

# NORTH METRO TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION MEETING

September 20, 2023

6:00 p.m.

1301 81<sup>st</sup> Ave NE

Spring Lake Park, Minnesota

## AGENDA

1. Call to Order/Roll Call
2. Public Comments
3. Changes to the Agenda
4. Consent Agenda [pp. 1-17](#)
  - a. Minutes of regular meeting of June 15, 2023
  - b. Minutes of Executive Committee meeting of September 6, 2023
  - c. Minutes of Operations Committee meeting of August 1 and September 5, 2023
  - d. Financial report for the period ending August 31, 2023
5. Executive Director Report
  - a. Quarterly Report [pp. 18-25](#)
6. Legal Counsel Report
  - a. Quarterly Report [pp. 26-28](#)
7. Old Business
  - a. Executive Director Search
8. New Business
9. Recommended Reading [pp. 29-38](#)
10. Community Calendar
  - A. Next Meeting Dates:
    - a. Operations Committee –October 3, 2023
    - b. Executive Committee – December 6, 2023
    - c. Cable Commission – December 20, 2023
11. Adjournment

# **NORTH METRO TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION**

## **UNAPPROVED MINUTES**

**Commission Meeting – June 15, 2023**

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair D. Stoesz called the regular meeting of the North Metro Telecommunications Commission to order at 6:00 p.m.

### **ROLL CALL**

**Directors Present:** Dale Stoesz; Lino Lakes, Barbara Goodboe-Bisschoff; Spring Lake Park, Tom Newland; Blaine, Russ Koski; Centerville, Nici Dorner; Circle Pines

**Directors Absent:** Jesse Wilken; Ham Lake, Brandon Winge; Lexington

**Others Present:** Greg Emmerich; CPA, Mike Bradley; Legal Counsel, Heidi Arnson; Executive Director

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

### **CHANGES TO THE AGENDA**

No changes were made to the agenda

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

- **Minutes, Financial Reports**

The February 15, 2023 NMTC meeting minutes, June 6, 2023 Operations Committee meeting minutes, June 7, 2023 Executive Committee meeting minutes and the financial reports were approved as presented. **Motion for approval made by B. Goodboe-Bisschoff. Second, C. Massoglia. Motion passed.**

### **2022 AUDIT PRESENTATION**

G. Emmerich, of Harrington, Langer and Associates, reviewed the 2022 North Metro Telecommunications Commission annual financial report. No abnormalities were found and the Commission is in a strong financial position.

**MOTION:** To approve the 2022 North Metro Telecommunications Commission annual financial report as presented. **Motion for approval made by: C. Massoglia. Second: N. Dorner. Motion approved.**

### **REPORT OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

H. Arnsen reported on the following items:

- North Metro TV staff has been working with the Minnesota Office of Broadband Development to identify areas of digital inequity in Minnesota. Through that process it was realized that staff could provide a new service to the community, in particular senior citizens. Workshops and instructional videos are being developed to help seniors with internet, device, and app usage. Individual appointments will also be available for folks who want help with any aspect of internet use from setting up equipment to loading apps to using Facebook. Staff is also looking at ways to fund the new service, such as grants.
- The summer production schedule is underway. It includes the Blaine, Centennial, and Spring Lake Park High School graduations, all city parades, and coverage of the USA Cup Soccer tournament.
- 1<sup>st</sup> quarter Comcast franchise and PEG fees were received. The amounts fell within expectations and funding for the 2023 budget is in good shape.
- North Metro TV staff is working to develop commercial sources of income. Currently there are nine different projects underway including drone service for the city of Osseo, promo production for a non-profit organization, coverage of the Columbia Heights Jamboree Days parade and providing streaming and production services for the National Sports Center. Home movie transfers saw their single busiest month in May. Several city newsletters printed information about the service in the spring and it seems to have made a big difference.
- Long-time Administrative Assistant, Rose Valez, retired on June 2<sup>nd</sup> after 24 years of employment with the Commission. Some of her responsibilities have been assumed by current employees. An accounting firm was retained to complete accounting and financial reporting tasks.

### **REPORT OF LEGAL COUNSEL**

M. Bradley reported on the following items:

- Encouraged the Commission to read items regarding current federal legislation in the Legal Report.

- Senate File 3039 and House File 3261 were introduced last session. It is a bill that would enhance funding for PEG organizations and municipal digital media.
- It will be important for cities to support federal and state legislation regarding new sources of funding for municipal digital media. As the cable franchise funding source decreases, legislation geared toward transitioning that funding source to broadband based solutions will be essential.
- President Biden has nominated a fifth Commissioner for the FCC. Confirmation hearings will be held later in June.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

- H. Arnson reviewed and summarized the pay study and recommendations regarding market based pay increases for NMTV staff. The Operations Committee created a new step matrix that reflected the recommended updates by consultant, Dan Tesch. The Committee would like to move each employee to the step above what they are currently earning, as long as it is at least 2% more. The increases would be retroactive to January 1<sup>st</sup>. The cost of that recommendation to the 2023 budget will be \$33,929, which includes salaries and payroll taxes. It was noted that savings of over \$82,000 had been identified in the personnel/benefits areas of the 2023 budget due to staff turn-over and a retirement. Even with the additional cost of an accounting service, in 2023, the amended budget should be \$26,000 lower than the original.

**MOTION:** To adopt and implement the market-based step increases for NMTV staff as recommended by the Operations Committee. **Motion made by D. Love.**  
**Second, C. Massoglia. Motion passed unanimously.**

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

- It was recommended that the Cable Commission approve amending the 2023 budget to reflect the market based salary increases and costs related to hiring an accounting service.

**MOTION:** To amend the 2023 budget to reflect the market based salary increases and the use of an accounting service. **Motion made by B. Goodboe-Bisschoff.**  
**Second, N. Dorner. Motion passed unanimously.**

- H. Arnson presented the draft 2024 NMTC budget. The personnel line items included recommended market based step increases, with the Executive Director position being budgeted at the maximum step to provide flexibility in the hiring process. Other budget increases include a COLA increase of 3%,

recommended step increases, a \$45 per month/per employee increase in the benefits package, building maintenance, insurance, and accounting service line-items. Capital expenditures include a master router for master control, a tripod and lens for the production truck, cameras and microphones, routine computer and software purchases, a security system upgrade, the HD bond payment and PEG fees for cities. The total 2024 budget is \$29,759 lower than the 2023 budget. If an Executive Director is hired at the minimum salary level the total budget would be \$58,521 lower than the 2023 budget.

**MOTION:** To approve the 2024 budget as presented. **Motion made by D. Love. Massoglia. Second, C. Massoglia. Motion passed unanimously.**

#### **COMMUNITY CALENDAR**

Upcoming meetings include:

1. The Operations Committee on August 1, 2023
2. The Executive Committee Meeting on September 6, 2023
3. The Cable Commission Meeting on September 20, 2023

#### **ADJOURN**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:32 p.m. **Motion for approval made by C. Massoglia. Second, N. Dorner. Motion passed unanimously.**

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Brandon Winge; Secretary, NMTC

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES**

Meeting of September 6, 2023

Executive Cmte. Present: Barbara Goodboe-Bisschoff; Spring Lake Park, Dale Stoesz; Lino Lakes; Brandon Winge; Lexington

Absent: Chris Massoglia; Blaine

Others Present: Heidi Arnson; Executive Director

### **CALL TO ORDER**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A motion to approve the June 7, 2023 Executive Committee meeting minutes was made by B. Goodboe-Bisschoff. Second, B. Winge. Motion passed unanimously.**

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR / OPERATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT**

- North Metro TV has signed an agreement with Neighborhood Sports Network (NSPN.TV) to provide games to be streamed over the NSPN.TV network. The agreement covers a trial period, from August 31 to November 30, 2023. NMTV will be compensated up to 70% for all attributed monthly and annual subscriptions and for any downloads of games.
- North Metro TV is providing a new series of internet literacy classes intended for senior citizens. The series includes:
  - Internet Basics
  - How to Search the Internet
  - How to Send an Email
  - Look Out for Scams!

Instructor, Eric Houston, has scheduled a series of the classes at the Mary Ann Young Center. He is also looking at other community centers and Park and Rec departments for additional venues.

- Election coverage for Lino Lakes, Circle Pines, and several school board races in underway. Bios and pics have been posted on the website and interviews with candidates have been scheduled.
- NMTV is exploring providing city meetings as podcasts. It would be another distribution method for city information, which could reach people in a new way. Staff will be contacting each city to determine interest and preferred format.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

- H. Arnson reported that it is likely that an interim Executive Director will be selected while discussions continue regarding various ideas for the future of NMTV.

Executive Committee Meeting  
September 6, 2023  
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**NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

**ADJOURN**

**Motion to adjourn made by B. Winge. Second, B. Goodboe-Bisschoff. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:21 p.m.**

**NORTH METRO TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
UNAPPROVED OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES**

Tuesday, August 1, 2023

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting began at 11:03 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

S. Cotton, M. Wolfe, M. Statz, D. Webster

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

D. Buchholtz, P. Antonen, B. Petracek,

**OTHERS PRESENT**

H. Arnson

**APPROVAL OF MEETING NOTES**

The meeting notes of June 6, 2023 were approved by consensus.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT**

- An update was given regarding progress on the Strategic Plan. It included an accounting of commercial projects completed in July and organizational preparations being made in anticipation of a new Executive Director. It was also noted that the new accounting service was working well.

**OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- The Committee considered steps for moving forward with an Executive Director search. It was recommended that a formal proposal be drafted by Craig Waldron including a timeline for implementation. The group approved of moving forward with Craig Waldron provided the formal proposal is consistent with the email sent to P. Antonen. M. Statz will coordinate the process.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:32 a.m.

**NORTH METRO TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
UNAPPROVED OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES**

Tuesday, September 5, 2023

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting began at 11:04 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

S. Cotton, M. Wolfe, M. Statz, D. Buchholtz

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

P. Antonen, B. Petrcek, D. Webster

**OTHERS PRESENT**

H. Arnson

**APPROVAL OF MEETING NOTES**

The meeting notes of August 1, 2023 were approved by consensus.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT**

- North Metro TV has signed an agreement with Neighborhood Sports Network (NSPN.TV) to provide games to be streamed over the NSPN.TV network. The agreement covers a trial period, from August 31 to November 30, 2023. NMTV will be compensated up to 70% for all attributed monthly and annual subscriptions and for any downloads of games.
- North Metro TV is providing a new series of internet literacy classes intended for senior citizens. The series includes:
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  - How to Search the Internet
  - How to Send an Email
  - Look Out for Scams!

Instructor, Eric Houston, has scheduled a series of the classes at the Mary Ann Young Center. He is also looking at other community centers and Park and Rec departments for additional venues.

- Election coverage for Lino Lakes, Circle Pines, and several school board races in underway. Bios and pics have been posted on the website and interviews with candidates have been scheduled.
- NMTV is exploring providing city meetings as podcasts. It would be another distribution method for city information, which could reach people in a new way. Staff will be contacting each city to determine interest and preferred format.
- A request was made that meeting coverage staff be allowed into city halls at least 45 minutes before a meeting is scheduled to begin. That would better allow for creation of graphics, equipment testing, and troubleshooting of any problems.

**OLD BUSINESS**

- It is likely that an interim Executive Director will be selected.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- The group discussed Commissioner Massoglia's ideas for the future of NMTV.

- It was requested that the October Operations Committee meeting date be changed several members had a conflict with the original date.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:11 p.m.

# Management Report

North Metro Telecommunications Commission  
For the period ended August 31, 2023



Prepared by

Carpenter, Evert & Associates, Ltd.

Prepared on

September 7, 2023

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# Statement of Activity - Budget vs Actual

January - December 2023

	Actual	Budget	over Budget	% of Budget	Total
<b>INCOME</b>					
4000 PEG Fees - Comcast	469,668.60	650,000.00	-180,331.40	72.26 %	
4100 Franchise Fees - Comcast	913,063.76	1,150,000.00	-236,936.24	79.40 %	
4200 Interest - NMTC	82,483.23	1,000.00	81,483.23	8,248.32 %	
4300 Misc Income	55,577.38	35,000.00	20,577.38	158.79 %	
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>1,520,792.97</b>	<b>1,836,000.00</b>	<b>-315,207.03</b>	<b>82.83 %</b>	
<b>GROSS PROFIT</b>	<b>1,520,792.97</b>	<b>1,836,000.00</b>	<b>-315,207.03</b>	<b>82.83 %</b>	
<b>EXPENSES</b>					
0 - Wages - Accrued vac/comp	-23,869.00		-23,869.00		
1 - Personnel					
5102 Wages - Master Control MS	41,920.00	64,176.00	-22,256.00	65.32 %	
5103 Wages - Mobile Prod. Dir KK	46,692.80	71,513.00	-24,820.20	65.29 %	
5104 Wages - Govt Coordinator TJ	41,920.00	64,176.00	-22,256.00	65.32 %	
5105 Wages - Video Engineer MW	50,572.00	79,800.00	-29,228.00	63.37 %	
5106 Wages - Mobile Prod. Tech TL	33,413.20	51,153.00	-17,739.80	65.32 %	
5107 Wages - Asst. News Producer EN	30,735.20	46,503.00	-15,767.80	66.09 %	
5109 Wages - Executive Director HA	72,741.60	111,552.00	-38,810.40	65.21 %	
5110 Wages - Administrative Asst.RV	55,419.20	33,544.00	21,875.20	165.21 %	
5111 Wages - Studio Manager EH	41,537.20	63,565.00	-22,027.80	65.35 %	
5112 Wages - News Director DP	46,692.80	71,513.00	-24,820.20	65.29 %	
5113 Wages - Municipal Producer TS	36,468.00	55,803.00	-19,335.00	65.35 %	
5114 Wages - News Assistants 20HR	424.64	0.00	424.64		
5115 Wages - Sports Assistants	46,142.12	79,582.00	-33,439.88	57.98 %	
5120 Wages - City Meetings Staff PT	7,245.55	18,373.00	-11,127.45	39.44 %	
<b>Total 1 - Personnel</b>	<b>551,924.31</b>	<b>811,253.00</b>	<b>-259,328.69</b>	<b>68.03 %</b>	
2 - Employee Benefits					
5201 Social Security/Medicare Tax	41,365.45	62,061.00	-20,695.55	66.65 %	

No assurance is provided on this financial statement. All disclosures omitted.

	Actual	Budget	over Budget	% of Budget	Total
5203 PERA cost	36,496.25	60,844.00	-24,347.75	59.98 %	
5204 Health/Dental/Other	118,224.18	158,130.00	-39,905.82	74.76 %	
5205 Workers Compensation/Volunteer	3,643.00	2,000.00	1,643.00	182.15 %	
5206 Electronic Filing Charges	681.15	2,000.00	-1,318.85	34.06 %	
<b>Total 2 - Employee Benefits</b>	<b>200,410.03</b>	<b>285,035.00</b>	<b>-84,624.97</b>	<b>70.31 %</b>	
3 - Administrative Expenses					
5501 Legal Fees	20,378.75	50,000.00	-29,621.25	40.76 %	
5602 Audit & Accounting	29,440.50	39,500.00	-10,059.50	74.53 %	
5605 Conferences	550.00	1,000.00	-450.00	55.00 %	
5608 Membership Dues	5,660.00	5,500.00	160.00	102.91 %	
5610 Melio, CC, Bank Fees	263.04		263.04		
5612 Mileage - Administrative	717.32	1,500.00	-782.68	47.82 %	
5613 General/Special Meeting Expenses	562.22	2,000.00	-1,437.78	28.11 %	
5615 Miscellaneous admin expense	249.00		249.00		
<b>Total 3 - Administrative Expenses</b>	<b>57,820.83</b>	<b>99,500.00</b>	<b>-41,679.17</b>	<b>58.11 %</b>	
4 - Production Expenses					
5003 Intern Stipends	4,005.00	5,500.00	-1,495.00	72.82 %	
5601 Advertising/Marketing	431.36	1,000.00	-568.64	43.14 %	
5701 Truck/Fleet Vehicle - Gas & Oil	1,368.97	3,500.00	-2,131.03	39.11 %	
5702 Vehicle Licenses	44.25	500.00	-455.75	8.85 %	
5703 Truck/Fleet Vehicle - Maintenance/Lic	2,644.02	5,500.00	-2,855.98	48.07 %	
5704 Truck/Fleet Vehicle - Maintenance	175.00	0.00	175.00		
5802 Video Equip/Parts/Maintenance	18,251.32	4,000.00	14,251.32	456.28 %	
5803 Video Media/Labels/Shipping	860.25	6,000.00	-5,139.75	14.34 %	
5804 Bulb/Battery/Other Prod Costs	139.31	4,000.00	-3,860.69	3.48 %	
<b>Total 4 - Production Expenses</b>	<b>27,919.48</b>	<b>30,000.00</b>	<b>-2,080.52</b>	<b>93.06 %</b>	
5 - Office/Occupancy					
5401 Building Security	446.43	700.00	-253.57	63.78 %	
5403 Property Tax - Special Assessments	1,362.90	1,400.00	-37.10	97.35 %	
5404 Postage/Shipping	269.62	500.00	-230.38	53.92 %	

No assurance is provided on this financial statement. All disclosures omitted.

	Actual	Budget	over Budget	% of Budget	Total
5405 Office Supplies/Equipment Maintenance	10,800.57	13,000.00	-2,199.43	83.08 %	
5406 Telephone/Internet/Web Service	27,312.89	42,000.00	-14,687.11	65.03 %	
5407 Trash/Janitor/Water	6,550.94	8,500.00	-1,949.06	77.07 %	
5408 Building Maintenance	32,895.20	45,000.00	-12,104.80	73.10 %	
5409 Building Utilities	19,311.04	32,000.00	-12,688.96	60.35 %	
5616 Insurance Expense	15,028.00	16,500.00	-1,472.00	91.08 %	
5617 Computer Building Expense	987.58		987.58		
<b>Total 5 - Office/Occupancy</b>	<b>114,965.17</b>	<b>159,600.00</b>	<b>-44,634.83</b>	<b>72.03 %</b>	
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>929,170.82</b>	<b>1,385,388.00</b>	<b>-456,217.18</b>	<b>67.07 %</b>	
NET OPERATING INCOME	<b>591,622.15</b>	<b>450,612.00</b>	<b>141,010.15</b>	<b>131.29 %</b>	
OTHER EXPENSES					
5004 Cities-Refunded PEG Fees	200,000.01	200,000.00	0.01	100.00 %	
6001 Depreciation	103,200.00	154,800.00	-51,600.00	66.67 %	
Capital Expenditures					
7001 Office Equipment		14,000.00	-14,000.00		
7002 Computer/Office Equip/Software/Upgrades	10,759.88	14,000.00	-3,240.12	76.86 %	
7003 Studio Equipment Purchases	106,029.32	142,910.00	-36,880.68	74.19 %	
7005 New Vehicle Fund	25,000.00		25,000.00		
7006 Bond Payments	229,375.04	229,425.00	-49.96	99.98 %	
7007 Closed Captioning	22,775.75		22,775.75		
7008 Building/Property Improvements	23,320.00	28,000.00	-4,680.00	83.29 %	
<b>Total Capital Expenditures</b>	<b>417,259.99</b>	<b>428,335.00</b>	<b>-11,075.01</b>	<b>97.41 %</b>	
<b>Total Other Expenses</b>	<b>720,460.00</b>	<b>783,135.00</b>	<b>-62,675.00</b>	<b>92.00 %</b>	
NET OTHER INCOME	<b>-720,460.00</b>	<b>-783,135.00</b>	<b>62,675.00</b>	<b>92.00 %</b>	
NET INCOME	<b>\$ -128,837.85</b>	<b>\$ -332,523.00</b>	<b>\$203,685.15</b>	<b>38.75 %</b>	

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No assurance is provided on this financial statement. All disclosures omitted.

# Balance Sheet

As of August 31, 2023

		Total
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>Current Assets</b>		
<b>Bank Accounts</b>		
1001 Cash - Checking Account		2,612,658.15
1003 Petty Cash		425.00
<b>Total Bank Accounts</b>		<b>2,613,083.15</b>
<b>Accounts Receivable</b>		
1100 Accounts Receivable		174,710.09
<b>Total Accounts Receivable</b>		<b>174,710.09</b>
<b>Other Current Assets</b>		
1200 Prepaid Insurance - NMTC		11,459.00
<b>Total Other Current Assets</b>		<b>11,459.00</b>
<b>Total Current Assets</b>		<b>2,799,252.24</b>
<b>Fixed Assets</b>		
1500 Office Equipment - NMTC		1,488,709.00
1702 Bond Equipment 2016		1,985,000.00
1800 Building-Polk/125		1,613,485.84
1850 Land-Polk/125		225,700.00
1900 Accum Deprec - NMTC		-3,721,866.46
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>		<b>1,591,028.38</b>
<b>Other Assets</b>		
1950 Deferred Out Related/Pension		299,695.00
<b>Total Other Assets</b>		<b>299,695.00</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>\$4,689,975.62</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>		
<b>Liabilities</b>		
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
<b>Accounts Payable</b>		
2000 Accounts Payable		11,551.35
2001 A/P - NMTC (Old)		18,264.99
<b>Total Accounts Payable</b>		<b>29,816.34</b>
<b>Other Current Liabilities</b>		
2100 Accrued Payroll Taxes & W/H's		52.30
2103 PERA - CORRECTIONS		-503.59
2104 PERA Payable		74.90
2106 PERA PAYABLE - PRIOR		-3,371.42
2150 Sales Tax Payable - MN		169.91
2200 Accrued Vacation		97,958.24
2300 Franchise Fee App		926,091.63

	Total
2410 Due to City of Blaine	339,318.00
2420 Due to City of Centerville	21,042.00
2430 Due to City of Circle Pines	30,176.50
2440 Due to City of Ham Lake	87,948.00
2450 Due to City of Lexington	11,187.00
2460 Due to City of Lino Lakes	103,950.00
2470 Due to City of Spring Lake Par	36,288.00
2600 Net Pension Liability	418,504.00
2900 Deferred In Related/Pension	392,476.00
<b>Total Other Current Liabilities</b>	<b>2,461,361.47</b>
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>2,491,177.81</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>2,491,177.81</b>
<b>Equity</b>	
3002 Net Equity - Media Ctr	-206,243.34
3003 Net Equity - NMTC	2,517,656.37
Retained Earnings	16,222.63
Net Income	-128,837.85
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>2,198,797.81</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>	<b>\$4,689,975.62</b>

## A/P Aging Summary

As of August 31, 2023

	Current	1 - 30	31 - 60	61 - 90	91 and over	Total
Bradley Werner, LLC	3,794.50					3,794.50
Carpenter Evert & Associates	1,260.00					1,260.00
Coastal Wintergreen LLC	1,010.00		1,200.00			2,210.00
Haivision	3,970.85					3,970.85
North Metro TC					18,264.99	18,264.99
Richard D. Larson	316.00					316.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$10,351.35</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$1,200.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$18,264.99</b>	<b>\$29,816.34</b>

# North Metro TV

August 2023 Update

## Program Production

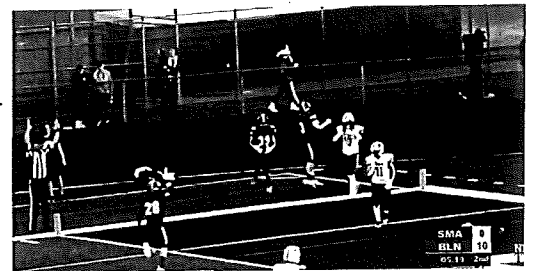
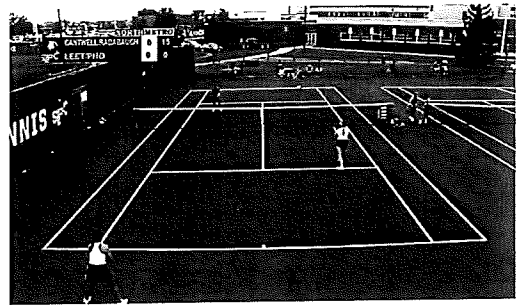
In August, a total of **74 new programs** were produced utilizing the North Metro facilities, funds, and services. This constitutes **56:15:00 hours of new programming**.

- 29 programs were produced by the public
- 43 programs were produced by NMTV staff
- 2 programs were produced by City staff

## Van Shoots

The HD production truck was utilized for 16:45:00 hours of production in August. The following events were produced live and/or recorded for additional playback:

- Blue Heron Days Parade
- Tennis: Totino Grace vs. Spring Lake Park
- Football: Coon Rapids vs. Centennial



## vMix Live Streaming Shoots

The vMix single camera production system was utilized to record/stream 43 events. The vMix system requires significantly fewer staff members than the production truck. vMix crews are spread out over multiple locations and connected via the internet.

- Football: St. Michael-Albertville vs. Blaine



## Most Viewed YouTube Sporting Event

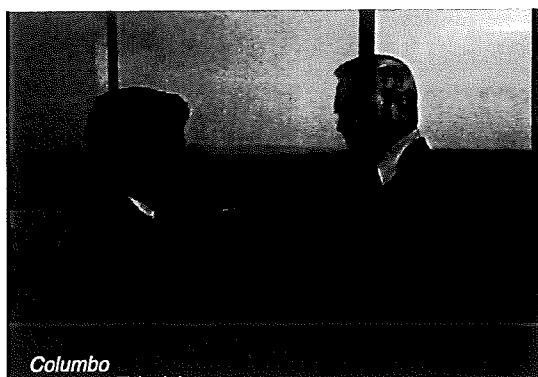
Sports Den:  
360 Views

## Live Workshops

Workshop	Instructor	Organization	Students
Look Out for Scams!	Eric Houston	General Public	9
1 Workshop	P. 18		9 Students

## VOD Workshop Views

Workshop	Type	# of Views	Hours Viewed
Diana Rigg: Avenger	Mini	304	24 hrs
Batman's Greatest Villains	Mini	153	12.75 hrs
Columbo: One More Thing	Mini	3357	363.75 hrs
King of the Cowboys 4 – John Wayne	Mini	79	10.5 hrs
King of the Cowboys 3 – Randolph Scott	Mini	100	5.75 hrs
King of the Cowboys 2 – Autry/Rogers	Mini	240	14 hrs
King of the Cowboys 1 – Strong and Silent	Mini	33	2.75 hrs
Great British Game Shows	Mini	31	1.75 hrs
We Love Lucy: The Lucille Ball Story	Full	11	.75 hrs
The Immortal Ingrid Pitt	Mini	560	21 hrs
The Oscars: 90 Years of the Academy Awards	Full	30	6.75 hrs
Tim Curry Horror Picture Show	Mini	25	1 hrs
Back to the Eighties: The Decade's Biggest...	Full	5	.25 hrs
James Bond: 50 Years of 007	Full	30	2.5 hrs
Eurovision: A Celebration	Mini	5	.25 hrs
Yabba-Dabba-Do! The Fantastic World of Hanna...	Full	383	30.25 hrs
Superman: The Man of Steel on the Silver Screen	Full	NA	NA
The Fantastic Four on the Silver Screen	Mini	NA	NA
Christmas in Hollywood	Full	NA	NA
TV's Greatest Christmas Specials	Full	12	1 hrs
Chicago Christmas Classics	Mini	197	9.75 hrs
Let's Go Ghostbusters: Filmation's Haunted Heroes	Mini	14	.25 hrs
Monster Movies of the 40s and 50s	Full	184	9.25 hrs
Monster Movies of the 20s and 30s	Full	14	.25 hrs
The Presidency on Film JQA to JFK	Full	NA	NA
Monstervision: The Legend of Joe Bob Briggs	Mini	NA	NA
The Cult of Caroline Munro	Mini	1635	61.25 hrs
The Marilyn Monroe Story	Full	NA	NA
Nick at Nite: A TV Viewer's Dream	Mini	31	.75 hrs
The Birth of Animation: Mickey, Bugs, and Betty...	Full	NA	NA
Hollywood Goes to War: World War II	Full	68	11 hrs
Come on Down: Game Shows of the 70s and 80s	Full	29	4.25 hrs
The Quiz Show Scandals and Other Game Shows...	Full	2652	784.5 hrs
The Three Stooges: Comedy's Heavy Hitters	Full	4	.25 hrs
The Marx Brothers: Groucho, Harpo, Chico...	Full	61	5 hrs
Mary Pickford: The World's First Movie Star	Full	NA	NA
Hollywood Goes to the Dogs: Lassie, Benji...	Full	11	1.25 hrs
<b>37 VOD Workshops</b>		<b>10,258 Total Views</b>	<b>1,310.5 Hours Viewed</b>



### Most Viewed YouTube Workshop

Columbo: One More Thing  
3,357 Views

## YouTube Stats

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Month	Viewers	Videos Viewed	Hours Watched	New Subscribers	Total Impressions
January	26,847	33,656	2,176.25	64	375,076
February	39,350	51,758	5,263	201	1,169,051
March	58,859	74,726	7,070	237	1,833,467
April	53,014	97,942	3,445	58	421,789
May	39,135	61,084	2,771	92	380,115
June	34,746	58,907	3,659	138	344,775
July	34,807	57,811	2,395.5	60	294,888
August	32,600	50,353	2,658	67	272,782
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>319,358</b>	<b>486,237</b>	<b>29,437.75</b>	<b>917</b>	<b>5,091,943</b>

## NMTV Website Stats

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Month	Number of Users	Number of Views	Ch. 15 Live Stream Views
January	5,568	10,793	1,625
February	5,229	10,091	1,040
March	6,404	11,943	868
April	6,626	11,569	799
May	7,224	8,717	1,564
June	7,305	12,398	1,192
July	4,600	26,000	595
August	10,000	27,000	1,563
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>52,956</b>	<b>118,511</b>	<b>9,246</b>

## Home Movie Transfers

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Home movie transfers have become one of our most popular services. Residents can transfer their family videos themselves for free, or pay NMTV to do it. NMTV can also transfer film, slides, and photos for a fee.

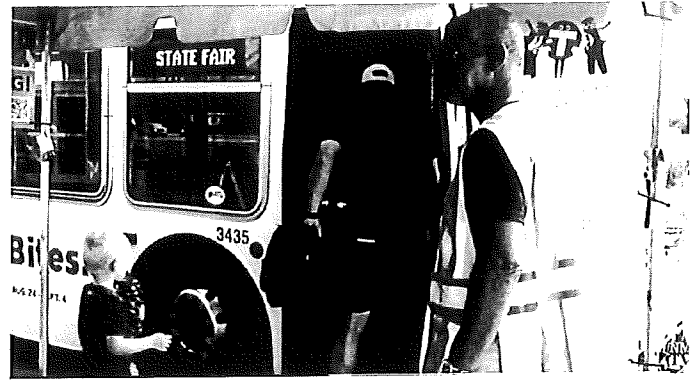
Month	Hours Transferred	Tapes	Film Reels	DVDs	Photos/ Slides	Fees Paid
January	225	51	59	0	0	\$764.92
February	180.75	35	43	0	0	\$234.52
March	284.75	82	62	0	0	\$1,046.56
April	564	149	161	27	236	\$1,871.45
May	514.5	131	69	10	164	\$4,336.45
June	175	25	49	22	0	\$1,102.67
July	523.25	138	103	9	170	\$1,150.54
August	189	55	13	9	30	\$2,520.65
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>2,656.25</b>	<b>666</b>	<b>559</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>\$13,027.76</b>

## Production Highlights

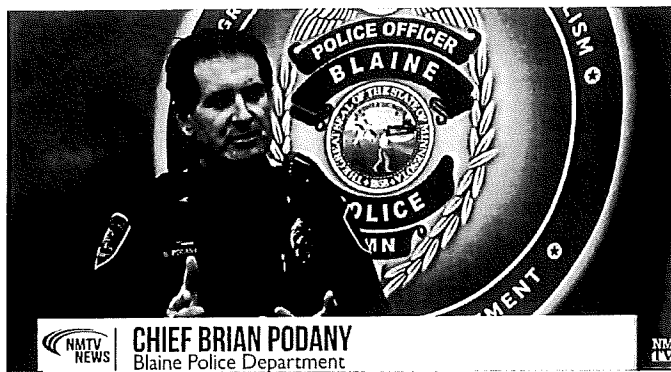
### NMTV News Highlights

Each week Danika Peterson and Eric Nelson create a news program that highlights events, people, issues, and information important to citizens of our Member Cities. Some August highlights include:

- New and Better Boardwalk to Open Soon on Rice Creek Trail
- Sunflower Power on Full Display at Lino Lakes Farm
- School Meals Will be Free for All Students
- US 10 Getting Extra Lanes in the North Metro
- Blaine Singer Hits All the Right Notes
- Blaine's State Fair Express is a Home Run
- Blaine Suspends School Resource Officer Program



In addition to daily playbacks of North Metro TV News on the cable systems, there are **1,253 local stories** archived for viewers on the **NMTV YouTube channel**. The channel can be accessed through the [northmetrotv.com](http://northmetrotv.com) website.



### Most Viewed YouTube News Story

Blaine Suspends School Resource Officer Program  
361 Views

### NSPN.TV Streaming Agreement

North Metro TV has entered into an agreement with the Neighborhood Sports Network (NSPN.TV) to stream fall sports. NSPN.TV holds the contract with the Minnesota State High School League for streaming all high school sporting events. They typically stream games utilizing a single camera and charge viewers a fee for accessing the service. Fees are paid on a monthly or annual subscription basis and NSPN also provides downloads of their games for a fee. NSPN is interested in streaming games produced by other entities, such as NMTV. In exchange for allowing this, NMTV would receive compensation based on subscription and download levels. This is an income source that North Metro TV has been considering for some time as it fits perfectly into the goal of earning money without changing NMTV's mission. The agreement is for a trial basis that covers the fall sports season. At that point the partnership will be re-evaluated and consideration given as to whether it benefits NMTV to continue.

### Safety Camp

Special Events Coordinator, T.J. Tronson, spent a couple of days covering the annual Blaine Safety Camp activities at the SBM fire station #3. The completed video includes highlights from all of the presentations and plenty of video of kids having fun. The program was shared with the SBM Community Relations Specialist and can also be found on the cable channels and Youtube.



### City Meeting Podcasts

Facility Manager, Eric Houston, is ready to start offering our city meetings as podcasts. It is one more distribution method for city information that

NMTV can provide at no cost to cities. Eric has been contacting each city to determine interest, number of meetings to turn into podcasts, and how long to make them available on the players. NMTV has an account with Podbean, a popular and robust podcast host. Through that host we can distribute the podcast to podcast players such as Amazon, Spotify, iHeart and Apple.

### Conversations

The news team, of Danika Peterson and Eric Nelson, has produced another episode of their show Conversations. This time they have a discussion with Cory McIntyre, the Superintendent of the Anoka-Hennepin School District. With the new school year starting, host Eric Nelson gets the skinny on what is ahead for the district. Conversations is available on the cable channels and Youtube.



### League of Women Voters Friend of League Award

Special Events Coordinator, T.J. Tronson, and North Metro TV have been unanimously chosen to receive the League of Women Voters, of Anoka-Blaine-Coon Rapids area *Friend of the League* award. The award is presented to an individual or an organization that has had a significant impact on the community through civic engagement and support. The League specifically noted, "NMTV's outstanding service to the electorate of Anoka County with video recording and playback of candidate forums. We particularly appreciated your services last fall when you made your studio available to us when other plans were disrupted.." T.J. is working with the League again this fall to record three of their candidate forums.

### City Productions

In August, Municipal Producer, Trevor Scholl, completed two productions. He completed another public safety employee profile, and a business highlight. Completed programs include:

- Meet the Staff: SLP PD Officer Wyatt McDonough at Night to Unite
- Local Connections: Brewers Guild State Fair 2023



New and ongoing projects include:

- Historical Society cemetery tours
- Blaine Police Department community outreach events
- Public safety employee profiles, fire departments
- Love My Pet Fair
- Blaine On-Boarding Videos
- Business profiles
- Blaine Facebook live town halls

Trevor touches base with contacts on a regular basis and also encourages Cities to contact him with ideas for new videos.

## Public Access Programs

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Title	Producer	Runtime
Lucky Star: The Anime No One Remembers "Trailer"	Kenzo H. Samadani	00:02:10
Rice Creek Watershed District Meeting (2 episodes)	Theresa Stasica	02:45:59
Christ Lutheran Church Worship (5 episodes)	Chance Amundson	04:53:39
Christ Lutheran Church Worship Message (5 episodes)	Chance Amundson	02:32:05
Lovepower (6 episodes)	Rick Larson	06:00:00
The Power of Love (6 episodes)	Rick Larson	03:00:00
Oak Park Community Church (4 episodes)	David Turnidge	02:31:17
<b>29 New Programs</b>		<b>21:45:10 New Hours</b>

## NMTV Staff Programs

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Title	Producer	Runtime
Anoka County Board Meeting (8/8/23)	T.J. Tronson	00:40:55
Anoka County Board Meeting (8/22/23)	T.J. Tronson	00:41:45
Blaine Safety Camp	T.J. Tronson	00:06:24
NMTV News (2 episodes)	Danika Peterson/Eric Nelson	00:38:50
Conversations: Cory McIntyre, Anoka-Hennepin Superintendent	Danika Peterson/Eric Nelson	00:23:02
New Roundabout at 99 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	Danika Peterson/Eric Nelson	00:02:13
Blaine Votes to Remove School Resource Officers	Danika Peterson/Eric Nelson	00:05:06
911 Day of Service Version 1	Danika Peterson/Eric Nelson	00:00:31
911 Day of Service Version 2	Danika Peterson/Eric Nelson	00:00:31
911 Day of Service Version 3	Danika Peterson/Eric Nelson	00:00:31
911 Day of Service Version 4	Danika Peterson/Eric Nelson	00:00:31
Local Connections: Brewers Guild State Fair 2023	Trevor Scholl	00:06:48
Meet the Staff: SLP PD Officer Wyatt McDonough at Night to Unite	Trevor Scholl	00:03:42
Blue Heron Days Parade	Kenton Kipp/Ted Leroux	00:44:50
Girls Tennis: Totino Grace/Spring Lake Park	Kenton Kipp/Ted Leroux	01:19:32
Football: Coon Rapids/Centennial	Kenton Kipp/Ted Leroux	02:34:19
Football: St. Michael/Albertville/Blaine	Kenton Kipp/Ted Leroux	02:02:49
Sports Den	Kenton Kipp/Ted Leroux	00:26:17
<b>19 New Programs</b>		<b>09:57:36 New Hours</b>

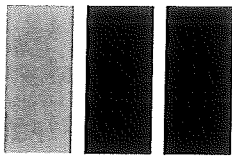
## City Meetings

Title	Producer	Runtime
Blaine City Council Meeting (8/7/23)	T.J. Tronson	01:46:58
Blaine Planning Commission Meeting (8/8/23)	T.J. Tronson	00:14:19
Blaine Natural Resources Conservation Board Meeting (8/15/23)	Matt Waldron	01:02:33
Blaine City Council Meeting (8/21/23)	Trevor Scholl	01:44:22
Blaine City Council Meeting (8/31/23)	Trevor Scholl	00:22:56
Centerville Park & Rec Meeting (8/2/23)	John Murphy	02:58:10
Centerville Planning & Zoning Meeting (8/8/23)	Trevor Scholl	01:30:07
Centerville City Council Meeting (8/9/23)	John Murphy	03:20:32
Centerville EDA Meeting (8/16/23)	John Murphy	01:40:06
Centerville City Council Meeting (8/23/23)	John Murphy	01:15:07
Circle Pines Park Board Meeting (8/1/23)	Ray Flint	00:02:32
Circle Pines City Council Meeting (8/8/23)	Ray Flint	01:25:54
Circle Pines Utility Commission Meeting (8/16/23)	Eric Houston	00:21:47
Circle Pines City Council Meeting (8/22/23)	Ray Flint	00:52:50
Ham Lake City Council Meeting (8/7/23)	David Little	00:34:54
Ham Lake Planning Commission Meeting (8/14/23)	David Little	00:14:51
Ham Lake City Council Meeting (8/21/23)	T.J. Tronson	00:21:47
Ham Lake Planning Commission Meeting (8/28/23)	Danika Peterson	00:23:39
Lexington City Council Meeting (8/3/23)	Lexington Staff	00:11:56
Lexington City Council Meeting (8/17/23)	Lexington Staff	00:11:19
Lino Lakes Planning & Zoning Meeting (8/9/23)	Anne Serwe	00:12:12
Lino Lakes City Council Meeting (8/14/23)	Anne Serwe	00:38:02
Lino Lakes City Council Meeting (8/28/23)	Anne Serwe	00:48:15
Lino Lakes Environmental Board Meeting (8/30/23)	Anne Serwe	00:44:50
Spring Lake Park City Council Meeting (8/7/23)	Trevor Scholl	00:22:44
Spring Lake Park City Council Meeting (8/21/23)	Matt Waldron	00:57:02
<b>26 New Programs</b>		<b>24:13:30 New Hours</b>

If you have any questions or comments regarding this monthly report please contact Heidi Arnson at 763.231.2801 or [harnson@northmetrotv.com](mailto:harnson@northmetrotv.com).

# NORTH METRO TV Production Statistics 2023

Programming Statistics														23 Total			23 Average		
	J	F	M	A	M	J	JU	A	S	O	N	D							
<b>Cablecast Programs</b>																			
Cablecast Hours	2321.00	2070.00	2359.00	2217.00	2328.00	2317.00	2377.00	2177.00						18026.00			1502.17		
Programs Produced - Public	1917.00	1668.00	1927.00	2060.00	1897.50	1887.50	1873.50	1845.00						15075.50			1256.29		
Programs Produced - Public	18.00	22.00	15.00	16.00	25.00	18.00	12.00	23.00						149.00			12.42		
Program Hours Produced - Public	12.50	21.50	10.00	12.00	16.75	14.50	9.50	16.50						113.25			9.44		
Prog. Produced - Affiliated Public	7.00	5.00	5.00	6.00	12.00	6.00	7.00	6.00						54.00			4.50		
Prog. Hours Produced - Affil. Public	6.25	6.00	5.00	6.75	8.75	4.75	6.75	5.25						49.50			4.13		
Programs Produced - City Staff	4.00	5.00	3.00	4.00	4.75	3.00	2.00	2.00						27.00			2.25		
Prog. Hours Produced - City Staff	3.00	3.00	1.50	4.00	4.75	2.50	1.00	0.50						20.25			1.69		
Programs Produced - NMTV Staff	43.00	42.00	43.00	35.00	51.00	41.00	80.00	43.00						378.00			31.50		
Prog. Hours Produced - NMTV Staff	41.00	40.50	31.00	36.75	55.50	37.50	85.00	34.00						361.25			30.10		
Total Public Programs Produced	25.00	27.00	20.00	22.00	37.00	24.00	19.00	29.00						203.00			16.92		
Total Staff Programs Produced	47.00	47.00	46.00	39.00	55.00	44.00	82.00	45.00						405.00			33.75		
Total Internal Programs Produced	72.00	74.00	66.00	61.00	92.00	68.00	101.00	74.00						608.00			50.67		
% Staff Produced Programs	65.28%	63.51%	69.70%	63.93%	59.78%	64.71%	81.19%	60.81%						66.61%			66.61%		
% Public Produced Programs	34.72%	36.49%	30.30%	36.07%	40.22%	35.29%	18.81%	39.19%						33.39%			33.39%		
External Programs Submitted	24.00	22.00	23.00	18.00	26.00	18.00	27.00	24.00						182.00			15.17		
External Program Hours	31.00	18.50	19.00	16.00	22.50	16.25	23.50	23.75						170.50			14.21		
Total New Programs	96.00	96.00	89.00	79.00	118.00	86.00	128.00	98.00						790.00			65.83		
<b>Public Equipment Usage Statistics</b>																			
Facility Hours Available	154.00	94.00	77.00	119.00	133.00	96.00	115.00	117.00						907.00			75.58		
Camera Check Outs	11.00	8.00	9.00	9.00	9.00	10.00	9.00	9.00						74.00			6.17		
Studio A	15.25	5.25	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00						30.50			2.54		
% of Available Time	9.90%	5.59%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	10.20%	0.00%	0.00%						3.36%			3.36%		
Studio B	7.50	0.00	0.00	6.50	0.00	1.50	10.50	6.00						32.00			2.67		
% of Available Time	4.87%	0.00%	0.00%	5.46%	0.00%	1.53%	9.13%	5.13%						3.53%			3.53%		
Editing	33.25	17.25	12.25	6.25	5.25	8.00	11.00	9.00						102.25			8.52		
% of Available Time	21.59%	18.35%	15.91%	5.25%	3.95%	8.16%	9.57%	7.69%						11.27%			3.83%		
Number of Public Facility Users	10.00	9.00	7.00	11.00	7.00	14.00	10.00	10.00						78.00			6.50		
Total Hours of Public Facility Use	56.00	22.50	12.25	12.75	5.25	19.50	21.50	15.00						164.75			13.73		
<b>Production Van/Volunteer Statistics</b>																			
Number of Van Shoots	6.00	4.00	3.00	3.00	11.00	8.00	3.00	3.00						41.00			3.42		
Total Van Usage Hours	36.00	21.00	20.25	18.75	67.50	52.50	24.00	16.75						256.75			21.40		
Number of vMix Shoots	5.00	8.00	1.00	1.00	5.00	2.00	43.00	1.00						66.00			0.28		
Intern Hours	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	98.00	71.25	66.50	6.00						241.75			20.15		
Volunteer Hours	5.00	5.00	0.00	0.00	5.00	30.00	8.00	0.00						53.00			4.42		
<b>Workshop Statistics</b>																			
Number of Live Workshops	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00						7.00			0.58		
Number of Students at Live Workshops	3.00	11.00	0.00	0.00	18.00	5.00	13.00	9.00						59.00			4.92		
VOD Students All Workshops	9012.00	26653.00	49927.00	8612.00	7684.00	6554.00	8230.00	10258.00						126930.00			10577.50		
<b>Media Transfer Statistics</b>																			
Total Transfer Equip. Usage Hours	225.00	180.75	284.75	564.00	514.50	175.00	523.25	189.00						2656.25			221.35		
Tapes Transferred	51.00	35.00	82.00	149.00	131.00	25.00	138.00	55.00						666.00			55.50		
Film Reels Transferred	59.00	43.00	62.00	161.00	69.00	49.00	103.00	13.00						559.00			18.45		
Slides/Photos Transferred	0.00	0.00	0.00	236.00	164.00	0.00	170.00	30.00						600.00			50.00		
DVDs Copied	0.00	0.00	0.00	27.00	10.00	22.00	9.00	9.00						77.00			6.42		
Transfer Hours By Public	1.00	18.25	12.75	15.00	1.00	3.50	2.00	0.00						53.50			4.46		
Transfer Hours By Staff	224.00	162.50	272.00	549.00	513.50	171.50	521.25	189.00						2602.75			216.90		
<b>NMTV YouTube Statistics</b>																			
Number of Viewers	26847.00	39350.00	58859.00	53014.00	39135.00	34746.00	34807.00	32600.00						319358.00			26613.17		
Total Videos Viewed	33656.00	51758.00	74726.00	97942.00	61084.00	58907.00	57811.00	50353.00						486237.00			40519.75		
Total Hours Watched	2176.25	5263.00	7070.00	3445.00	2771.00	3659.00	2395.50	2658.00						29437.75			2453.15		
Number of New Subscribers	64.00	201.00	237.00	58.00	92.00	138.00	60.00	67.00						917.00			76.42		
Total Impressions	375076.00	1169051.00	1833467.00	421789.00	380115.00	344775.00	294888.00	272782.00						5091943.00			424328.58		
<b>NMTV Website Statistics</b>																			
Number of Users	5568.00	5229.00	6404.00	6626.00	7224.00	7305.00	4800.00	10000.00						52956.00			4413.00		
Number of Views	10793.00	10091.00	11943.00	11569.00	8717.00	12398.00	26000.00	27000.00						118511.00			9875.92		
Ch. 15 Live Stream Views	1625.00	1040.00	868.00	799.00	1564.00	1192.00	595.00	1563.00						9246.00			770.50		



**Bradley Werner**  
Attorneys at Law

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** North Metro Telecommunications Commission  
**From:** Mike Bradley, Nancy Werner, and Michael Athay  
**Re:** September 2023 Legal Report  
**Date:** September 12, 2023

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### **Senate Confirms Biden Nominee Anna Gomez to Fill Vacant FCC Seat**

The United States Senate on Thursday, September 7, confirmed Biden nominee Anna Gomez to serve on the FCC. Gomez was confirmed 55-43. The confirmation vote ends a 2½ year period during which the Commission has been in a 2-2 deadlock of Republican and Democratic commissioners. Gomez is a telecom lawyer who worked at the FCC and also in the private sector. She is currently a communications policy adviser at the State Department. She will be the first Latina to serve on the commission in more than 20 years.

Detailed news coverage can be found in articles by *The Hill* [here](#) and *The Washington Post* [here](#).

### **Commission Files Reply Comments Supporting All-In Cable Pricing Rules**

The Commission joined a coalition of cable commissions and local governments in filing reply comments in the FCC's "All-In Pricing" docket in which the FCC proposes to adopt a new rule requiring cable operators and direct broadcast satellite (DBS) providers to specify the "all-in" price for their video programming services on subscribers' bills and in their promotional materials.

The reply focused on three main points:

1. Emphasizing the support in the record for the new rules.
2. Supporting other commenters who expressed support for the rules, including Consumer Reports suggestion that the Commission consider prohibiting all itemization of "junk fees."
3. Rebutting claims by industry commenters that there is no issue with junk fees or confusion on cable bills, and reiterating that the Commission has authority to impose the proposed rule with respect to cable operators.

The filing can be found [here](#) and a link to the other filings in the docket is available [here](#).

### **Minnesota Office of Broadband Development Releases Draft Digital Opportunity Plan**

The Office of Broadband Development has released a draft Digital Opportunity Plan for public input. The Plan outlines how Minnesota will use an upcoming grant from the federal government

to advance digital equity. Each state must submit a plan to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) detailing how it will spend its allocation from the \$2.75 billion Digital Equity Act. A draft of the Digital Opportunity Plan is available [here](#). Additional information, including a summary of the plan, is available at <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/broadband/adoption/>.

We urge the Commission to work with other cable commissions and local governments to provide comments on the Plan. Our primary message would be that the Digital Opportunity Plan must include a plan to ensure equal access to the same quality of service of broadband throughout every city in the state. The best way of ensuring equal access is municipal franchising, and thus municipal franchising should be included as a recommendation in the Plan. Please let us know if you would like us to participate on your behalf with joint comments.

### **Treasury Releases Interim Final Rule Updating ARPA's SLFRF Program to Provide Additional Flexibility**

According to a bulletin issued by the National League of Cities, on August 10, 2023, the U.S. Department of Treasury released its Interim Final Rule governing the new uses of the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) authorized by Congress in December 2022, which add three new expenditure categories. The new expenditure categories are:

- Spending to provide emergency relief from natural disasters
- Spending on surface transportation infrastructure eligible projects and matching funds
- Spending on any program, project, or service that would also be eligible under HUD's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program

Commentators have noted that the new categories introduce needed flexibility into the use of SLFRF funds. After publication in the Federal Register, there will be a 60-day comment period. The time to proceed to a final rule will depend on the volume and complexity of comments. The full NLC article is available [here](#).

### **45 Bipartisan Members of Congress Call for Extension of "Affordable Connectivity Program" for Broadband**

On August 17, 2023, a bipartisan group of 45 Members of Congress, wrote to congressional leadership to call for an extension of the federal Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) in the upcoming government appropriations bill. The full letter and a list of members signing it can be found [here](#). The news release is available [here](#).

The ACP provides millions of families with financial assistance intended to ensure every household nationwide has access to high-speed and reliable broadband. Specifically, the program provides eligible households with up to \$30 per month toward their internet bills, and a one-time subsidy of \$100 toward desktops, laptops, or tablet computers for children and families.

## **FCC Seeks Comment On Possible Revision of Cable-Related Regulations Under Regulatory Flexibility Act**

The FCC, on August 17, 2023, released a Public Notice seeking comment regarding the possible revision or elimination of Commission rules adopted between 2007–2012 that have or will have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. The Regulatory Flexibility Act requires the Commission to review all such rules to determine whether they should be continued without change, amended, or rescinded, consistent with the stated objectives of applicable statutes, to minimize such economic impact.

The 72 page list of rules under review, attached as an Appendix to the Public Notice, includes rules regarding cable franchising (*see* Part 76 , starting at p. 47), and numerous other sections of the FCC’s cable television regulations. There is no indication the Commission intends to change any rules related to cable regulation, however, we will track this docket in the event commenters propose changes. The Public Notice and Appendix, DA 23-710 in CB Docket No. 23-283, can be found [here](#). Comments are due 60 days after publication in the Federal Register.

## **FCC Issues FM Digital Power NPRM In MB Docket No. 22-405**

On July 31, 2023, the FCC adopted a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) that seeks to give digital FM and Low Power FM stations more flexibility to increase digital power levels. According to the FCC’s August 1 Public Notice, available [here](#), this would encourage more FM broadcasters to adopt digital technology and would make digital broadcasts available to a greater number of listeners. The NPRM seeks comment on two proposals and asks whether these changes will benefit the public or impact existing FM services.

Specifically, the NPRM proposes to change the way an FM station can determine its maximum permissible digital power level, thus expanding the number of stations that can broadcast at higher digital power levels. Additionally, it proposes to allow FM stations to operate their digital sidebands at different power levels in order to give broadcasters greater flexibility to maximize power while avoiding interference. According to the Public Notice, these proposed actions would offer more efficient FM digital operation, increase digital signal coverage and provide a more robust digital signal for reception inside buildings.

Comments are due September 21, 2023; Reply Comments are due October 6, 2023.

## **FCC September 21, 2023 Open Meeting**

The Open Meeting is scheduled to commence at 10:30 a.m. ET in the Commission Meeting Room of the Federal Communications Commission, 45 L Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. Open Meetings are streamed live at <https://www.fcc.gov/live>. The agenda is available [here](#).

# NiemanReports

NEWS

July 20, 2023

## Massachusetts Lawmakers Look to Streaming Services to Fund Public Access Media

As local journalism contracts, community stations — which are seeing their own revenue decline — are becoming a key information source for communities

ARTICLE BY

SAMANTHA HENRY



Massachusetts lawmakers are considering legislation that advocates say would make it the first state

in the nation to levy fees on streaming companies like Netflix in order to help fund community media

Jakub Porzycki/NurPhoto via AP

Massachusetts lawmakers are considering legislation that advocates say would make it the first state in the nation to levy fees on streaming companies like Netflix in order to help fund community media.

The “Act to Modernize Funding For Community Media Programming” is proposing a five percent fee on digital streaming providers, based on a company’s gross annual revenue in the state. A portion of the fee would be distributed to municipalities for the support of their community media centers — colloquially known as public access television.

The proposed legislation, which is in the early stages of committee review in the state legislature, is aimed at supplementing decreasing cable revenue fees, which make up a large portion of community media budgets.

Under the federal Cable Communications Policy Act of 1984, cable providers currently pay a percentage (up to five percent of gross annual revenue) of their franchise license agreements with municipalities in exchange for using local infrastructure to reach customers. For nearly 40 years, these fees have represented a major source of funding for community access stations across the country that produce non-commercial public, educational, and governmental (PEG) programming. (Disclosure: The author serves as a volunteer member on the board of the non-profit Watertown [Mass.] Cable Access Corp.)

But as consumers increasingly quit cable for streaming entertainment services, a major source of funding for community media is in jeopardy. At the same time, these stations are playing an increasingly vital role in a shrinking local news ecosystem, according to Jonathan Grabowski, the executive director of Marshfield Community Television and a clerk on the board of Mass Access, a nonprofit that advocates for community media.

“In an age of remote participation and a lack of local media coverage, community media centers in Massachusetts have found themselves in the untenable situation of increased demand for services with less funding,” Grabowski testified at a July 13 hearing on the bill.

Seventy percent of Mass Access’ member organizations reported a sharp increase in coverage of local meetings since 2020, to support hybrid open-public-meeting requirements during the pandemic, Grabowski testified, while nearly 60 percent reported a decrease in funding during the same time period. Citing figures from the Massachusetts Department of Telecommunications and Cable, he added that cable subscriptions have decreased by more than 30 percent in the state from their apex a decade ago, with the largest-ever decrease in subscribers — 10 percent — occurring between 2021 and 2022. At that pace, Grabowski warned, the \$63.3 million in cable franchise fees that go to supporting Massachusetts’ community media centers will decrease by more than half by 2030.

The proposed legislation (H.74 and S.34), which has more than 70 cosponsors to date, would direct the state to collect fees from streaming companies twice per year into the general fund. Twenty percent would be retained for administrative costs, and the remaining 80 percent would be disbursed to municipalities, based on population, to be evenly split between the municipality and its community media station for “expenditures related to hybrid municipal meetings, data infrastructure improvements, school technology programs and more,”

according to Mass Access.

At least a dozen states currently levy some kind of digital tax on streaming services, but Massachusetts would be the first state to earmark a portion of the fees specifically to support community media, according to David Gauthier, the president of Mass Access and the executive director of Winchester Community Access & Media. Massachusetts is leading the legislative push, according to Gauthier, because it is home to more than 200 — or 13 percent — of all the community media centers in the nation. According to Mass Access, Massachusetts, with a population of around 7 million people, has more stations than California and Texas, the only other two states to have more than 100 community media centers.

Sponsors of the bill estimate it could generate about \$65 million annually, which would replace, not add to, the projected decline in cable fees, according to Gauthier. Netflix and other streaming services did not return a request for comment. But several people representing the interests of cable, satellite, and streaming service providers testified at the legislative hearing that any additional fees on streamers would translate to a new tax on consumers at a time when many are eschewing cable for streaming in an effort to save money.

Tim Wilkerson, president of the New England Connectivity and Telecommunications Association (NECTA), a nonprofit trade association that represents several internet, broadband, cable, television, and content providers, said Massachusetts would go from being “the envy of most states” for having “the right regulatory environment for industry to invest, innovate, and partner with state government,” to damaging that reputation were it to levy fees on streaming companies.

During testimony before the Joint Committee on Advanced Internet Technology, the Internet, and Cyber Security, which included the streaming bill and other initiatives, Wilkerson urged the committee not to change the current regulatory environment. “Today, there are several well-intended bills before you that would reverse that proven policy of predictability by proposing regulatory expansion that is unnecessary, would be costly for consumers and industry, and in some instances, likely preempted by federal law,” he said.

Chris Gilrein, the executive director of Massachusetts and the Northeast for TechNet, a national network of technology CEOs and senior executives that “promotes the growth of the innovation economy,” also claimed the proposed legislation would mean higher fees for consumers.

“Beyond being an ill-timed burden on your constituents, this new tax would be duplicative and administratively cumbersome and sending a negative message to innovators and early adopters,” Gilrein said.

Gauthier of Mass Access, in an interview before the hearing, argued there is nothing in the proposed legislation that would require companies to pass the fees onto consumers.

“We can either throw everything back on the residents, or we can ask these multi-billion-dollar corporations to do their part,” Gauthier said, adding he thinks the term “cord cutting” is a misnomer.

“The streaming services are using the same infrastructure [as the cable companies]. The cord remains, regardless of what data runs through it,” Gauthier said. “People still have a cord coming into their house. That cable is still running over public lands, and to me, it’s the same form of transmission.”

Julie Thompson, chief communications officer for business and government affairs at Plymouth Area Community Access Television, testified that despite the declining revenue picture, her station has increased its coverage as a result of more demand for its content. The station has covered more than 966 board and committee meetings and more than 900 informational stories, profiles pieces, sporting events, concerts, parades, and community events over the last 18 months, Thompson testified during the hearing.

“With the demise of local newspapers and the questionable fact-checking of many social media sites, providing a local, trusted source for news and information is our continued mission and goal,” Thompson said.

“Everyone wants transparency in government,” she added. “Transparency costs money to provide.”

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*NECTA president Tim Wilkerson did not testify on H.74 and S.34 specifically, but on broadband issues at large.*

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# Finally There Are Five: Gomez Confirmed as FCC Commissioner

Posted on September 7, 2023 4:33pm by [Joan Engebretson](#)

More than halfway through President Biden's four-year term as president, the FCC finally has a full complement of commissioners. The Senate today confirmed Anna Gomez for the fifth spot on the commission, which has been largely deadlocked since Biden took office.

Gomez was Biden's second choice to fill the vacant spot when former FCC Chair Ajit Pai left with the change in administration. Biden's initial nominee Gigi Sohn faced strong opposition for over a year before withdrawing herself from the running in March.

In May, Biden nominated Gomez, who faced less opposition. Gomez is a veteran of both the FCC and NTIA. Most recently, she was a senior advisor for International Information and Communications Policy in the State Department's Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy.

Traditionally the political party that holds the White House has the majority on the commission, enabling the commission to advance that party's objectives. No more than three commissioners can be nominees from the same party. Since Biden took office, there have been two Democratic nominees and two Republican nominees on the commission. As a result, no controversial actions have been taken by the FCC.

"Anna brings with her a wealth of telecommunications experience, a substantial record of public service, and a history of working to ensure the United States stays on the cutting edge of keeping us all connected," said FCC Chair Jessica Rosenworcel in a prepared statement.

"Her international expertise will be a real asset to the agency. I look forward to working with her to advance the agency's mission to ensure the benefits of modern communications reach everyone, everywhere and that the United States can continue to lead in the digital age."

## Industry Reaction

Many stakeholders within the telecom industry have been arguing that a fifth commissioner is needed so that important decisions can be made. Unsurprisingly, numerous telecom associations issued statements congratulating Gomez on her achievement, while also referencing their own hot button policy objectives.

Here are just a few of the statements that were issued today.

"NTCA and its hundreds of community-based members are eager to work with [Gomez] in her new role to advance the FCC's mission of universal service for all Americans," said Shirley Bloomfield, CEO of NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association.

“The broadband community remains committed to working with her and the Commission toward our shared goal of building our connected future as quickly and efficiently as possible,” said Jonathan Spalter, president & CEO of USTelecom – The Broadband Association.

According to ACA Connects President and CEO Grant Spellmeyer, Gomez “has demonstrated her expertise, leadership, and sound decision making.”

He added that “We look forward to working with her as the FCC seeks to close the broadband availability and adoption gaps, and to ensure that our small and rural member companies continue to operate in a regulatory environment that enables their enormous investment in reliable, robust broadband infrastructure to meet the needs of consumers.”

Matt Mandel, vice president of government affairs at WISPA – Broadband Without Boundaries, said Gomez has “years of experience and immense talents [that] have commanded universal respect from the telecom and consumer communities, and we are excited to begin working with her on the weighty communications matters of today and tomorrow.”

CTIA President and CEO Meredith Attwell Baker noted that Gomez has had “an exceptional public service career, underpinned by a keen understanding of policy and regulatory landscapes.”

Baker added that “Her proven track record in government oversight of spectrum management will be invaluable to ensuring America’s continued wireless leadership and expanding broadband access for all Americans. We look forward to working with the Commission to get much-needed licensed spectrum to market so we can fuel the next wave of 5G innovation, meet growing data demands and secure the future of America’s economy.”

Michael Powell, President & CEO, NCTA – The Internet & Television Association, said Gomez “has earned a reputation for being thoughtful about policy and addressing issues with an open mind” and that NCTA is ready to work with her on “the most important issue of the day – bringing high-speed internet to all.”

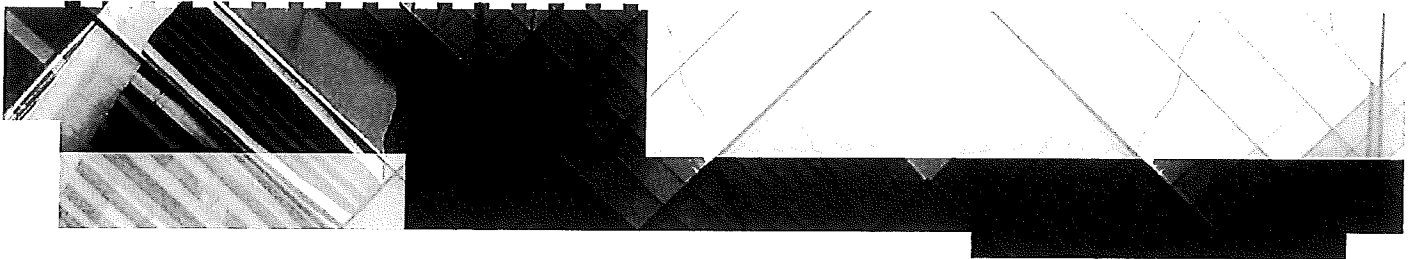
# POTs and PANs

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August 14, 2023

## Preempting Local Government

5 Comments

In May the House Energy and Commerce Committee marked up nineteen pieces of telecom-related legislation, which means the bills can move forward to the full House for a vote. Today's blog looks at one bill in particular because it represents what I'm seeing as a new trend of actions taken by big ISPs to preempt the authority of local governments.



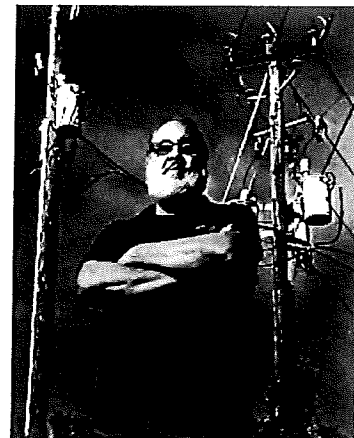
The bill is H.R. 3557, the American Broadband Deployment Act of 2023. This legislation would preempt a host of current rights of local governments to manage public rights-of-way for telecom infrastructure. This applies to both wireless infrastructure like towers, but also to landline infrastructure like fiber, huts, and cabinets.

The legislation includes a long list of changes aimed at taking local government out of the business of controlling telecom infrastructure deployment.

- The bill establishes a 60-day shot clock for local governments to consider requests for rights-of-way. If the local government doesn't approve a request within that time, the request is 'deemed' to be approved. Further, once a project is deemed to be approved, the carrier or ISP can proceed with construction without further notice to the local government. It appears that would give builders the ability to bypass local inspections, traffic control regulations, etc.
- The legislation would give ISPs and carriers the ability to install facilities anywhere they choose and bypass local zoning rules. This would also eliminate local requirements to hide, conceal, or disguise infrastructure in historic neighborhoods.
- The legislation imposes a complicated formula for calculating and justifying any fees, with the overall goal of greatly lowering fees.
- One of the most intrusive changes is that the legislation would place all disputes at the FCC rather than in local courts. This would force local governments to battle disputes in D.C. rather than locally. This would upset a 35-year long truce between Congress and local governments that allows disputes on local-related issues to be heard in local courts.
- Eliminates cable franchise renewals and eliminates the ability of local governments to require rules such as an ISP having to serve the whole community, the local government



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requiring PEG channels, or the local government requiring customer service standards.

- The biggest killer is that the law would give holders of franchise agreements the ability to cancel the agreement without losing any rights-of-ways included in the agreement. This would also kill local franchise fees, a major source of revenue for many governments. Perhaps the most severe provision is that franchise contract holders can eliminate any contract provisions they deem to be commercially infeasible.

There is a mountain of bills in the House this year, and there is no way to know the chances of this coming for a vote. However, there are several telecom bills that have bipartisan support, and bills like this one could be attached to such bills. This includes a bill that would renew the FCC's authority to hold spectrum auctions and a bill that would stop federal grant funding for broadband infrastructure from being taxable.

To me, this bill is part of an ongoing effort of cellular carriers, cable companies, and big telcos to restrict the ability of local governments to affect the construction of infrastructure. These big companies have already been successful in recent years in eliminating regulation. The cellular companies already got relief from the Ajit Pai FCC that made it a lot easier to place cell sites. This law would codify that change so that a future FCC can't change it. The large ISPs were successful in getting the Ajit Pai FCC to eliminate most broadband regulations.

This bill is going for a home run to eliminate local regulations these big companies don't like. I've written recently about regulatory capture, and this is an ultimate example of changing the laws to get what the big monopoly providers want. This law would eliminate franchise fees, allow carriers to put infrastructure anywhere they want, and pay low fees in doing so.

More proof of the degree of regulatory capture in the telecom market is that there are no equivalent efforts to change local government control of other kinds of infrastructure like roads, factories, buildings, etc. This bill is the ultimate example of the biggest companies in telecom flexing their power and influence to bypass some of the last vestiges of regulation.

Posted by Doug Dawson, CCG Consulting in Regulation - What is it Good For?

Tagged: franchise fees, H.R. 3557, rights-of-way

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## 5 thoughts on “Preempting Local Government”



Eric

August 14, 2023 at 9:09 am

As someone who has been involved with local government trying to assist in the promotion and installation of broadband in a rural area... I feel that some of these laws are in response to inaction. We cant have a scattered and uneven response from 100+ counties in Illinois that were handed ARP money. We need some “blanket” policies that help all sized carriers move more quickly to get to end users.

Like

Reply



Julie

August 15, 2023 at 2:27 pm

telecom already has too much power. Wired Broadband is fine but cell towers are wireless and telecom companies routinely make mistakes – we need government oversight. Just curious – who do you work for?

Like

# Streaming services now cost more than cable TV

## Netflix and Disney Plus subscriptions have risen in price by more than 50 per cent over the last year

Anthony Cuthbertson

Streaming bundles have risen in price above cable TV packages in the US for the first time

The combined cost of popular streaming services like Netflix and Disney Plus is now more expensive than traditional cable television, according to new analysis.

Recent price rises to all of the main streaming platforms for ad-free subscriptions have pushed the cost above the average cable TV package of \$83 per month for the first time.

Calculations by the *Financial Times* found that a bundle of the top US streaming services – including Disney+, Hulu, Netflix and Peacock – rose in price from \$73 to \$87 over the last year.

Some of the price rises of streaming services have been considerable, going way above the rate of inflation.

Netflix raised the price of its basic advertisement-free monthly subscription from \$9.99 to \$15.49, representing a 55 per cent increase.

Disney Plus saw an even bigger increase for its ad-free subscription price, nearly doubling from \$7.99 per month to \$13.99.

“From a business point of view, streaming was going to have to move in this way – the price point was going to have to go up,” David Rogers, a professor at Columbia Business School and expert in digital business, told the *FT*.

“This was accelerated by the fact that we no longer have cheap debt to flood the market with streaming content.”

These rising costs, combined with an increasingly fractured streaming ecosystem, have helped contribute to a major surge in online piracy over the last year.

Figures published earlier this year by research firm Muso revealed that the most popular form of piracy is websites that host free streams of films and TV series, which account for 80 per cent of all illegal content consumption.

Visits to these sites rose by nearly 9 per cent last year, with early data suggesting that this trend will continue into 2023.