

Cable Communications Advisory Committee (CCAC) Meeting Notes for September 18, 2019

CCAC had the opportunity over the summer months to engage with Montgomery Community Media (MCM) and Montgomery County Public School Cable TV (MCPS) with information and facility tour sessions. Purpose of the tours was to allow CCAC members to get orientated with Montgomery County cable services that serve the community. One of the key takeaways is that they partner appropriately to maximize cable TV and media accesses to Montgomery County at large.

Committee Items:

I. May 15, 2019 Meeting Minutes were approved

II. MCM Tour: MCM Tour started at 6:30 pm

Members and county staff in attendance: Yen Chen, Dorshae Demby, Muriel Hairston-Cooper, Peter Jablow and Bernadette Garrett

MCM's CEO Nannette Hobson provided us an overview of the services MCM offers the Montgomery County community and government as well as the Rockville media facility. An in-depth list of the services and classes MCM provides can be viewed via <https://www.mymcmmedia.org/>. The most well-known services are:

- a. Cable Access Channels 19 and 21
- b. Partners to support County Government access Channels

Services that deserve more notoriety that many are not aware of would be:

- a. Provides venues for individuals to create content for the community (e.g. podcasts)
- b. Conducts classes on how to create podcasts and other media products

MCM budget consists of approximately 2.5M a year which includes contracts, grants and donation. As with any community based organization, funding is vulnerable to change negatively or positively every year.

One of the major challenges we assessed for MCM was the marketing of the programs and services they offer. If we had not had the opportunity visit, many of us would not be aware of some the classes and services they offer.

We thank Ms. Hobson and MCM for their service to the community and taking the time to host a tour for us.

MCM Tour/Visit Ended 7:40 pm

III. MCPS Cable TV Tour: MCPS Cable Tour started at 6:10 pm

Members and county staff in attendance: Dorshae Demby, Steve Boliek and Bernadette Garrett

MCPS Cable TV's Producer Todd Hochkeppel gave us an insightful tour of the MCPS's programming and media centers. He shared MCPS's historical fact that it was one of the first school systems in the nation to integrate in the 1960s. MCPS TV works closely with the county's Public Information Officer (PIO) to schedule programming for significant events.

MCPS primarily use legacy equipment (with a small percentage of newer cameras, computers and associated equipment) to produce and program content. Key takeaways from the tour were the following:

- a. They're working hard to provide more content using popular streaming methods (e.g. YouTube); one challenge is to retrieve viewing numbers from live TV to compare customer access methods (e.g. streaming versus television viewing access)
- b. Conducts a vibrant intern program that provides a percentage of human resources to produce content
- c. Challenges:
 1. Concerns about Comcast and Verizon no longer paying access fees. These fees contributed to the cable budget; with the removal of these fees how will (or if) the cost be absorbed
 2. Marketing of services offered – Getting the word out about their programming services is a challenge. Ensuring the county is aware of resources it provides helps promotes its usage

We thanked Mr. Hochkeppel for taking the time to host the tour for us and the service he and his team provide to the community. Please visit their website <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/itv/> for more information. Thank you to Steve for coordinating this tour.

MCPS Cable TV Tour ended: 7:10 pm

IV. Pending Action Items:

A. **Action Item:** Committee would like to craft a statement (for County Cable Staff to consider) to advocate for preserving the 5% supposedly set aside and ensure this is highlighted for County Council's awareness when they review the upcoming Verizon franchise agreement and future cable agreements. To help facilitate this, the committee will:

1) Create a shared folder to draft and modify statement for consideration **(Action Complete)**

2) Send final draft to Mr. Demby **NLT November 18, 2019** for final consideration

B. **Action Item:** Committee will take the time to review the current franchise agreement and provide feedback (if any) to Dorshae Demby for consideration

C. **Fact finding needs: Charter** – Committee would like to get a copy of the CCAC charter and review it.

V. Identify next meeting date: CCAC next official meeting is scheduled for **November 20, 2019** but interim meetings maybe scheduled to accommodate fore mentioned outreach briefings that are under review.