The radio reaches so many people. And, it is connected to people in ways that you have already heard. But, with that said, the reason that I bring it up, and want to emphasize it, is that we will, we are adapting and we are growing. And we are becoming much more self-sustaining than we have historically through necessity and through desire. And with the ambition to reach more people and train more people and be more inclusive. So the lost of the space is a challenge. And it is one that we will meet but one of the things that it is highlight for all of us, we talked about the future and as we started to strategic planning is that aim really is a place and it is a place for community. So, any, as we make this transition, and as we look for space, whereas we adapt with the space that we have, we want to emphasize that is one of the reasons why the space itself has become important over the years. To aim. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you, the committee for your time and attention for this, what we think is a very 20 important matter. My name is Deborah shul. I'm here as, in Arlington county resident first. In Arlington county business owner second. And a board member of Arlington independent media. Which may be, should be most important but, I'm grateful first of all to the county for their support in negotiating the agreement with Comcast and making it a workable agreement, I think for aim and for the county. To ensure continued access. Aim serves the local community by providing a path for this public access. To the airways. And in a time where the media landscaped the scene dramatic changes, Arlington independent media is both a teacher and a platform provider to our community. Fostering dialogue, creative expression. And, in an essential means for citizen participation and connection. I have a media business and marketing business. I got involved with Arlington independent media on the board. Because, I want more people to know about it. And know about its resources. So, that is my long, that is my long range goal. I want to make sure that more people in Arlington know. And participate. I'm here to support aim and important to our uniqueness in Arlington community.

Thank you.

Thank you very much.

Hi, good evening. 21 I'm here to make the aggressive economic development case for continuing aim and its growth. I got into tech not because I wanted to, but because I had to as a 50-something-year-old woman to learn digital media. Aim has been going into these areas and in ways that are powerful. Over the last couple of months, I have had to submit six different videos submissions to get a job, to get a Grant, to pitch an idea. These are things that I had my teenage son videotape on iPad. But, quite frankly, the world is getting to a place where we need the facilities and the talent of aim to make the case for Arlington and need to get a job. Who need to get to school and need to get a Grant. This can only be done with the support of keeping aim as it is and growing. In the location it is at in a metro friendly corridor. Without a doubt, the landscape is changing for cable. We are getting to the point where low power, wide area network, for the internet of things is coming on board. And, I know that we are not here to talk about that tonight. Once we agree on this, we need to modernize and think about the future how we use the public airwaves in the public interest and, economic development and helping people to get their jobs in the future. It is a very good start. Thank you.

Thank you. Daniel and William.

Thank you to all of you. Thank you for taking the time to 22 listen to us today. My name is Daniel PANEDA, a volunteer at Arlington independent media for 8.5 years. I work, I volunteer at a program. I co-anchor with Craig Nolan, the Arlington weekly news program. Which was founded by Don Hammond, our founder. And, well, one of the reasons I'm asking for your support today, is because aim has taught me a lot. I'm in the video production industry. And, with aim, it was one of the reasons why I got into video production. The great classes, their instructor, really taught me a lot about the industry and really got me motivated to speak my mind and so, I would really appreciate if you could support Arlington independent media. Thank you.

Thank you.

Go ahead bill.

Good evening. I'm Bill Calder. I come from Pittsburgh. I make a recommendation, this past Thanksgiving holiday, I looked at the biography of Fred Rogers. I would recommend you find somewhere the exchange of senator pastor and Fred Rogers in a senate hearing of the late '60s. I had never worked for what you would call Mr. Rogers' neighborhood. There was a show in Pittsburgh before that called the children's corner. I was a crew guy. You know, Fred Rogers as well as 23 I do. The same off and on the air. One thing that was going to be decided by you folk, here is my question. The commercial people will deliver a commercial for a commercial. They'll get your money. But they don't have to do public service. They don't owe us anything. What will this committee and the board deliver, what public service will you deliver to Arlington residents? My background, I was the lucky kid who February 1973, went to work for WTOP-TV channel 9. I was camera man and a floor manager from Maxine Gordon. It was hot stuff. We were number one. Those were the good old days. And we are all still friends. We delivered public service there because of William Daly, and Kathleen Graham who were personal friends and we knew it. Down on the bottom of the studio. So here is the question. It will be an answer. What public service will this group, the board, what we need to deliver beyond these people here? Because the commercial people will not deliver, they don't have to. That was given up in 1982. As an FCC rule gone. Don't worry about the little Saturday evening shows with the EI, what is that? I'll leave you with a question and I thank you very much.

Thank you. Jay and pardon my mispronunciation if it happen, 24 Craig Nolan --

Thank you very much for taking the time to hear our views. I'm not even a resident of Arlington. I live in Springfield, Virginia. In fact, Arlington media has had as much positive impact on my family as any organization I could think of. When my younger son was about 13 or 14, he started teaching himself how to edit videos on line. He was feeling pretty good at it. He showed me one. Yeah, this looks good. I knew a couple of people that were involved in film making, they looked at it and said, your son is great. You need to encourage him. I said, oh, free intern over the summer? I was think, what will I do with a teenager hanging around? I wasn't getting anywhere. I happen to run into acquaintance of mine, who started a staff job at aim. Really excited and pumped up. Explaining her job. I thought, this is perfect. Exactly the place where my son can learn skills from professional people. And, the contacts he made, the production scenes involved in, got him into BCU Cinema program. He graduated last year. And, he is now has a union job, specializes in lighting and electrical jobs onset. How many people my age have 22-year-old kids that are supporting themselves? That is pretty rare. And, in fact, this summer, he 25 came home, you know, for a weekend and he had just started a shoot with a Danny movie and head shaved. I said, did you join the marines? What happened? He said, I got a story. Pulled out the phone. I showed a picture of three people with shaved heads. Well, Daniel was filming the movie with undercover FBI agent infiltrating skinhead organization. First day on the set, they had someone pull out a razor, all of the rookies line up and getting your head shaved. Chief cinematographer said I want my head shaved. My son said, yeah, me, too. The picture was myself, Daniel Radcliffe and the cinematographer with the head shave and smiling. In my long life, I never had such a cool picture taken. None of this happen without aim. It is an opportunity that would be great for even more Arlington families, but, just remember, the reason that I knew about the organization was an accident. I ran into an acquaintance at a time which was really excited about starting the new job. In addition to helping to fund and support this organization provide really useful skills to young people, we also should be doing as much as we can to publicize what this organization does. So I understand that one of the issues, in the contract negotiations is whether or not, our programming will be included in the call. I would say that, what is the 26 point of devoting how many resources to something like this if you don't also give out public programming for it. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Mr. Chairman and Mr. Cable administrator and ladies and gentlemen of the ITAC commission, commission or a counsel?

Commission.

We are a commission.

We are a commission.

Thank you for hearing our comments this evening. I am an Arlington resident since 1971. And, have been in the aim member before, was aim for about 30 years. And, I am also the anchor of the Arlington weekly news. If you ever happen to watch our show, we air at 6 o'clock on Thursday nights, if you are a Comcast cable subscriber, that would be on channel 69. And, if you are Verizon subscriber, that would be on Channel 38. 6 o'clock Thursday nights. Again, Saturday mornings at 10 or 10:30, I believe. And then, Monday the following Monday at 8:30. So you still may have time if you get home to latest edition of the weekly edition of the Arlington weekly news. I have a question for you folks and, maybe it is not a good idea with a presentation with a question. Have you ever been to aim?

Yes, we held our last regularly scheduled meeting at aim.

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You were the folks in the kitchen. As I was changing into hi anchor outfit. If you haven't, you should stop by. It is a beautiful facility. Well managed and well run by our long time executive director Paul valley, and an amazing staff and for a lot of us who don't work there, that is our home. For me, at least one night a week on Wednesday night, that is my home. That is where I go. I met and just crossed technology with a lot of folks down there. Met a lot of amazing people from county board members to local celebrities to musicians, and we are doing the Arlington weekly news 35 years later. Aim is one much the best run access operations in the country as our 10-12 community media awards testify and, it is, it is a wonderful place. And it is home to us. If you haven't had a chance to stop by, aim, come by some Wednesday night, we would be glad to make you a local television star and, make you a part of the Arlington weekly news. Thank you for your time.

Thank you so much.

L chairman, two 5-minute speaker, Paul and Jason. If there are any 3-minute speakers that still want to come up, you may come up after these two have spoken.

Thank you, Rob.

Thank you to the commission for hearing our Testimony tonight. 28 We appreciate the opportunity to comment. Because this agreement directly affects aim and some very critical ways. We are extremely grateful to the Arlington county government for negotiating on our behalf and securing some crucial support for aim. And I especially would like to thank Rob Billingsley and belcher for getting the best agreement. It is comprised of nearly a thousand volunteers who produce local radio and television for the Arlington community. These volunteers contribute thousands of hours every year to help each other cover the sites, sounds, people, events in our community. Arlington weekly news besides one example continuously producing a new show every week for the past 35 years. WERA, 96.7 FM our new

community radio station has put more than 90 regularly produced programs on the air in just its first year. In fact, since aim was first incorporated in 1982, our volunteers have created more than 15,000 television programs. And then together volunteered for more than 150,000 hours. Aim is also a media production and literacy training facility. Our basic and advanced courses have taught tens of thousands of regular people how to communicate using today's state of the art audio and video equipment. Summer camp for children, school-aged children, teaches them how to write, shoot and edit short video narratives. 29 Our document Arlington program teaches high school students how to produce documentary television and then pays them to produce two documentaries about Arlington each summer. A radio producer cover everything from Arlington politics and personalities to the local music scene. As a matter of fact, as you might have noticed, we are joined tonight by a number of our producers, volunteers, and members. And I like to ask them to just stand up and be recognized, if you don't mind. [APPLAUSE] Might have been easier to ask the people who aren't to stand up tonight. Important thing to acknowledge tonight, all of the things that aim has been able to accomplish over the year, including as was mentioned earlier, being named America's best community media center ten times. All of that is made possible by the franchise agreements between the cable providers and Arlington county. Without the community benefits contained within these agreements, aim wouldn't have been able to sprout, thrive or grow. I've been the executive director at aim for 25 years, that seems ridiculous and impossible but it is true. This is the fifth time that I have stood before the ITAC and offered comments on a franchise agreement. I think it is fair to thought that each time the agreement has been less favorable to the public each time. 30 And has had fewer community benefits. This is due to the fact that United States Congress and Virginia has done their best to remove the right of the localities to charge fair rent for the use of the public right-of-way. Cities and counties have little leverage these days and new franchise agreements across the county are has fewer and fewer community benefits. And in light of the regulatory environment, it is actually quite remarkable that this agreement is as good as it is. Nevertheless, it is a bit of a mixed bag for aim. It adds an extremely important benefit that we had not had before. We soon have an HD channel on the Comcast system for our fine programs. That is great. We appreciate that very much. The agreement also maintains some important benefits from previous agreements such as an annual Grant and operating support. However, the agreement also calls for end to the contributed rant that we have received from Comcast for the past 18 years. And this will present us with a significant challenge. Nevertheless aim board support this and urge the county to vote in favor of it. We understand and acknowledge that the communication landscape has change and overall we see all of the agreement is a good one with the conservatory, and technological environment. In close, I like to thank the commission for opportunity to 31 comment and ask you all to continue to support the work of our volunteers as they create independent media that is by and for the Arlington community. Thank you.

Thank you very much, Paul. Appreciate it. [APPLAUSE]

Jason.

Good evening. My name is Jason coil. I have been a member and volunteered with aim for almost ten years. I was not planning on speaking tonight. But I feel very strongly about this. And I want to express my gratitude to you all. For letting me appeal to you. And share my story with aim. I grew up here in Arlington. And, when I was in high school, back in 1988, myself and some friends produced a video for Arlington community television. And it was a quirky film called canary man. This kind of super hero parody, it was really fun. And, as a high schooler, it gave us a chance to take a risk. Something, a crazy

idea. And, get our friends together. And be creative and do something adventurous. And, that really stayed with me. So I am an artist and a musician. And I produce this program called lost on tape for WERA right now. And, again, I have continued this way. It is a quirky program. Includes music and interviews and, hopefully, it allows me to communicate some ideas that you 32 might not have had. I hope to inspire people. With it. So just some, try and give you what I have here. Aim really is part of my family. Because, that community arts has been with me my whole life. And it is really made a difference in my life. You know, as volunteers we all support each other, it is really a healthy, loving community. We all chip in on each other's programs and it is a safe place to take those risks to express something that maybe you are scared to say you have the support of these people and these people. And these people to say, take this risk. And commercial radio is really boring. There is so much unique, exciting stuff going on. And you turn that dial and you never know, you know, what you are going to find or hear something new, or, learn something important. Learn what is happening in your schools, your communities, the arts. So just wrap up and say that for me, the access to community radio is that radio, that is exciting. And, it has a joyous feeling to it. It is helpful. Enlightening for the future. It is lively. It is great for the community. Thanks for listening to me.

Thank you so much. [APPLAUSE]

Okay. Do we have any, another speaker did you say? 33

No, we don't. I was going to say, that is the end of the speakers who have submitted speaker slips.

Mr. Chairman, I move we close the public comment. Okay. We have a second? All in favor. So moved. Well, I want to thank you all for sharing your stories and your passion. It is, you have told us a very important story here tonight. Now we need to actually, believe it or not, this agreement actually covers a lot of things and, and it is not just the, it is very important agree many for the county as a whole. I think that we want to hear from the ITAC commissioners themselves here. So, would anybody like to, I guess, I don't know if we have a -- go alphabetically. I'll go from my left, your right. Start. Anybody have, would like to sake to this? Bill. Okay. Yeah.

All right. Are you on?

There you go.

Full disclosure, I joined the aim board after being a long time member, just a couple of months ago. I also have a lot of personal stories and sense of gratitude towards the station and all it has provided me and my family. Tonight we have heard a lot of Testimony from a lot of people reporting a lot of good a very long time and themselves force the 34 community. And I just want to say that the reason this is impossible to me, it is board and the staff and the membership, and the producers, have had the resources, to focus on training, living out quality programs, understanding what the community needs and providing a lot of service. I understand that aim will no longer receive the pre-rent benefit which it has been receiving for very long time. I brought this up, we don't know what is going to happen after the end of this coming year. But I think that we can be quite certain the resources of the board and the staff and the membership and the producers are going to be preoccupied with fundraising. Which in some respects, maybe a very difficult mission. I just want to say, I believe that is most unfortunate.

All right. Thank you, Phil. Bill. Did you -- are you sure? Okay.

First of all, I would like to thank all of the folks that took time out of their personal lives to come here tonight. That certainly shows to me, and I'm sure the rest of the commission, the commitment that you all have to aim and what aim delivers to Arlington. I do believe that this is a good agreement. Paul summed that up, saying the board was, you know, agreed with the, what has been negotiated. I think that we do owe it, I think we are perhaps, where we are doing it, the draft that we 35 have seen, to point out, to the, to the county board, the pluses and the minuses. Of this agreement, especially as they impact aim and even though I believe this is a good agreement, I think you believe this is a good agreement. We do owe to the county board to say, this is what aim is getting. Particular hi-definition, a channel. But this is what aim is losing. And, they are going to have a chore in front of them to try to replace the space. That they have right now. And, I think that our obligation is to point that out and to follow that as closely as we can over the next months.

thank you.

Anybody else? Okay. Martha.

Okay. I have a quick question for Rob and comment. Rob, is it accurate that as a peg channel, aim cannot have commercials to generate revenue?

It, to my knowledge, and it is in the agree many, they can't have commercials in the traditional manner? But there may be other ways to announce donors but cannot advertise.

I think by law, I believe they cannot do traditional commercial allowance.

for the public, I want to clear up, in case they are watching this meeting or a subsequent rebroadcast, also, I am looking, or if we did read everything, the valley, they had a press release dated November 16. 36 And in there, he raised the importance of being, of having the programs listed in the channel guide. So, we did follow up on that. And, I, it is my understanding that number one, none of those, the peg channels had that capability at this time. And, that Comcast says that there are technical issues that at this time, cannot be surmounted but does not mean that they won't be in the future. Am I correct on that, Rob?

Yes, that is, we cannot, at this time, it is not technically feasible. That is what they are telling us. That doesn't mean we can't continue to ask.

If there are changes, could be something that added at some point in the future. Yes.

All right. Any other comments? Anita? Mary?

Just final one, echo, Ken, as I was sitting here, you saw that, it is a very powerful movement, right? This is not just a television and radio community service. There is just a powerful commitment to what it means to have public access. And to educate people and give them an tonight that they wouldn't have so, I think what you all are able to do and you are, I remember other times as well, other times especially, it is, there is a spirit here that you don't, you don't see everywhere. And, certainly the agreement 37 will be watching and what is important to preserve that spirit. As Charles mentioned, this is more than just a building. You know, that this spirit of the people in this room and the commitment and the powerful narrative and the stories, really mean that this is going to be, this will thrive and, and in an Arlington way. So, we certainly have our support and also, all in a way of powerful impact you are

making on Arlington as a community. So, we really thank you. It makes us really very honored that we have the role we have. It just reinforces for us, what our role is as giving advice to the board. So thank you. Thank you Miriam. This is culmination of six years of hard work between the county and Comcast. I think that Paul pointed out, I think the current environment from a business stand point and regulatory environment, this is a very good deal. I think for the county, and, for, I think for aim, in many way, I think while the rent issue is a significant, significant one. I think it is, the continued support for the peg channels and obtaining, the HD channels, I think it is a significant benefit for the peg channels to aim and, as well as to the viewers out there. They are going to be able to see Arlington weekly news in hi-def. That is a good benefit. So we are looking forward to it. There are a lot of other38 significant benefits in this. In this certificate. The continued use of the institutional network. The I-net is very important to the county. Having those connections and helping to provide for a smooth landing for the county. It is extremely important. So, so I am glad to hear that aim is supporting this agreement. I think that ITAC should as well. I think that brings us, let's see. If we have any -- no? We have an important job here tonight. We have to make a recommendation to the county. But, perhaps, want to on the record, thank Rob Billingsley, cable administrator, hard at work for, 12 years is it Rob?

Yes, it is.

12 years.

Anyhow, Rob. [APPLAUSE] Rob. Rob will be retiring at the end of this month. Whether we have this agreement approved or not. It better be.

I was going to say, it has been 12 years I have been here, not 12 years since negotiated.

Right, right. Just seemed that way, right?

We could at times.

But anyhow, we wanted to thank Rob for his service. To the county. And, and to all of us. We want to thank you again and recognize that.

Thanks.

I also want to take a moment 39 to acknowledge that George par, my partner in crime here, is going to be stepping into my shoes. And, we are having a transition time here. So that there won't be any breakdowns in support for the ITAC. For the coordination of the meetings, etc. And, anything else that comes across the desk of the cable administrator. All right. George, we look forward to working with you in the future. Rob, we want to thank you for your service.

Mr. chairman.

We have a letter that ITAC could send to the county board with the recommendation which ends, giving the continuing and new benefits outlined in the above, they support the proposed agreement. Now the above is what you heard already from Rob. And, others about the good and the not great in this agreement. So I say to the members, I move that we accept the letter which has been before you.

and unfortunately, we had a relatively short turnaround. I want to thank the work of Martha, Mary and Rob and Jack. I'm putting this letter together on short turnaround. So, if we are open to comments, I'm also open for a second.

a second.

All right. We have a second. All in favor. Is there a discussion? All right. I think we have adopted a letter.
40 I want to thank you all for that. Are there any other motions we need to consider?

Do I have a second?

Second.

All in favor.

All right.

We have actually got, we'll do this?

Yes.

Okay. All right. Thank you all for coming tonight. And, we look forward to WERA and aim.

I have a couple of copies of the letter if you want to see it. Extra copies.

Okay. Think about that.