

MINUTES OF THE House COMMITTEE ON Communication, Computers and Technology

The meeting was called to order by Representative Mike Meacham at
Chairperson

3:30 ~~am~~ p.m. on February 21, 1983 in room 522-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Representative Rolfs (excused)

Committee staff present:

Judy McConnell, Fiscal Staff, Research Department
Chris Stanfield, Fiscal Staff, Research Department
Arden K. Ensley, Revisor of Statutes
Betty Ellison, Secretary to the Committee

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Ken Gardner, Vice President and General Manager,
KOOD-Channel 9 (Bunker Hill)

Chairman Meacham introduced Mr. Gardner who is the station manager of Smokey Hill Public TV Station at Bunker Hill. The chairman noted that the state has a much greater investment in getting this station built and on the air than in the other stations.

Mr. Gardner gave a status report on current activities and future plans for expanding the station. He said that the station went on the air November 10, 1982. He stated that the station has tried to wean away from state support; last session, \$264,000 was the state's share of the operating budget while this session, \$246,000 has been requested. So far the station has 196 members, average membership is \$45.22; there will be a pledge drive March 5--March 20.

The conferee commented on the problems of a new station--identity, having cable companies know that you are on the air and switch you over; of the 21 cable companies in their Grade B area, 15 have switched over so far. He said that some small cable companies in the area are still locked into the Nebraska Public Television System. Nebraska puts more than \$9 million annually into that network and they provide programming day and night. KOOD must compete by making its signal as attractive through its small cable system as what is received from Nebraska.

The station has two NTIA awards for translators: one is in Phillipsburg. That 110 foot tower was donated to KOOD and a translator is being put in there which will extend the signal from the Phillipsburg area to the Nebraska border. KOOD is involved in a joint project with the community college at Concordia, approved by FCC, and has been awarded by the NTIA.

Mr. Gardner stated that there is a translator at Hoxie which was built with federal funds; this does not belong to Kood but was endorsed for their signal so they could compete for federal funds. This translator would cost KOOD about \$5400. They don't get a good signal from KOOD when there is a rain or snow storm so they are looking into putting a small translator in at Morland to guarantee a good signal in that area 100 percent of the time. The conferee said that this is a difficult way to expand, but he feels that translators are the most economical way to extend coverage of public television to the borders of Kansas. When this is done, additional board members are brought in from that area and sensitivity to the needs of the constituent community is provided.

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE House COMMITTEE ON Communication, Computers and Technology
room 522-S, Statehouse, at 3:30 ~~xxx~~/p.m. on February 21, 1983

In answer to a question from Chairman Meacham, Mr. Gardner said that the Kansas-Nebraska Natural Gas Company provided the tower at Phillipsburg and this was used as part of the local match for the NTIA grant, the rest coming from KOOD's out-of-pocket budget. He stated that \$28,117 was the federal share and out-of-pocket was \$9,373.

The federal share for the translator at Concordia was \$38,242; KOOD's out-of-pocket share was \$12,748. The tower there is all new construction, 225 feet.

In reply to a question from the chairman, Mr. Gardner said that the community college at Pratt is interested in working with them to get a translator at Pratt. They are considering two microwave hops, one in Great Bend and one in St. John, and a translator in Pratt on a 300 foot tower. The cost of that would be approximately \$180,000 to \$210,000 and the state's share would be \$65,000--\$80,000 in Fiscal 85. Mr. Gardner felt that they probably would file with NTIA by the deadline of February 28.

Chairman Meacham expressed a concern that public television be extended to the unserved areas of the state and he had been assured that Pratt already received the signal of Channel 8. Mr. Gardner replied that Pratt was interested in higher education telecourses, PTV-3. The price to community colleges for broadcasting PTV-3 telecourses is \$51.00 per broadcast hour; five schools could form a consortium for the same course and that would amount to \$10.00 per school per broadcast hour. The chairman asked if KOOD would be willing to diplex the translator signal with KPTS so the Pratt area would be able to receive both channels. Mr. Gardner's response was affirmative.

The chairman asked for the budget to be broken out into two categories, operating expenditures and expansion projects. This would be especially helpful to the Ways and Means subcommittee that deals with the grants.

Regarding HB 2119, Mr. Gardner suggested that a board from each area have an appointment to the Public Television Board; he felt that perhaps this should be the general manager. He also felt that the Speaker of the House and President of the Senate would be very helpful as members of the Board to insure continuity with the legislative process.

Chairman Meacham asked Mr. Gardner if he would be available to come back on February 28 for hearings on HB 2119, regarding formula funding on the grants. Mr. Gardner said that he would come back then.

The chairman told the committee that in addition to Southwestern Bell's testimony on the telecommunications system, United Telephone would also be heard on February 22.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m. by the chairman.

The next meeting of the committee will be held at 3:30 p.m. on February 22, 1983.

