

**MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS ADVISORY BOARD**  
**October 11, 2021 Meeting at 7:00PM**  
**Hybrid Meeting: Virtual and Administration Conference Room**  
**MINUTES**

ATTENDANCE

Howard Hoffman (Chairman).....Present	Jim Kravitz.....Present
David Rassbach (Vice Chairman).....Present	Greg Waks (Supervisor Liaison) .....Present
Bill Carroll .....Present	Don Herbert (Staff Liaison) .....Present
Peter Kuhn .....Present	Tony Hamaday (Twp Manager).....Present
Portia Waller .....Absent	Tiffany Bellamy (Comm. Coord.) .....Present

The meeting was called to order at 7:00PM

**I.** Pledge of Allegiance

**II.** Approval of Minutes

1. May 2021

2. June 2021

3. July 2021

- Approval of the May and July Minutes was tabled as copies were unavailable for review and there was no June meeting due to the lack of a quorum.
- Guidance was provided by Tony Hamaday, Township Manager, that a note should be added to the posted Agenda documenting that the meeting was canceled.

**III.** Comments from Chairman: No comments

**IV.** Reports

1. Resignation of Michael Cusack

- Michael Cusack resigned to accept a position on the Parks and Recreation Board.
- There are no current recommendations for a candidate to fill the vacant position.

2. Appointment of new Secretary

- The appointment of a new Secretary will be tabled until the 2022 Reorganization Meeting.

3. Push App Discussion

- Tiffany Bellamy, Digital Communications Coordinator, asked for clarification on how the members would like to have Push Notifications distributed.
- Don Herbert, Staff Liaison, commented on prioritizing timely and urgent notifications that should not wait for the weekly E-newsletter or to be “found” on the web site. He further commented that an app can be installed without requiring a user to register their email or cell numbers.
- The consensus of the members was that timely as well as urgent messages should be pushed. Examples stated as timely messages included the start of leaf collection and reminders to vote.
- Pete Kuhn suggested the app NIXLE to address the township’s needs. Tiffany agreed to research NIXLE as well as SmartNews and NewsBreak and report her findings back to the board.
- Howard Hoffman asked Greg Waks if funding is available for an app subscription. Greg responded that a persuasive presentation by the MCAB outlining the app’s importance and value could convince the Supervisors to approve funds that would enhance the Township’s ability to serve the residents better.
- Jim Kravitz mentioned that one of the advantages to a push app is that notices are received automatically without having to be logged in.

4. Verizon Franchise Agreement Discussion

- Don Herbert reviewed a preliminary list of the Township’s “asks” to include:

- Confirm the name and contact information of our current Government Liaison because several attempts through phone calls and emails resulted in no response from the liaison on record. Tony Hamaday mentioned that he has contact information for a Verizon VP that he would share with Don Herbert.
  - Replace existing transcoder device that has been operating 24/7 for over 12 years with new and current technology.
  - Request a \$10,000 equipment grant on a 5-year term which is a proportional amount based on the \$24,000 equipment grant provided on the current 12-year term. The Township should hold Verizon to the same expectation Comcast was held to in which Comcast provide a \$138,500 equipment grant as part of their agreement renewal.
  - David Rassbach asked if we know what other townships in the Consortium have received. Tony responded most have received very little and the last agreement he negotiated for a previous municipality over 6 years ago received about \$13,000.
  - Tony discussed requiring Verizon to demonstrate that they have completed the build-out as required in the existing agreement.
  - Jim suggested informing Verizon of the \$138,500 equipment grant provided by their competitor Comcast and state that a \$15,000 request is small in comparison.
  - Tony requested that the MCAB submit their final recommendations that would include mentioning the fact that Upper Merion is a unique municipality that provides an extensive variety of information sources to its residents.
  - As a way of demonstrating the value of UMGA-TV's programs, Greg asked if the programs have been made available to neighboring municipalities. Don responded that much of UMGA-TV's programming is specific to Upper Merion Township, but he would reach out to the PIO Consortium to assess their interest in the programs that have a wider appeal.
  - Howard asked if a meeting should be scheduled with Verizon representatives. Tony responded that a meeting could follow a written response to Verizon's proposed first draft of a new agreement.
  - Howard and Jim discussed how most content providers are transitioning to 5G wireless delivery technology.
  - Tony reiterated his request for the MCAB to provide their recommendations to him so he can present them to the Supervisors for consideration. Howard recommended the members use an email chain to submit comments that would be finalized at the next meeting.
  - Don agreed to reach out to Lower Merion for a copy of their Verizon Franchise Agreement.
5. Status of PIO Position
- Tony stated that he is currently reviewing the existing job description and discussing potential revisions with the Supervisors. Once that is completed, he intends to make it available to the MCAB. In the meantime, Don will serve as the Acting PIO.
  - Mention was made that the PIO position has historically not required appearing in front of a camera as a spokesperson.
  - The importance of retitling the position appropriately was discussed.
  - Tony expressed the importance of the next PIO being able to interact effectively with all of the Township department and community groups as well as possess proficiencies in television, print, and online communications.
  - Greg stated the importance of the next PIO having the ability to write and release clear and concise press releases in a short amount of time.

## V. New Business

- With no members having new business to bring before the board, Jim made a motion for adjournment that was seconded by Pete and David. The motion passed unanimously.

## VI. Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 7:57PM.