

Elko Television District

Board Meeting Minutes, March 13th, 2025

6:00 p.m. at the Elko County Court House

Board Members:

Present: Dale Lotspeich, Kent LeBarts, and Brian Riley

Absent: Rick Jimenez

Others Present: Cenni Jimenez representing Premier Wireless, Misty Atkins representing herself, Paden Hilyard representing Eagle Communications, Raymond Mowrey representing himself, Albino Ortega representing KYUW-FM, and Marisa Reeves representing McMullen, McPhee & Co., LLC

Proceedings

Meeting called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Dale Lotspeich.

Public Comment: None

Comments From the Chairman

Dale will be attending the NTA meeting. All other board members may attend as well. Dale met with Paden last week. Paden will report on a few things in his service report.

Approval of the Minutes February 6th, 2025 Meeting

Kent LeBarts moved to accept the minutes from the February 6th, 2025 meeting. Brian Riley seconded the motion; the vote was unanimous.

Approval of the Treasurer's Report

Kent LeBarts moved to accept the Treasurer's report as written. Brian Riley seconded the motion; the vote was unanimous.

Approval & Ratification of Outstanding Bills for payment

Kent LeBarts read aloud the outstanding and ratified bills. Brian Riley moved to accept the outstanding and ratified bills as read. Kent LeBarts seconded the motion; the vote was unanimous.

Discussion and Possible Approval of a Candidate to Fill the Vacated Seat

Dale read the interview memo. The board asked the two candidates, Misty Atkins and Raymond Mowrey, interview questions.

1) Tell us a little bit about yourself.

Misty – She is a wife and mom of 3 children. She is a dentist and part of the Ham Radio club.

Raymond – He is a lifelong resident of Elko. He is married and has a son in the Air Force. He has been on boards before and is experienced in creating budgets. He has installed equipment before. He ran Communications at the Fire Academy. He likes hiking, motorcycles, working on cars, biking, and anything else going on outdoors.

2) *Why do you want to join the TV Board?*

Raymond – He wants to guide the TV District into the future and help residences have a reliable way to access television. He has a long history in public service. He became an EMT right out of high school.

Misty – She believes in sharing quality TV service for the community. She was previously on the board so she would be useful from day one. She has run a small business so she knows how to handle money.

3) *What do you know about the TV Board and TV District in general?*

Misty – The TV District maintains towers and components to provide over-the-air TV. They coordinate equipment upgrades, build new towers, and have major and small contracts.

Raymond – It is a special task district and has a 5 member board. The primary role is to provide over-the-air television from Carlin to Wells and outlying areas. It is a critical infrastructure. They manage and maintain buildings, towers and equipment.

4) *Do you consider yourself a leader?*

Raymond – Yes. The trade of a leader is to recognize, address, and solve problems. That is what he has done throughout his career. He was able to work his way up to Captain as a firefighter very quickly because of his leadership skills. Less than 1% can achieve that role. He is constantly trying to improve himself. He was the President and lead contract negotiator for the last 15 years.

Misty – Yes. She takes pride in being of service to the public. She believes a leader needs to be a listener and not have their own agenda.

5) *What are your greatest strengths?*

Misty – Leadership, problem-solving, and having a strong work ethic

Raymond – Honesty, integrity, efficiency, and adapting to change.

6) *What are your greatest weaknesses?*

Raymond – Knowing when to say when. Sometimes he doesn't recognize the effort he has put in when things don't pan out. He also speaks very matter-of-factly.

Misty – She takes on too many responsibilities at once, but through time she has learned better. She can be very blunt.

7) *What is your definition of success?*

Misty – Success is happiness, daily growth, and being able to lay your head down at night with a smile.

Raymond – Achieving your personal goals, whether it be home, career, or hobbies.

8) *What are your personal goals for serving on the TV Board?*

Raymond – To help guide the TV District to the future. When doing research, he was surprised how many people didn't think TV was a thing anymore. He wants to find ways to increase reliability and expand the TV District's services.

Misty – She has no personal goals. She feels you shouldn't have personal goals since we are here to serve the public. She wants to make sure everything is available to the public.

9) *How will you keep up with the TV translator industry news?*

Misty – She will follow TV industry publications, attend conferences, and have regular discussions with Paden and Cenni.

Raymond – He will ask questions, seek out experts, attend webinars, subscribe to newsletters and NTA, visit the FCC website, and keep aware of the incoming legislature.

Kent asked Raymond what he thought would make the system more reliable. Raymond said it is more of a broad goal. He knows sometimes you can't do anything, but really his goal is to help the TV District improve.

Dale thanked both candidates for applying. He hopes whoever isn't selected will be interested in assisting with one of the committees. Kent asked the candidates to step out for a moment and they did. After a short discussion the candidates we brought back in. Raymond Mowery was selected as the new board member. Misty Atkins was willing to be involved with some of the committees.

Committee Reports

Infrastructure Committee – They will be having a meeting on April 15 at the County Fire Headquarters on south 9th Street.

Translator/Programming Committee – Nothing to report

Budget Committee – Had a meeting on February 25th. Kent mentioned prices are going up. They discussed planning for upcoming major projects. They also discussed looking at spending for contracts versus hiring a person.

Discussion and Possible Approval of District Travel Expense Policy

Kent LeBarts moved to accept the travel expense policy. Brian Riley seconded the motion; the vote was unanimous.

Discussion and Possible Approval of Raising the Rate of Pay for Board Members to \$500 Per Month, Effective July 1, 2025

Since the board members are being asked to participate more, Dale feels the amount of pay should be raised to help compensate for some of that time. Brian Riley moved to raise the rate of pay to \$500 per month for board members effective July 1st, 2025. Kent LeBarts seconded the motion; the vote was unanimous.

Discussion and Possible Approval of Fiscal Year 2025 Audit Engagement Letter

Brian Riley moved to approve the 2025 Audit engagement. Kent LeBarts seconded the motion; the vote was unanimous.

Discussion and Possible Approval of McMullen McPhee Engagement Letter

Tabled until the next meeting.

Discussion of Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget and Discussion and Possible Approval of 5-Year Capital Project Plan

The amounts for the first year of the Capital plan are placeholders. The TV District has budgeted \$1,000,000 for Capital projects for two years and can continue to budget that amount. Dale's personal advice is to look at not spending more than 75% of the Capital budget. There are some ways to be more cost-effective, such as using a clearly delineated scope of work and reporting requirements. The District can purchase items directly and save some money. NV Energy has raised the price for power to Adobe Summit to \$318,000. The board discussed moving a building to Grindstone and possibly removing the 3-legged guide tower. Currently, Sinclair Broadcasting who owns Channel 10 is on that tower.

The District does have an agreement to do road repairs on Maggie Creek road. It will also be good to keep track of the camera equipment and keep replacements on hand. After testing the equipment for Ryndon, we can move forward on what transmitters to purchase for future upgrades.

Paden is going to respond to the FCC Rule Making email proposing to make Translator licensing easier to apply for full licenses every 10 years and discuss the impact of the DMA's on rural areas and allowing the transmitter to choose what they transmit.

Cenni suggested upgrading from 200 to 400 amp services and installing a steel gate on Lamoille. Dale would like to look at potential risks and liabilities and see what to do to mitigate those risks. This item will be agendized as an action item at the next meeting.

Discussion and Possible Approval of Final Offer to AT&T for Lease on Grindstone

Cenni said AT&T will not accept the \$2,600 a month. If there is no agreement AT&T is going to look at the site and see if they can sponge the contract. Cenni feels they won't be able to get rid of the site because it is a major hub. Brian Riley moved that the offer proposed at the last meeting is final. Kent LeBarts seconded the motion; the vote was unanimous.

Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Verizon Grindstone Lease Modification

Cenni said it is the same thing with Verizon. They proposed \$1,300 and we countered with \$1,800. He knows Verizon has been awarded to do upgrades on the Grindstone site, so they are not planning on moving. Kent LeBarts moved to make this the final offer as proposed at the last meeting. Brian Riley seconded the motion; the vote was unanimous.

Verizon wants to reduce the Lamoille contract as well. This will be agendized at the next meeting.

Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Payment Plan for Albino Ortega

Marisa explained the situation with the current payments from Albino. Albino thanked the board for letting him make payments. He asked if they would accept an increase in the payments to \$600 instead of paying off the new invoices and making monthly payments. Dale's opinion is that he needs to stick with the minimum payment and each year pay the annual lease and then work towards the amount in arrears. Dale asked Albino to draft a letter and explain his payment plan. The TV District is not in the business of helping for-profit businesses.

Kent LeBarts moved to accept \$600 a month from Albino Ortega until the balance is paid in full. Brian Riley seconded the motion; the vote was unanimous.

Discussion and Possible Approval of Elko Amateur Radio Club (Ham Radio Club) Contract Renewal

The contract expires this year. There are four sites involved. The Ham Radio Club is a 501-3C and is considered a public service. Dale proposed a 99-year lease for \$1 a year. Tabled until the next meeting.

Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Maggie Creek Road Repair

Tabled until the Final Budget is approved.

Discussion and Possible Approval of Purchasing a Power Usage Monitor at Several Sites

Paden researched the product, and it looks very solid. He would like to advise the board to purchase one for Ryndon as a test site. Kent moved to purchase a Power Usage Monitor and have Paden test it out at Ryndon. Brian Riley seconded the motion; the vote was unanimous. The board asked Marisa to purchase the equipment and Paden will install it.

Updates Regarding a New Site and Getting Power at Snowbowl

The cost to install power is \$318,000. In order to put it under contract with NV Energy, it must be paid in full within 90 days. Until it's paid, this number is a rough estimate. There will be about 35 poles and will they bore under the highway. NV Energy will pull the state permits. The earliest they could start would be after July 1st. It is estimated to be about \$400,000 to build the Snowbowl site. So now the total cost to build the site is about \$750,000. The purpose of this site is to be a filler for where Grindstone and Ryndon can't reach. About 30 to 60 families would benefit from this.

The City does have plans to tie into the power. The City will have a cost themselves to run a conductor for the base of the lyft to the top. Dale would like to discuss if this would be the best use of TV District monies. Other routes such as solar or batteries may be a better solution. This item will be agendized as an action item at the next meeting.

Updates On New Fiber Routes

Dale asked Paden to look up ways to for redundancy. At the next meeting, Paden will have a map showing the proposed Fiber Routes. The current fiber routes are through the general internet. Some of these are dedicated access, So when we get copper-hungry hobos, we lose internet. The switch has multiple carriers and can get different routes. They offer an in-house multi-carrier solution. It is more expensive but can fall to any of the 7 they have in that data center. Option b would be to add a carrier. The best solution is to get multiple carriers. Humboldt County is leasing the fiber from PBS to the data center. There is another line that has only had one drop-out since it's been installed. With a dual connection from different carriers, that would increase the likelihood of no dropouts, unless something happened on the property. This item will be agendized as an action item at the next meeting.

Repair Service Report and Site Updates

There have been a couple of outages. Every UPS at the office died. Lamoille Summit is happy, however we will probably have to get a new waveguide dehydrator. It's not holding pressure. They are about \$3,000. That would be a spring-time project. One of the line fuses had blown at Grindstone. Got the new fuse, just need to install it when he can get up there. Peavey has been operating nicely. The new building is fine. NDOT has new equipment in the building but it is currently off. NDOT sent back a contract for review for the Peavey Building to be agendized for the next meeting. He is currently testing the new Ryndon transmitter equipment. He will be installing it tomorrow.

The contact for the equipment in the Ruby Vista Building has had a rough couple of years. He lost both parents and has had medical issues, so he hasn't been able to get the equipment. Dale told Paden it needs to get cleaned out so that if we purchase larger equipment or materials we can store it there. Paden said in April they are going to put down a new herbicide. He tried it at the shop and nothing grew, and it was a lot cheaper. Dale would like to clear out some of the older equipment at the TV District building. We might be able to post something at NTA about old equipment if they would like it. Paden could possibly do a full backup for power for the transmitters in each of the buildings, but it is really expensive for the system. The last time he installed one for the state, about \$80,000 for an 8 kilowatt battery backup, it dropped the battery 10% in 4 hours, so it would be about 30 hours of backup. For power upgrades in the future, we should weigh the costs of a UPS verses a lower grade of the same system, it may give us 8 hours or at least overnight till we can get up there.

As soon as the ground dries up, he highly advises driving the newer board members to the sites.

Old Business: None

New Business: None

Public Comment: None

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

The next regular meeting will be held on April 10th, 2025.