

**APPROVED MINUTES
MANSFIELD COMMUNICATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
August 23, 2010
Conference Room B**

Members present:

Patrick McGlamery (chair); Aline Booth, Richard Pellegrine, Ronald Schurin, Leila Fecho (arrived approximately 11:15 a.m.), and staff Jaime Russell.

The meeting was called to order at 10:15 a.m. in Conference Room B. The minutes of the meeting of June 21, 2010 were approved.

There was no public comment.

Old Business

A. Membership

Patrick reported that he had discussed membership status issues with Town Council member Toni Moran, chairs the Committee on Committees. Toni indicated that it is up to the chair of the Communications Committee to decide about the option of "alternate" membership for any committee member. Patrick will discuss Leila's preference with her.

B. Freedom of Information

Dick distributed the draft of a flyer that he prepared for the Town to distribute to community members who might be interested in pursuing Freedom of Information requests. The goal of the flyer is to help individuals know the parameters, charges, and mechanisms for obtaining information under FOI requirements. He stressed the importance of providing full information and assuring that such requests be handled impartially and with the goal of providing maximum transparency. This applies not only to FOI requests but to all requests for information.

In that context, Dick noted that he had tried to get information from the Town's web site regarding job descriptions for several Town positions. He was unable to get the information, either because it does not exist in written form or because the Town web site is difficult to navigate and not well indexed. This reflects, he thinks, a lack of transparency.

The committee agrees that there is a need for user-friendly indexing on the Town web site, and for information and training for those who will use the web site or otherwise seek information from the Town (either through FOI requests or other means).

Pat noted that in a general sense, we need to articulate the problem and refer it to Jaime.

Ron suggested that each of the Committee members look at some area of concern (e.g., University issues, public works issues, personnel-as Dick did for

job descriptions). We can navigate the web site to see if we find what we're after, and note our success or lack thereof, any challenges, etc., maintaining a log for each step. We can discuss this with Jaime at the next meeting.

Pat summed up saying that a key agenda item for next time is how we define the problem of query and retrieval. By next time we will have researched the issue, begun to create a "problem statement," and reviewed Dick's FOI draft (which Jaime will transmit to us via e-mail). Particularly with regard to the FOI draft, we will seek to get input from relevant Town officials so they have "buy-in" on the final document.

A related point was raised with regard to a Town summary of legal requirements regarding public information, distributed by Dick. This is not "signed" by anyone so the source is not clear. The Committee will recommend that all such documents have a clear citation.

C. Next meeting

The next meeting was re-scheduled for Tuesday, September 21 at 10:00 a.m., and the subsequent meeting for Tuesday, October 19 at 10:00 a.m.

The meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

Secretary pro tem
Ron Schurin