

## **NORTH METRO TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION MEETING**

December 17, 2025  
6:00 P.M.  
1301 81<sup>st</sup> Ave NE  
Spring Lake Park, MN 55432

### **AGENDA**

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL
2. PUBLIC COMMENTS
3. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA
4. CONSENT AGENDA
  - a. Approve minutes of regular meeting of June 18, 2025 **pages 2 - 7**
  - b. Approve minutes of special meeting of July 16, 2025 **pages 8 - 10**
  - c. Accept Minutes of Operations Committee meetings of July - December 2025 **pages 11 - 18**
  - d. Approve May - October 2025 financial reports and bill lists
5. REPORT OF CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS
  - a. December Programming and Social Media Updates **pages 19 - 20**
  - b. Third Quarter Comcast Franchise and PEG Fee Reports **page 21**
  - c. Cable Rate Change **page 22**
  - d. Viewer Comments **page 23**
  - e. WCAG Requirements **page 24**
  - f. 2026 Meeting Schedule **page 25**
  - g. Broadband Franchising Update **pages 26 - 31**
6. LEGAL COUNSEL REPORT
7. OLD BUSINESS
8. NEW BUSINESS
  - a. North Metro TV Employee Handbook **pages 32 - 56**
  - b. Insurance Liability Waiver **page 57**
9. RECOMMENDED READING **pages 58 - 59**
10. COMMUNITY CALENDAR
  - a. Next Meeting Dates:
    - i) Operations Committee – January 6, 2026
    - ii) Executive Committee – March 4, 2026
    - iii) Cable Commission – March 18, 2026
11. ADJOURN

## **NORTH METRO TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION**

### **UNAPPROVED MINUTES**

**Commission Meeting – June 18, 2025**

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Goodboe-Bisschoff called the regular meeting of the North Metro Telecommunications Commission to order at 6:05 p.m.

#### **ROLL CALL**

**Directors Present:** Chris Massoglia; Blaine, Meagan Bachmayer; Circle Pines, Andrew Hallberg; Ham Lake, Dale Stoesz; Lino Lakes (Vice Chair), Barbara Goodboe-Bisschoff; Spring Lake Park (Chair)

**Directors Absent:** N. Golden; Centerville (Secretary), Barbara Mahr; Lexington (Treasurer),

**Others Present:** Mike Bradley; Commission Attorney, Dan Buchholtz; City Administrator, Spring Lake Park, Greg Emmerich; CPA, Eric Houston; Co-Executive Director, Danika Peterson; Co-Executive Director; Dr. Craig Waldron, The Waldron Company

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

#### **CHANGES TO THE AGENDA**

No changes were made to the agenda.

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

The February 13, 2025 NMTC meeting minutes, the March 19, 2025, Special Executive Committee meeting minutes, the May 8, 2025, Special Executive Committee meeting minutes, the June 12, 2025. Executive Committee meeting minutes, the March thru June, 2025, Operations Committee meeting minutes, and the February thru May 2025 financial reports were approved as presented.

**Motion for approval made by: D. Stoesz. Second: A. Hallberg. The motion passed with 4 cities with 7 votes in favor and 1 city with 7 votes abstaining. Yea – M. Bachmayer; Circle Pines (1 vote), A. Hallberg; Ham Lake (2 votes),**

**D. Stoesz; Lino Lakes (3 votes), B. Goodboe-Bisschoff; Spring Lake Park (1 vote). Abstain – C. Massoglia; Blaine (7 votes)**

### **2024 AUDIT PRESENTATION**

G. Emmerich of Harrington, Langer & Associates presented the 2024 Audit Report to the Committee. No abnormalities were found and the Commission is in a strong financial position.

**MOTION:** To approve the 2024 North Metro Telecommunications Commission annual financial report as presented. **Motion made by C. Massoglia. Second: M. Bachmayer. The motion was approved unanimously.**

### **REPORT OF INTERIM CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS**

E. Houston and D. Peterson reported on the following items:

- a. Miscellaneous Updates
  - North Metro TV was proud to once again offer cable television and live streaming coverage of the annual Guns ‘N Hoses police vs fire department hockey game. In recognition of the events growing popularity, coverage this year shifted to the HD production truck.
  - Trevor Scholl and TJ Tronson created a video capturing this year’s Anoka County Polar Plunge in Blaine.
  - Danika Peterson and Eric Nelson teamed up with the SBM Fire Department to create Heroes and Hydrants, a new, monthly program highlighting issues facing the department and the good they are doing in the community.
  - North Metro TV staff have recorded their first city meetings at Spring Lake Park’s remodeled city hall.
  - Trevor Scholl created a video profiling Justin Ernst, a local man who has now run every street in the City of Blaine.
  - News Producer Eric Nelson created a story profiling a team-up between the SBM Fire Department and Pizza Hut of Blaine to offer free pizzas to customers with working smoke detectors.
  - North Metro Now continues to prove popular with other community stations. Two more area stations added the program, which is now seen in 35 cities across the metro.
- b. Legislative Update
  - The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) announced the termination by the federal government of the state’s \$12 million grant from the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program. Due to this action, the state will no longer be able to offer expected grants that would have benefited PEG stations.

- Last year, the Commission applied for a Digital Equity Competitive Grant through the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). The Commission has been awaiting word on whether or not its application was successful. If not, the Commission planned to apply again during a second round of funding. Unfortunately, the Commission received an email from the NTIA stating that all Digital Equity Competitive Grant awards have been terminated.
- c. First Quarter Comcast Franchise and PEG Fee Reports
  - The Commission has received the first quarter PEG and Franchise Fee payments from Comcast.
- d. Franchise Extension
  - As of March, the Commission received signed copies of the Franchise Extension Ordinances for all seven of our member cities from Comcast. This completes the Franchise Extension the Commission began last year. The current NMTC franchise will now be in effect through June 2030.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

- There was no Old Business.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Appoint Co-Executive Directors
  - D. Buccholtz presented the Committee with an update on the Executive Director Search and the organizational assessment conducted by Dr. C. Waldron.
  - Dr. C. Waldron summarized his findings by stating his preexisting biases: first that he did not typically favor two-person administration teams, but that he believed in the adage of “if it is not broke, do not fix it.”
  - Dr. C. Waldron explained how he came to the conclusions presented in his report. He found that most of the Cable Commissioners were happy with the way things were going. He found that most NMTV staff felt the same way. Dr. C. Waldron also found that he had a great deal of faith in the NMTC Operations Committee and their ability to address any problems. Dr. C. Waldron stated that he found the culture at North Metro TV to be very positive. He was impressed with the Interim Co-Executive Directors, both with their work and their ability to get along.
  - Because of all of this, Dr. C. Waldron recommended the Commission continue with the current model and appoint E. Houston and D. Peterson as Co-Executive Directors.
  - Dr. C. Waldron made some suggestions in his report. He recommended clearly stating the job responsibilities and relationships between the Co-Executive Directors. He also felt that a procedure should be put in place to resolve conflicts between the Co-Executive Directors.

- D. Buccholtz told the Committee that the Operations Committee had already met, discussed the issue, and voted unanimously to recommend the Commission follow Dr. C. Waldron's recommendation and continue with the current model and appoint E. Houston and D. Peterson as Co-Executive Directors.
- D. Buccholtz recommended the Commission adopt Dr. C. Waldron's suggestions regarding conflict resolution and, further, to permit Dr. C. Waldron to conduct evaluations of the Co-Executive Directors in six months, 12 months, and two years.
- D. Buccholtz recommended that the Co-Executive Directors be moved into the normal Executive Director compensation plan and for salaries be set at step one of the Executive Director pay scale.

**MOTION:** To appoint Eric Houston and Danika Peterson Co-Executive Directors. **Motion made by C. Massoglia. Second: D. Stoesz. The motion was approved unanimously.**

- E. Houston and D. Peterson expressed their gratitude to the Commission.
  - D. Stoesz asked when the effective date was. D. Buccholtz replied that June 18, 2025 would be the effective date.
- b. 2026 NMTC Budget
- The Commission considered the 2026 Draft NMTC Budget.
  - D. Stoesz inquired if the replacement of the attic dry fire suppression system was included in the budget. The Co-Executive Directors replied that they were looking to pay for the system in 2025, but that the 2026 budget reflected the reduction in building reserve funds.

**MOTION:** To approve the 2026 NMTC Budget. **Motion made by D. Stoesz Second: M. Bachmayer. The motion failed with 4 cities with 7 votes in favor and 1 city with 7 votes opposed. Yea – M. Bachmayer; Circle Pines (1 vote), A. Hallberg; Ham Lake (2 votes), D. Stoesz; Lino Lakes (3 votes), B. Goodboe-Bisschoff; Spring Lake Park (1 vote). Nay – C. Massoglia; Blaine (7 votes).**

- C. Massoglia stated that the City of Blaine would like to see some parts of the budget handled differently.
- D. Buccholtz asked what items the City of Blaine would like to see changed, in order to bring those items to the attention of the Operations Committee.
- C. Massoglia expressed that the reduction in PEG fees returned to cities – from \$200,000 to \$150,000 to \$100,000 - affected the City of Blaine's budget to a greater degree as it receives 60 percent of those funds.
- The Co-Executive Directors informed the Commission that the JPA requires the Commission to submit a budget to the member cities by

August 1 and that a Special Meeting may be required before that time to resolve any issues.

- D. Buchholtz inquired if there was a specific dollar amount the City of Blaine wished to see fees returned to cities set. C. Massoglia replied that the city would like to see that number set at \$150,000 - \$200,000.
- The Interim Co-Executive Directors informed the Committee of the need to purchase a new attic dry fire suppression system in 2025. Different options for the new system were considered.
- D. Stoesz related that he had spoken with Lino Lakes fire personnel and felt comfortable endorsing a nitrogen-based system.

**MOTION:** To authorize staff to use funds from building reserves not to exceed \$125,000 for the purchase and installation of an attic dry fire suppression system from Nova Fire Protection. **Motion made by D. Stoesz. Second: A. Hallberg. The motion was approved unanimously.**

- c. Broadband Franchising
  - M. Bradley presented remarks on the possibility of franchising broadband internet providers.
  - D. Stoesz indicated that he would vote Nay on exploring the issue, citing his opinion that franchise fees would constitute a new tax.
  - D. Buchholtz pointed to disruptions to municipal rights of way as a key reason the Operations Committee recommended the Commission look further into the issue.
  - C. Massoglia expressed support for broadband franchising as a way of providing needed funds to the Commission.
  - A. Hallberg asked for clarification on the motion and sought confirmation that it was only to explore the issue rather than commit to a specific course of action. The Co-Executive Directors confirmed that that was the case and that options would be presented for cities to opt in or out of such franchising individually.
  - C. Massoglia inquired about costs associated with exploring the issue. The Co-Executive Directors replied that they believed any costs would not exceed the amount already budgeted for 2025 legal fees. They indicated that if costs did start to rise faster than expected they would seek the guidance of the Commission.

**MOTION:** To authorize staff to explore options for franchising broadband service providers. **Motion made by M. Bachmayer. Second: A. Hallberg. The motion was approved with 4 cities with 11 votes in favor and 1 city with 3 votes opposed. Yea – C. Massoglia; Blaine (7 votes), M. Bachmayer; Circle Pines (1 vote), A. Hallberg; Ham Lake (2 votes), B. Goodboe-Bisschoff; Spring Lake Park (1 vote). Nay – D. Stoesz; Lino Lakes (3 votes).**

d. Date for Special Meeting

- The Commission set a date of July 16 for a Special Meeting to further discuss the 2026 NMTC Budget.
- M. Bachmeyer indicated that she would not be able to attend, but that Circle Pines would send an alternate.
- C. Massoglia was unsure if he would be able to attend. He said he would be comfortable sending an alternate if necessary.

**MOTION:** To set a Special Meeting of the North Metro Telecommunications Commission on July 16, 2026 at 6:00pm at Spring Lake Park City Hall to discuss the 2026 NMTC Budget. **Motion made by D. Stoesz. Second: A. Hallberg. The motion was approved unanimously.**

**ADJOURN**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:09 p.m. **Motion for approval made by: C. Massoglia. Second: D. Stoesz. The motion was approved unanimously.**

Nancy Golden; Secretary, NMTC

## NORTH METRO TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

### UNAPPROVED MINUTES

Special Meeting – July 16, 2025

#### CALL TO ORDER

Chair Goodboe-Bisschoff called the special meeting of the North Metro Telecommunications Commission Executive Committee to order at 6:00 p.m.

#### ROLL CALL

**Directors Present:** Chris Massoglia; Blaine, N. Golden; Centerville (Secretary), Matt Percy; Circle Pines, Andrew Hallberg; Ham Lake, Barbara Mahr; Lexington (Treasurer), Dale Stoesz; Lino Lakes (Vice Chair), Barbara Goodboe-Bisschoff; Spring Lake Park (Chair)

**Directors Absent:** Meagan Bachmayer; Circle Pines

**Others Present:** Mike Bradley; Commission Attorney, Dan Buchholtz; Spring Lake Park City Administrator, Eric Houston; Co-Executive Director, Danika Peterson; Co-Executive Director

#### OLD BUSINESS

- D. Peterson re-presented the draft 2026 NMTC Budget and explained a slight modification reflecting a mid-year step increase for the Co-Executive Directors.
- E. Houston presented three options to the commission:
  - **Budget Plan A** – Adopt the 2026 NMTC Budget as presented. The attached budget is the same as presented at the June 18 meeting, with slight alterations to reflect the new Co-Executive Director model.
  - **Budget Plan B** – Adopt the 2026 NMTC Budget with the modification that an additional \$50,000 be drawn from Operating Reserve funds and given to the member cities.
  - **Budget Plan C** – Adopt the 2026 NMTC Budget as presented and, as part of the approval, the Commission could direct that an additional \$50,000 be distributed to NMTC member cities as a supplemental fee disbursement in the event that the Commission generates at least \$50,000 in surplus income, after meeting all budgeted expenditures.



- D. Stoesz asked if the July 14 Special Meeting of the Operations Committee was fully attended. E. Houston and D. Peterson replied that the Ham Lake and Lexington City Administrators were absent.
- M. Percy asked how the figure of \$50,000 was arrived at. E. Houston replied that said figure was suggested by the City of Blaine at the June Cable Commission Meeting.
- B. Mahr asked if adopting Plan C would result in a reduction of reserve funds. E. Houston replied that Plan B could result in a reduction of reserve funds, but that Plan C would only see up to an additional \$50,000 returned to cities in the event that the Commission generated a corresponding amount in surplus revenue. E. Houston and D. Peterson also reminded the commission that such surplus revenue was generated in previous years thanks to factors such as favorable interest rates.
- D. Stoesz suggested that the phrasing “surplus income” might not factor in budget reductions thanks to cost savings and expressed a desire to include language that would account for such cost savings. D. Buchholtz stated that the intent of the Operations Committee recommendation was for the additional funds to be returned if revenues exceeded expectations or expenditures, which would include cost savings.
- E. Houston suggested amending motion language to replace “surplus income” with “surplus revenue.” C. Massoglia suggested simply removing the word “income.”

**MOTION:** Adopt the 2026 NMTC Budget as presented and, as part of the approval, the Commission directs an additional \$50,000 be distributed to NMTC member cities as a supplemental fee disbursement in the event that the Commission generates at least \$50,000 surplus, after meeting all budgeted expenditures. The distribution shall be proportionate to each member city’s share of gross cable system revenue during the fiscal year. **Motion made by D. Stoesz. Second: C. Massoglia.**

- M. Percy asked permission to raise an additional question.
- D. Stoesz suggested suspending voting until M. Percy’s question was addressed.
- M. Percy inquired if the decision to appoint E. Houston and D. Peterson as Co-Executive Directors, a point made in a bullet item in documents supporting the budget, had been made at a previous Commission meeting or if that decision was yet to be made.
- N. Golden, B. Mahr, and D. Stoesz explained that, yes, that decision had been made and also detailed some of the reasoning behind that decision.

**MOTION:** Adopt the 2026 NMTC Budget as presented and, as part of the approval, the Commission directs an additional \$50,000 be distributed to NMTC member cities as a supplemental fee disbursement in the event that the Commission generates at least \$50,000 surplus, after meeting all budgeted expenditures. The distribution shall be proportionate to each member city’s

share of gross cable system revenue during the fiscal year. **Motion made by D. Stoesz. Second: C. Massoglia. The motion was approved unanimously.**

**ADJOURN**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:10 p.m. **Motion for approval made by: C. Massoglia. Second: A. Hallberg. The motion was approved unanimously.**

Nancy Golden; Secretary, NMTC

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

Tuesday, July 1, 2025

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting began at 11:11 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

K. Anderson, P. Antonen, D. Buchholtz, A. Lewis (arrived at 11:35 a.m.), D. Webster, M. Wolfe

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

B. Petracek

**OTHERS PRESENT**

E. Houston, D. Peterson

**APPROVAL OF MEETING NOTES**

The meeting notes of June 3, 2025, were approved by consensus.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT**

- North metro police and fire departments took the spotlight this month in several videos highlighting the efforts of these local heroes. Videos included a visit to the SBM Safety House and profiles of the new Blaine High School Resource Officer, the new Lino Lakes Police Chief, and the new Lino Lakes Fire Chief.
- 11-year-old Sierra Taylor raised \$5,500 for the Centennial Food Shelf and was awarded with the Community Leadership Award by Circle Pines Mayor Dave Bartholomay.
- North Metro TV staff assisted member cities Blaine, Lino Lakes, and Spring Lake Park with various franchise administration issues.
- The Operations Committee bid a fond farewell to retiring Blaine City Manager Michelle Wolfe.

**OLD BUSINESS**

- The Committee discussed the 2026 Draft NMTC Budget, which failed to be approved by the Cable Commission. The Committee resolved to consider options and meet again later in the month.

**MOTION:** To schedule a special meeting of the Operations Committee on July 14 at 11:00 a.m. to further discuss the 2026 Draft NMTC Budget. **Motion made by D. Buchholtz. Second: P. Antonen. The motion was approved unanimously.**

- As directed by the Executive Committee, the Operations Committee discussed additional pay for the Co-Executive Directors retroactive to January 1, 2025. The Committee believed the matter was discussed sufficiently at the Cable Commission meeting of June 2025 with a decision that retroactive pay would not be offered. The Operations Committee specified that they followed best and common practices in giving the Co-Executive Directors an “acting” pay bump whilst interim and that retroactive pay is not typically granted to employees who have received “acting” pay.

- The Committee discussed the topic of Broadband Franchising and how to address permit requests from Broadband Internet Providers.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:04 p.m. **Motion to adjourn made by: P. Antonen. Second: D. Buchholtz. The motion was approved unanimously.**

**NORTH METRO TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
APPROVED OPERATIONS COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING NOTES**

Tuesday, July 14, 2025

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting began at 11:02 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

K. Anderson (attended via Zoom), P. Antonen, D. Buchholtz, A. Lewis (attended via Zoom), E. Thorvig

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

B. Petracek, D. Webster

**OTHERS PRESENT**

E. Houston, D. Peterson

**OLD BUSINESS**

- The Committee discussed the 2026 NMTC Budget.
- D. Peterson informed the Committee that a minor adjustment was made to the existing draft of the 2026 NMTC Budget to reflect a step increase for the Co-Executive Directors during the month of June 2026.
- The Committee discussed a budget plan that would see additional fees returned to member cities in the event that Commission generates \$50,000 in surplus income in 2026, also known as Budget Plan C.
- The Committee felt it was appropriate to cap this supplemental fee disbursement at \$50,000.

**MOTION:** To recommend the Commission adopt Budget Plan C – to adopt the 2026 NMTC Budget as presented and direct that an additional \$50,000 be distributed to NMTC member cities as a supplement fee disbursement in the event that the Commission generates at least \$50,000 in surplus income, after meeting all budgeted expenditures. **Motion made by P. Antonen. Second: E. Thorvig. The motion was approved unanimously.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m. **Motion to adjourn made by: E. Thorvig. Second: P. Antonen. The motion was approved unanimously.**

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

Tuesday, August 5, 2025

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting began at 11:03 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

P. Antonen, A. Lewis, E. Thorvig, D. Webster

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

K. Anderson, D. Buchholtz, B. Petracek

**OTHERS PRESENT**

E. Houston, D. Peterson

**APPROVAL OF MEETING NOTES**

The meeting notes of the July 1, 2025, regular meeting and the July 14, 2025, special meeting were approved by consensus.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT**

- Danika Peterson interviewed Circle Pines Mayor Dave Bartholomay about his upcoming retirement and about his plans for the future.
- North Metro TV was contacted by a representative of the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum. The representative wanted help locating a veteran featured in an NMTV News story with the hopes of including their photograph in an upcoming exhibit at the library.
- Eric Houston and Danika Peterson attended the annual Minnesota Association of Community Telecommunications Administrators (MACTA) conference.
- Several North Metro TV staff members worked together to provide coverage of the 3M Open golf tournament and of the City of Blaine's announcement of the new Scheels store coming to the city.
- The Commission received the second quarter Franchise and PEG Fee reports from Comcast. While revenue continued to slowly, but steadily decline, the fees received were still within the expected range.

**OLD BUSINESS**

- E. Houston and D. Peterson updated the Committee on current Franchising prospects. The process and timeline for franchise applicants was discussed as were actions that may be required by the Commission and its Committees. The Committee expressed an interest in regular email updates regarding potential franchises.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:29 a.m. **Motion to adjourn made by: P. Antonen. Second: E. Thorvig. The motion was approved unanimously.**

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

Tuesday, November 4, 2025

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting began at 11:02 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

K. Anderson, P. Antonen, D. Buchholtz, A. Lewis, E. Thorvig, D. Webster

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

B. Petracek

**OTHERS PRESENT**

E. Houston, D. Peterson

**APPROVAL OF MEETING NOTES**

The meeting notes of August 5, 2025 were approved by consensus.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT**

- As part of their annual Local Decision election coverage, the NMTV News team recorded 13 candidate interviews, which were available online and aired on the channel.
- The NMTV Sports Team worked to wrap up the fall season, streaming a dozen live games, including several section semi-finals and finals.
- Trevor Scholl recorded stories about two popular Mary Ann Young Center events: the annual jewelry sale and the liver and onions luncheon.
- September was North Metro TV's most successful month yet on social media with 140,000 video views.
- The third quarter PEG and Franchise Fees were reviewed.
- E. Houston highlighted the station's work as cable franchise administrator and its role in helping Comcast customers resolve issues with the cable company.
- The Co-Executive Directors updated the Commission on discussions with Dr. Craig Waldron about his helping to prepare a 2026 strategic plan.
- The Co-Executive Directors presented several positive comments that the station received from the community.
- TJ Tronson spent the last several months improving city meeting coverage. This included hiring an additional part time city meeting operator for each city. The additional part time staff offers many advantages, including lessening the need for full time staff to fill in, on site signal monitoring, and live VOD bookmarking.
- D. Peterson discussed upcoming WCAG rules for all cities that will require closed captioning and audio descriptions for all city meeting videos.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- The Committee reviewed a draft copy of the updated North Metro TV Employee Handbook.

**MOTION:** To recommend the Cable Commission approve the North Metro TV Employee Handbook as presented. **Motion made by E. Thorvig. Second: P. Antonen. The motion was approved unanimously.**

**OTHER**

- The Committee discussed a Blaine Street Assessment which the Commission will need to pay in 2026.
- E. Houston expressed his appreciation for the SBM Fire Department and commended them on their speed and professionalism.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:52 a.m. **Motion to adjourn made by: P. Antonen. Second: K. Anderson. The motion was approved unanimously.**



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

Tuesday, December 2, 2025

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting began at 11:02 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

K. Anderson, D. Buchholtz, E. Thorvig, D. Webster

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

P. Antonen, B. Petracek, A. Lewis

**OTHERS PRESENT**

E. Houston, D. Peterson

**APPROVAL OF MEETING NOTES**

The meeting notes of November 4, 2025, were approved by consensus.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT**

- North Metro TV is once again hosting students from Blaine High School's Business Professionals of America club. The students are learning to use NMTV equipment to film mock news stories for a state competition.
- Local Decision election coverage was a huge success, receiving nearly 8,000 social media views.
- NMTV staff recorded a pair of food related stories in November. There was a profile of the Hope Food Shelf, which is seeing a dramatic uptick in use, and a look at Lino Lake's American Legion Post, which provided free meals to veterans on Veteran's Day.
- October set another record for social media engagement. More than 246,000 people watched NMTV videos online.
- The NMTV Sports Team followed the Spring Lake Park Panthers football team through their state championship season. They are now working on a new documentary chronicling the amazing year.
- The Commission, along with the League of Minnesota Cities and a coalition of other Minnesota cities, filed comments in the FCC's Notice of Inquiry in its Build America: Eliminating Barriers to Wireline Deployment proceeding.
- The Co-Executive Directors updated the Committee on Broadband Franchising efforts, including the City of Blaine's decision to allow the Commission to begin administering their prospective broadband franchises. The revenue split between the city and the Commission will be decided at a later date, as is the case with every member city.
- Staff shared some fun comments received from NMTV viewers.
- The Co-Executive Directors continued to work on WCAG compliance, including producing a compliant version of the agenda packet. NMTV staff offered to coach city staff on producing compliant PDFs.
- Comcast informed the Commission of an increase in subscriber rates.

**OLD BUSINESS**

There was no Old Business.

**NEW BUSINESS**

There was no New Business.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:33 a.m. **Motion to adjourn made by: D. Buchholtz.  
Second: K. Anderson. The motion was approved unanimously.**

## **NORTH METRO TV MEMO**

**TO:** CABLE COMMISSION

**FROM:** ERIC HOUSTON AND DANIKA PETERSON

**SUBJECT:** PROGRAMMING AND SOCIAL MEDIA REPORT

**DATE:** 11/25/2025

### **Presidential Library**

In July, North Metro TV staff was surprised to receive an email from a researcher working with the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum. The presidential library is working on a special veterans exhibit and was looking for help finding a local veteran featured on the NMTV website. That veteran, Kay Bauer, was featured in a 2020 NMTV News story about her time as a Navy Nurse in Vietnam. NMTV staff reached out to Steve Guider, President of Veterans Memorial Park in Blaine, who gladly put them in touch with Kay. Kay was delighted by the request and is honored to have her photograph featured in the gallery. The entire North Metro TV staff is excited to have a hand in telling this local veteran's story on a national stage.

### **MACTA Conference**

Co-Executive Directors Eric Houston and Danika Peterson attended this year's Minnesota Association of Community Telecommunications Administrators (MACTA) Conference. The pair had ample opportunities to network with their professional peers and to attend a series of workshops. Some of the workshop topics included broadband franchising, station cost saving measures, legislative goals and priorities, and tips on producing programming for social media. Eric and Danika also took the opportunity to discuss the NMTV video router replacement with area vendors. It was a productive conference and the Co-Executive Directors are looking forward to putting what they learned into practice.

### **City Council Highlights**

Danika Peterson and the news team have been selecting notable moments from city council meetings and sharing them on Facebook. The videos are short, usually only a couple of minutes long, and easy to make and post quickly. We have noticed that these videos are effective in reaching viewers who may not otherwise be engaging with city council meetings. Some of the most successful videos are Mayor Dave Bartholomay's retirement announcement (847 Facebook views), State Representative Matt Norris thanking the Blaine Police Department (1,297 views), and Lino Lakes welcoming its newest police officers and firefighters (482 views). We would like to encourage city staff to let us know about any special moments or announcements during city meetings that they would like to see featured in this way.

### **Blaine High School BPA**

North Metro TV Public Access is proud to once again host students from Blaine High School's Business Professionals of America club. Each year, members team up to produce mock news programs as part of a state and national competition. This year, eight entirely new students are participating. They received training on NMTV's portable cameras and on studio filming and are planning to create stories about local businesses. Their videos will compete in a regional

competition in early 2026. If successful, the students will return to NMTV for another round of filming in advance of a statewide showdown.

### **Local Decision**

Election Day has now come and gone and, with it, another successful season of Local Decision Coverage. All 13 candidates in our member cities' races participated this year, submitting candidate biographies and sitting down for interviews with Eric Nelson. The videos aired on the relevant city channels and on channel 15. We also posted the interviews to Facebook and YouTube, where they received nearly 8,000 views, with a whopping 5,200 people watching in just the first days of November. Proving just how much more popular our social media channels have become, this year's total views are only 200 views short of 2024, a year with more than twice as many races. This year's recap posts, which showed each race's outcome, were also extremely popular, earning more than 125,000 views on Facebook. The post recapping the Anoka-Hennepin School District 4 race received 108,936 views alone, making it one of our most popular posts ever and earning the station \$14.72.

### **Social Media**

North Metro TV saw immense social media success this fall, with three record breaking months in a row. August kicked things off with 75,000 social media viewers. September doubled that with 140,000. Then, in October, our videos received 246,426 views across Facebook, YouTube, and X, a 76 percent increase over September's record setting month. Numbers were buoyed by sports videos, with 100,400 views in October, and road construction updates, 126,127 views in October. We also saw record numbers of new channel subscribers, with 194 new YouTube subscribers and a staggering 551 people subscribing to our Facebook page for the first time. This all means one thing: more people than ever are watching videos about our member cities.

**NORTH METRO TV MEMO**

**TO:** CABLE COMMISSION

**FROM:** ERIC HOUSTON AND DANIKA PETERSON

**SUBJECT:** THIRD QUARTER COMCAST FRANCHISE AND PEG FEE REPORTS

**DATE:** 11/25/2025

The Commission has received the third quarter gross revenue, franchise, and PEG fee reports and payments from Comcast. Comcast is required to provide these payments and reports within 30 days of the end of the quarter.

**NORTH METRO TV MEMO****TO:** CABLE COMMISSION**FROM:** ERIC HOUSTON AND DANIKA PETERSON**SUBJECT:** CABLE RATE INCREASE**DATE:** 11/25/2025

In November, Comcast informed the Commission of an increase in subscriber rates beginning December 16, 2025. The rates only affect cable fees. Cable rates will increase between three percent and 14 percent, depending on the service. We expect to see an impact on Franchise Fees in the first quarter 2026 report, which we should receive by the end of April.

<b>XFINITY TV PLAN/SERVICE</b>	<b>CURRENT PRICE</b>	<b>NEW PRICE</b>
Limited Basic (includes Broadcast TV fee)	\$38.55	\$44.00
Choice TV Select – with TV Box (Flex upgrade)	\$60.00	\$62.00
Choice TV (includes Broadcast TV fee)	\$56.95	\$62.90
Popular TV (includes Broadcast TV fee and Regional Sports Fee)	\$88.85	\$94.90
Ultimate TV (includes Broadcast TV fee and Regional Sports Fee)	\$118.55	\$124.95
Genre Packs – Sports & News (Includes Regional Sports Fee)	\$31.90	\$32.00
HBO	\$16.99	\$18.49
HBO Max	\$16.99	\$18.49
Paramount+ with SHOWTIME	\$12.00	\$13.00
Ultimate TV Upgrade (includes Regional Sports Fee)	\$29.70	\$30.05

<b>XFINITY TV SERVICE FEES (Included in package price where noted)</b>	<b>CURRENT PRICE</b>	<b>NEW PRICE</b>
Broadcast TV Fee	\$26.95	\$32.40
Regional Sports Fee – Popular TV and Sports & News	\$1.90	\$2.00
Regional Sports Fee – Ultimate TV and Ultimate TV Upgrade	\$13.10	\$13.55

<b>XFINITY EQUIPMENT</b>	<b>CURRENT PRICE</b>	<b>NEW PRICE</b>
TV Box	\$12.00	\$14.00

<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>	<b>CURRENT PRICE</b>	<b>NEW PRICE</b>
Late Fee	\$10.00	\$13.00

**NORTH METRO TV MEMO**

**TO:** CABLE COMMISSION

**FROM:** ERIC HOUSTON AND DANIKA PETERSON

**SUBJECT:** VIEWER COMMENTS

**DATE:** 11/25/2025

Marilyn Indahl, about North Metro TV Classes at the Mary Ann Young Center:

- "My mom loves to learn about things and loves to be active. I'm glad you take the time to work with the senior centers. I think it's programs like this that keep my mom going."

Ann Genosky, Coordinator Mary Ann Young Center, about the MAYC Liver and Onions Luncheon video:

- "Wow – this is awesome. Tell Trevor he did great."

Facebook comment on the Centennial Football v Anoka highlights video:

- "Thanks for the great coverage of local sports." – Derrick Taylor, via Facebook

Mark Belinske, a Centennial High School dad, about our not being able to carry the Centennial/Moorehead state playoff:

- "Bummer, but thanks for the update! We really love the NMTV productions!"

Krista Morey, commenting on a video about the Minnesota State Senate Resolution for Mayor Dave Bartholomay:

- "We will miss Mayor Dave! Congratulations!"

**NORTH METRO TV MEMO****TO:** CABLE COMMISSION**FROM:** ERIC HOUSTON AND DANIKA PETERSON**SUBJECT:** WCAG COMPLIANCE**DATE:** 11/25/2025

New regulations from the Department of Justice will require all online, pre-recorded municipal videos to comply with WCAG 2.1 rules. This will include closed captions and audio descriptions for all pre-recorded city meetings. These rules go into effect in April 2026 for the City of Blaine and April 2027 for all other member cities and for the Commission. NMTV Staff has been working to make all NMTV videos and websites compliant and is offering training and support to city staff. These requirements will also apply to all documents published online by government entities, including meeting packets and PDFs. The Co-Executive Directors are pleased to say that this very packet is among NMTV's very first WCAG compliant PDFs.



**NORTH METRO TV MEMO****TO:** CABLE COMMISSION**FROM:** ERIC HOUSTON AND DANIKA PETERSON**SUBJECT:** 2026 MEETING DATES**DATE:** 11/25/2025**OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Operations Committee meetings will be held the Tuesday before the first Wednesday of each month at the North Metro TV facility at 12520 Polk St. NE, Blaine, MN 55434, beginning at 11:00 am.

January 6  
February 3  
March 3  
March 31  
May 5  
June 2  
June 30  
August 4  
September 1  
October 6  
November 3  
December 1

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Executive Committee meetings will be held quarterly on the first Wednesday of each month at the North Metro TV facility at 12520 Polk St. NE, Blaine, MN 55434, beginning at 6:00 pm.

March 4  
June 3  
September 2  
December 2

**FULL COMMISSION MEETINGS**

Full Commission meetings will be held quarterly on the third Wednesday of the month at Spring Lake Park City Hall, 1301 81<sup>st</sup> Ave NE, Spring Lake Park, MN 55432, beginning at 6:00 pm.

March 18  
June 17  
September 16  
December 16

## **NORTH METRO TV MEMO**

**TO:** OPERATIONS COMMITTEE/CABLE COMMISSION

**FROM:** ERIC HOUSTON AND DANIKA PETERSON

**SUBJECT:** BROADBAND FRANCHISING

**DATE:** 11/25/2025

### **HISTORY OF THE COMMISSION**

The North Metro Telecommunications Commission (NMTC) has successfully administered the member cities' Cable Franchises for more than 40 years. The commission also operates North Metro TV (NMTV), which provides extensive video and streaming services to all member cities. These services have only expanded in recent years and include cable franchise administration, city meeting recording and distribution, election coverage, social media videos about area residents, businesses, and events, profiles of local police and fire departments, home movie transfers, classes for residents, live high school sports, and now support to help city staff adapt to new ADA guidelines.

### **WHAT IS FRANCHISE ADMINISTRATION**

Simply put, the NMTC handles the day-to-day needs of the member cities' cable franchises.

#### **Duties**

- Ensuring that cable service is available to 100% of member city residents
- Ensuring that all residents have access to the same high quality of service
- Ensuring maintenance of the rights-of-way
- Regular renegotiations of the franchise
- Negotiations for any newly proposed cable franchises
- Collecting PEG and franchise fees
- Regular audits of the cable company
- Customer support
- Handling any legal issues that arise through the Commission Attorney

#### **Successes**

- Administered the member cities' Comcast cable franchises since 1981
- Oversaw the arrival and departure of CenturyLink as a cable provider
- Conducted an audit of Comcast that resulted in a highly favorable settlement agreement that preserved member cities' ability to use PEG fees to pay for both capital and operational expenses
- Recently negotiated a franchise extension, preserving that settlement agreement and the commission's favorable PEG fee rate for an additional five years
- Ensured that Comcast built their cable service out so that it is available to 100 percent of member city residents and that each resident has access to the same level of service

## **Legal Interests**

The commission also fights for the member cities' legal interests at the state and federal level. In both 2023 and 2024, the NMTC was very active in attempting to guide a bill authorizing widespread broadband franchising through the state legislature. NMTC staff were even instrumental in securing bi-partisan support for the bill by personally securing the support of Representative Nolan West. Currently, the NMTC is joining with other area commissions to file reply comments to strongly oppose the FCC's Notice of Inquiry titled "Build America: Eliminating Barriers to Wireline Deployments." It is possible that the FCC may try to use these proceedings to preempt local government oversight of broadband-only providers, ending all attempts at broadband franchising. This is not the first time we have fought for our cities at the federal level and we are sure it will not be the last.

## **Customer Care**

We are also extremely proud of our efforts helping Comcast cable customers. In 2025, NMTC staff helped local residents resolve every one of their disputes with the cable company. Many customers had questions about billing and channel lineups. Some experienced technical difficulties. There were several customers who needed help cancelling service for a deceased relative. And almost everyone who called complained of being unable to navigate the complex Comcast phone tree.

In recent months, we have seen an increase in cable disruptions caused by broadband companies, including Gateway and Lumen. One such resident is Patricia Scheeler of Blaine. Patricia lost her phone, cable, and internet service when her line was accidentally cut by Gateway. As we have no franchise with Gateway, we had no means of communicating with them or forcing them to resolve the issue. Thanks to our cable franchise, we were able to work with Comcast to restore Patricia's service. It ultimately took six days to fix Patricia's problem. She was without phone, cable, and internet the entire time. NMTC staff spoke with Patricia and with Comcast each day, working diligently to correct her problem. Patricia was, of course, extremely frustrated and stated that she was a "nervous wreck" and "screaming on the inside," but throughout was extremely appreciative of NMTC staff for their work on her behalf. We were even able to ensure that Patricia received credit to her account from Comcast, even though the damage had not been their fault.

## **WHY FRANCHISE BROADBAND**

Franchising broadband providers would allow us to regulate them the same way we do cable, providing the same protections to the city and its residents. We could impose build-out and quality requirements. We could ensure prompt and proper maintenance of the right of way and to private property. We could make sure that broadband internet customers have someone to turn to when they needed help with the company. Through franchise fees, we could even bring much needed revenue to the city and to the commission.

## **HOW CAN WE FRANCHISE BROADBAND**

For many years, we were unable to franchise broadband providers as they considered themselves to be telecommunications companies. State law prohibits franchising

telecommunications companies. A recent federal ruling in *Ohio Telecom v the FCC*, however, stated that broadband is not a telecommunications service. It is our argument, developed by Commission Attorney Mike Bradley and shared with our member cities, that broadband only providers should be properly classified not as telecommunications systems, but as cable communications systems. Cable communications systems can be franchised.

## **OBSTACLES TO BROADBAND FRANCHISING**

### **Legal Hurdles**

While we feel confident in our assertion that broadband only providers should be classified as cable communications systems, it is essentially unproven. This means that a broadband provider may bring action against a city or commission, stating that they should be classified as “telecommunications right-of-way users” and that state law prohibits them from being franchised. There are also regular challenges to broadband franchising at both the state and federal level, which the NMTC routinely opposes.

### **Existing Infrastructure**

Unless there is a change in the law at the state level, we can only franchise new broadband systems. This means that any company that is fully built out can likely resist franchising. It also means that, if a provider is only partially built out, they could choose to stop where they are rather than franchise and finish building out.

### **Other Providers**

Our argument primarily applies to new, broadband only providers.

#### **- Comcast / Xfinity**

Comcast (also known as the brand name Xfinity) is a cable provider. FCC regulations prohibit municipalities from receiving franchise revenue from any services other than cable. This means that Comcast’s internet service cannot be franchised. This will hold even if there is a change in state law. This is disappointing because Comcast controls a large part of the broadband market in our member cities.

#### **- CenturyLink**

CenturyLink, specifically the old phone system, is a telecommunications company that also offers internet.

#### **- Fixed Wireless and Satellite Internet Providers**

There are several fixed wireless internet providers, like T-Mobile, Verizon, and AT&T, as well as satellite-based providers, such as Starlink, that operate in our member cities.

## **POTENTIAL BROADBAND FRANCHISING REVENUE**

In putting together this report, we sought to clarify the potential revenue available to each member city and, through them, the Commission. A number of factors were considered in putting together these figures, including:

- **Percent of Households with Broadband Internet**  
The US Census Bureau states that, as of 2021, 91 percent of urban homes had household internet. Assuming that number has risen, we have used a figure of 95 percent in our calculations. For businesses, we assumed the figure to be 100 percent.
- **Average Monthly Price of Home Internet**  
The technology website CNet studied 150 internet plans in July of 2025 and reported that the average internet bill was \$78 per month.
- **Average Monthly Price of Business Internet**  
In September of 2025, the technology website [highspeedinternet.com](https://www.highspeedinternet.com) reported the average business internet bill was \$158 per month.
- **Percent of Homes Subscribing to Broadband Only Providers**  
For a variety of reasons, we can only expect to franchise a portion of the market. For our estimates, we are assuming that a maximum of 50 percent of homes will be using a franchised broadband internet service after the city is fully built out. Please note that while the providers build their networks, this figure will necessarily be lower, with first year revenue likely being zero dollars. We estimate full build out may take five to six years per provider.
- **Expected Franchise Fee**  
Right now, the South Washington County Telecommunications Commission (SWCTC) is our only example. They have secured a five percent franchise fee for the City of Woodbury, which is the same as our member cities' franchise fee with Comcast Cable.

All of that brings us to annual potential broadband revenue of approximately \$11,000 per 500 households plus \$4,750 per 100 businesses.

## **REVENUE SHARING**

Unlike the cable franchise, NMTC staff expects each member city to retain the majority of its broadband franchising revenue. The exact percentages will need to be set by the commission and each individual city. The split between the City of Woodbury and the SWCTC is expected to be 60 percent for Woodbury and 40 percent for the SWCTC.

## **HOW COULD A MEMBER CITY USE THIS REVENUE**

Member cities could likely use broadband revenue however they liked without restriction. This is often not the case with cable franchise revenue, which typically must be used on

communications related expenses. The city itself would have complete control over its share of the revenue and, as a member of the commission, would have a say in how the NMTC's share is allocated in the annual budgeting process.

### **HOW WOULD NMTV USE THIS REVENUE**

NMTV would use this revenue both to pay for the labor involved in administering the franchise and for the general maintenance of the organization. Over the last several years, cable franchise revenue has dropped precipitously. Since 2017, franchise and PEG fees have dropped 23 percent and continue to drop each year. In the past two years, there has been an 18 percent reduction in NMTV staff to compensate.

At the same time, NMTV provides more services to the city than ever before. In addition to administering the franchise, recording city meetings, taping high school sports events, and providing news and election coverage, the station is also now providing support for new ADA requirements, including closed captions and audio descriptions, which must be applied to all pre-recorded municipal videos, including city meetings.

Broadband franchise fees could go a long way to closing our funding gap, preventing further layoffs, and preserving the level of services offered to all member cities.

### **BENEFITS FOR OUR MEMBER CITIES**

#### **Already at Work**

Our member cities benefit from the commission's 40 years of experience in franchise administration. The NMTC has planned for broadband franchising for months and has already begun the process, coordinating with city staff to pause right-of-way applications and informing prospective broadband providers of the need to franchise. The commission has already created franchise application documents, planned for the process of accepting said applications, and has even sent applications to providers interested in franchising with our member cities.

#### **Legal Expertise**

Commission Attorney Mike Bradley is one of the country's leading experts on franchising. Through the commission, Attorney Bradley's expertise is already available to each member city at no additional cost.

#### **Reduced Workload for City Staff**

City staff will not inherit any additional work.

#### **Passive Income**

For each city, broadband franchising will provide almost entirely passive income. Aside from issuing permits, approving the franchise itself, and offering any specific direction the city desires, the NMTC would handle everything.

## **All the Benefits of a Franchise**

Add to this all the benefits listed at the start of this report, including build out and quality requirements, maintenance of the right-of-way, regular negotiations and renegotiations, and customer support.

## **WHAT IS THE BROADBAND FRANCHISING PROCESS**

- Step one is for each city to cease issuing right-of-way permits to broadband only providers and to direct them to the NMTC for a franchise application. Many of our cities have already taken this step.
- Once a provider indicates a real interest in franchising, NMTC staff will publish a Notice of Intent to Franchise in the papers of record for the Commission once a week for two successive weeks. The Notice would include a deadline for submission of applications and set a public hearing date on the application. This would include an invitation to other interested parties that they may also apply.
- Staff would then send additional applications for a broadband franchise upon request.
- The application deadline must be at least 20 days after the first publication of the Notice of Intent to Franchise.
- The Co-Executive Directors and Commission Attorney, in coordination with city staff, would then negotiate a franchise agreement with the applicant.
- The Commission must wait at least seven days after the public hearing on the application to hold a meeting to make a recommendation on the franchise to relevant cities.
- The relevant cities would vote to approve or not approve their individual franchise.

## **CONCLUSION**

Broadband franchising is a win-win for the member cities, the North Metro Telecommunications Commission, and North Metro TV. It is an opportunity to expand upon a successful, 40-year partnership by adding broadband franchising administration to the expansive portfolio of services NMTV already provides. Cities will receive the lion's share of all potential revenue, while contributing much needed funds to NMTV's general operations. A city's portion of funds will belong only to the city and neither the commission nor NMTV will ever make any attempt to suggest how the city uses them. This endeavor will allow us to continue building a mutually beneficial future for the Commission, North Metro TV, and the member cities.

**NORTH METRO TV MEMO**

**TO:** CABLE COMMISSION

**FROM:** ERIC HOUSTON AND DANIKA PETERSON

**SUBJECT:** NMTV EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

**DATE:** 11/25/2025

Over the last several months, the Co-Executive Directors worked to update the North Metro TV employee handbook. The handbook had not been updated since 2009 and some sections were long out of date. The Co-EDs prioritized organizing and clarifying the handbook while getting it up to date with state law. Revisions include sections on cannabis use and earned sick and safe time.

At their November meeting, the Operations Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the Commission adopt the Draft NMTV Employee Handbook as presented.

**RECOMMENDED MOTION:** To recommend the Commission adopt the Draft NMTV Employee Handbook as presented.



# INTRODUCTION

## **North Metro Telecommunications Commission**

The North Metro Telecommunications Commission (NMTC) was established by a joint powers agreement to monitor the operation and activities of cable communications and the cable communications system for Member Cities.

Member Cities of the NMTC include the municipalities of Blaine, Centerville, Circle Pines, Ham Lake, Lexington, Lino Lakes, and Spring Lake Park. The NMTC is considered to be a governmental entity.

Each Member City is represented on the NMTC by one director, who is a council member from that City. The NMTC meets quarterly on the third Wednesday of select months. There is also an Executive Committee, elected annually within the NMTC, which meets quarterly on the first Wednesday of select months.

The NMTC is funded through a 5% franchise fee on gross revenue derived by the cable provider, along with a PEG fee on cable subscriber's bills. This fee is collected by the Cable Provider and paid to the Commission on a quarterly basis. The budget is taken from these fees, and the remainder is returned to Member Cities, earmarked for cable related expenses.

The responsibilities of the NMTC include:

- To administer and enforce the franchise agreement between the Member Cities and the Cable Provider
- To ensure equitable and reasonable rates and service levels
- To provide for the operation of North Metro TV
- To promote the development of locally produced television programs
- To ensure public access to emerging technologies

## **North Metro TV**

North Metro TV (NMTV) is a public access television facility committed to providing residents of the Member Cities access to television production equipment, channel space, and training. NMTV is also committed to working with groups and organizations to help produce events important to them and our communities.

Public Access television services exist as a condition of the franchise agreement between Member Cities and the Cable Provider. Originally these services were managed by the Cable Provider. However, on April 1, 1997, the Commission assumed the obligation and responsibilities for PEG (Public, Educational, Governmental) programming.

An Operations Committee was created to provide day-to-day oversight and coordination of North Metro TV's operations. In addition, it provides supervision and support to the Executive Director and advice and counsel to the Commission. The Operations Committee is made up of the administrators from each Member City.

NMTV staff consists of an Executive Director, Directors, Managers, Coordinators, Producers, and production assistants.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

The following are job requirements for every position at NMTV. All employees are expected to:

- Perform assigned duties to the best of their ability at all times.
- Render prompt and courteous service to the public at all times.
- Read, understand, and comply with the rules and regulations as set forth in these personnel policies as well as those of their departments.
- Conduct themselves professionally toward both residents and staff and respond to inquiries and information requests with patience and every possible courtesy.
- Report any and all unsafe conditions to the immediate supervisor.
- Maintain good attendance while meeting the goals set by an employee's supervisor.

### **Attendance and Absence**

Regular attendance is essential to good performance of an individual and to NMTV as a whole. As such, the operations and standards of service require that employees be at work unless valid reasons warrant absence, or an employee has a position that has been approved to work remotely.

For positions that are approved for remote work, a minimum of 40 hours per month in the office will be required.

In order for a team to function efficiently and effectively, employees must fully understand the goals that have been set for them and the time required to be on the job. Understanding attendance requirements is an essential function of every NMTV position.

Employees who are going to be absent from work are required to notify their supervisor as soon as possible in advance of the absence. In the event of an unexpected absence, employees should call their supervisor before the scheduled starting time and keep in mind the following procedures:

- If the supervisor is not available at the time, the employee should leave a message that includes a telephone number where they can be reached and/or contact any other individual who was designated by the supervisor.
- Failure to use the established reporting process will be grounds for disciplinary action.
- The employee must call the supervisor on each day of an absence extending beyond one day unless arrangements otherwise have been made with the supervisor.

- Employees who are absent for three days or more and who do not report the absence in accordance with this policy, will be considered to have voluntarily resigned not in good standing.
- NMTV may waive this rule if extenuating circumstances warranted such behavior or as required by law.

This policy does not preclude NMTV from administering discipline for unexcused absences of less than three days. Individual departments may establish more specific reporting procedures. Each employee shall ensure that time worked, and absences are correctly reported on their timecards. Failure to correctly report time and/or falsification of documents may result in discipline up to and including termination.

### **Injury on the Job**

If you are injured on the job, seek immediate first aid and notify your supervisor. If you have an accident while operating NMTV vehicles:

1. Notify the police and your supervisor immediately.
2. Obtain identifying data from the driver of the other vehicle (e.g., name, address, and insurance company).
3. Secure names and addresses of injured and any witnesses to the accident.
4. Do not admit fault. Leave that to the insurance company to resolve.

All accidents and injuries must be reported on a First Report of Injury form that is available from your supervisor. It must be completed and returned within 24 hours of the accident.

All employees involved in accidents which cause personal injury are required to have immediate medical attention to ensure adequate treatment and proper documentation so that medical records will be available for use by the insurance carrier.

Worker's compensation insurance covers work-related injuries and illnesses. For your protection, report all accidents, no matter how small.

### **Smoking in the Workplace**

In accordance with the Minnesota Clean Indoor Air Act, the NMTC will provide employees with the opportunity to work in a clean, healthy, smoke-free environment. NMTC facilities, including NMTC vehicles, and the North Metro Television office are designated as non-smoking facilities. This includes tobacco, cannabis, and vaping.

Smoking and vaping are not allowed within twenty-five feet of the building.

## **Sexual Harassment**

The NMTC is committed to providing and maintaining a workplace environment free of harassment; one which supports, nurtures, and rewards employees and their accomplishments on the basis of relevant factors such as ability and work performance. It is the policy of the NMTC to protect all employees and applicants from sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment includes any unwelcome sexual advances, demands, or requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment may also include the following, whether directed at or occurring within an employee's work environment.

- Unsolicited verbal sexual comments or conduct;
- Subtle pressure for sexual activity;
- Remarks about sexual activities or a person's body;
- Patting, pinching, or touching.

Such conduct becomes even more serious if:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Sexual harassment is illegal and adverse to the environment which the NMTC promotes. It is the duty of all employees to promptly report any incident of sexual harassment, whether or not it directly involves them. All complaints will be treated in a confidential manner and promptly, discreetly, and fully investigated. The accused persons will have a fair opportunity to address complaints. Involved employees will be informed of investigation results and decisions regarding any disciplinary action.

## **Alcohol and Other Drugs**

The NMTC intends to provide a drug-free, healthful, safe, and secure work environment. Employees are expected and required to report to work on time and in appropriate mental and physical condition.

The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance on NMTC property, or while conducting NMTC business while off NMTC property, is absolutely prohibited. Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination, and may have legal consequences.

Employees are prohibited from reporting to work or working while under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or cannabis, or cannabinoid products, which can adversely affect their ability to safely and effectively perform their job duties. Employees are further prohibited from consuming, smoking, or otherwise ingesting cannabis during work hours, including during meal and rest breaks.

Employees who fail to comply with NMTC's cannabis use policy are subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

The NMTC recognizes drug dependency as an illness and a major health problem. The NMTC also recognizes drug abuse as a potential health, safety, and security problem. Employees in need of help in dealing with such problems are encouraged to seek assistance through their medical plan as appropriate. Conscientious efforts to seek such help will not jeopardize any employee's job.

Employees must, as a condition of employment, abide by the terms of the above policy and report any conviction under a criminal drug statute for violations occurring on or off NMTC property while conducting NMTC business. A report of a conviction must be made within five days after the conviction as mandated by the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988.

#### **Company Vehicle Policy**

All company owned vehicles are to be used for work-related purposes only. Employees are expected to follow any applicable state, federal, and local laws while operating company vehicles, and will be held personally responsible for any such violation. All NMTC vehicles are smoke free environments.

#### **Computer and Internet Use Policy**

Occasional and reasonable personal use of the Commission's internet and e-mail services is permitted, provided that this does not interfere with work performance. These services may be used outside of scheduled hours of work, provided that such use is consistent with professional conduct.

Users should have no expectation of privacy while using company-owned or company-leased equipment. Information passing through or stored on company equipment can and will be monitored.

Violations of internet and e-mail use include, but are not limited to, accessing, downloading, uploading, saving, receiving, or sending material that includes sexually explicit content or other material using vulgar, sexist, racist, threatening, violent, or defamatory language. Users should not use the Commission's services to disclose NMTC information without prior authorization. Personal software can significantly impact the operation of NMTC equipment. Consequently, the installation and use of privately owned software is allowed only when approved in advance by the executive director. This includes downloading software from internet sites. Games are not considered to be appropriate software for NMTC computer equipment. If allowed, all personal

software, including screensavers and shareware, must be legally purchased and properly licensed to the employee. A copy of the license must be located in the employee's office. The employee shall affirm in writing that the software has not been loaded on any other computer in violation of copyrights. Personal software and data may be removed without warning at any time. NMTC is not responsible for the back-up or recovery of files associated with personal software. If it is suspected that a personal software package is the cause of a problem with any NMTC software, it may be removed without warning.

Infringements of this policy will be investigated on a case-by-case basis.

### **Personal Communications and Use of Social Media**

It is important for NMTC employees to remember the personal communications of employees may reflect on the NMTC, especially if employees are commenting on NMTC business or commenting on issues that implicate their NMTC employment. As NMTC representatives, employees share in the responsibility of earning and preserving the public's trust. An employee's own personal communications, such as on social media, can have a significant impact on the public's belief that all staff will carry out NMTC functions faithfully and impartially and without regard to factors such as race, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or other protected categories. Non-personal communications (performed within one's job duties) to members of the public must be professional at all times. The following guidelines apply to personal communications, including various forms such as social media, letters to the editor of newspapers, and personal endorsements:

- Do not share any private or confidential information you have access to as a result of your NMTC position.
- Any personal communications made on a matter of public concern must not disrupt the efficiency of the NMTC's operation, including by negatively affecting morale. Put another way, such public comments must not undermine any NMTC department's ability to effectively serve the public. Disruptive personal communications can include liking or republishing (sharing/retweeting) a social media post of another individual or entity. NMTC can act on the personal communication that violates this policy without waiting for the actual disruption.
- Remember what you write or post cannot easily be undone. It may also be spread to a larger audience than you intended. Use common sense when using email or social media sites. It is a good idea to refrain from sending or posting information or photos you would not want your boss or other employees to read, or you would be embarrassed to see in the newspaper. Keep in mind harassment, bullying, threats of violence, discrimination, or retaliation concerning a co-worker or between co-workers that would not be permissible in the workplace is not permissible online, even if it is done after hours, from home and on home computers.
- NMTC expects its employees to be fair, courteous, and respectful to supervisors, co-workers, citizens, customers, and other persons. Avoid using statements, photographs,

video or audio that reasonably may be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening or intimidating, disparaging, or might constitute harassment or bullying. Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of sex, race (including traits associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture and hairstyles such as braids, locs and twists) national origin, age, color, creed, religion, disability, marital status, familial status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, status with regard to public assistance or membership or activity in a local human rights commission.

- If you publish something related to NMTC business and there is liable to be confusion whether you are speaking on behalf of the NMTC, it would be best to identify yourself and use a disclaimer such as, "These are my own opinions and do not represent those of North Metro TV nor the North Metro Telecommunications Commission."
- NMTC facilities, resources, working time, or official positions cannot be used for personal profit or business interests, or to participate in personal political activity. Some examples: a video producer could not use NMTC's logo, email, or working time to promote their side business as a videographer.
- Personal social media account name or email names should not be tied to NMTC/NMTV (e.g., (First Name NMTV)).

### **Gambling**

All NMTC employees are required to refrain from gambling during work hours and on NMTC property at all times. This includes sports betting, pools and number boards, fantasy games, cards, and similar activities.

### **Political Activities**

The NMTC organization is non-partisan. NMTC employees have the right to express their views and to pursue legitimate involvement in the political system. However, no employee will directly or indirectly, during hours of employment, solicit or receive funds for political purposes.

As individuals, employees may express opinions on political issues and candidates during off-work hours when not discharging work functions; they may otherwise participate in public affairs but only to the extent that such endeavors do not impair the neutral and efficient performance of official duties or create real or apparent conflicts of interest.

Employees will not engage in any political discussions in the public area of the building.

Employees are prohibited from using their position of employment to influence, interfere with, or affect an election campaign or the results of an election.

Employees may not engage in political activity while on work time or while discharging work responsibilities; nor may they act in a manner that suggests that the NMTC either supports a

particular candidate or political issue or endorses the personal political opinions of the employee. Any act which tends to identify the NMTC with any candidate or political issue, or which otherwise tends to undermine the public perception of NMTC as a politically neutral and impartial body, is prohibited.

Use of company vehicles, facilities, equipment, or other resources while engaging in political activities is not permitted.

### **Gifts and Solicitations**

Occasionally NMTC employees are offered gifts from citizens or vendors in appreciation of service. If you are offered a gift or a gratuity for a service performed, courteously decline and explain that such service is available to all residents without gratuity. Advise the person of the NMTC's policy.

Solicitations are prohibited on NMTC time and property. Certain exceptions may be made for charitable organizations. If you are asked to purchase goods, contribute funds, or collect information while on NMTC premises, please check with your supervisor.

### **Outside Employment**

The NMTC recognizes the right of its employees to use their skills and knowledge to augment their income by holding other employment. However, the employees' rights must also be balanced with the NMTC's need for full productivity and loyalty from its employees. To that purpose, the NMTC considers itself to be your primary employer and therefore, reserves the right to have initial claim to your time and expertise for the accomplishment of your responsibilities. While outside employment may be acceptable, it must be administered in a way which does not interrupt your primary responsibilities to the NMTC.

## **EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES**

### **Probationary Period**

The NMTC has a minimum six-month probationary period for all new employees. This period allows the employer time to evaluate an employee's performance before the employee's status becomes regular.

Vacation and sick leave are accrued during the probationary period. Vacation leave may be used only after three months of employment. Sick leave is available immediately upon accrual.

During the probationary period, new employees receive written performance reviews to help them assess how well they are learning the job and to clarify their goals.

### **Regular Workday**

The NMTC is open five days a week, Monday through Friday, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Employees are allowed a 30 minute paid break for lunch and two unpaid 15 minute rest breaks - one in the



morning and afternoon. Most jobs at North Metro TV allow for flexible work schedules, which are determined by staff and management.

The work week begins at 12:01 a.m. Saturday and ends at 11:59 p.m. Friday.

### **Overtime/Compensatory Time**

All NMTC employees are classified as “exempt” or “non-exempt” under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

Exempt employees are not eligible for overtime.

All non-exempt employees will be compensated for all hours worked in excess of forty hours in any one calendar week with compensatory time off at the rate of time and one-half times the hourly rate. All overtime must be approved by your supervisor. Compensatory time may not accumulate to over 40 hours.

### **Promotions and Transfers**

The NMTC will post notices of available jobs within the organization. If you wish to be considered for a vacant position, you are encouraged to apply for the position. Experience, education, skills, and past performance of the employee as well as the qualifications necessary to do the job are considered when reviewing applications for promotions and transfers.

### **At Will Employment**

This handbook does not constitute an offer of an employment contract nor does the handbook alter the status of “at will” employees. The NMTC considers all employees to be “at will” employees. That is, the NMTC is free to terminate employment at any time for any reason or for no reason at all. Similarly, the employee is free to leave employment with the NMTC at any time.

The NMTC reserves the right to change the provisions of this handbook from time to time without notice. Any prior representations or understandings are superseded by this handbook.

### **Equal Opportunity Employer**

The NMTC strives to provide full and equal opportunities for every person in all areas related to employment, training, promotion, and compensation. To this end, the NMTC upholds the principle that no individual shall be discriminated against with respect to compensation, terms, conditions or other privileges of employment because of race, color, creed, religion, sex, age, national origin, sexual preference, gender identity, marital status, veteran status, source of income, or physical disability, and to any other group or class against which discrimination is prohibited by state or federal law.

Employees who participate in discrimination of any kind are subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

Any person who feels that they have been discriminated against should contact their supervisor. Employees can bring complaints, ask questions, and raise concerns under this policy without fear of reprisal.

### **Open Door Policy**

The NMTC maintains an Open Door Policy for answering questions about your employment and for resolving employee problems which may develop. NMTC encourages all employees to come forward with any concerns. Usually problems can be resolved in an informal fashion by simply meeting with your supervisor. In the event that this is unsatisfactory, issues can be presented to the North Metro Telecommunications Commission Operations Committee liaison for further consideration.

## **PAY**

### **Classification Levels**

Salaried/Exempt:

These employees receive a salary for the job that they perform and are exempt from receiving any overtime compensation.

Hourly Employees/Non-Exempt:

Employees whose compensation is based on the number of hours worked. These employees receive overtime compensation if they work more than 40 hours within a work week.

Full-Time Employees:

Employees who have successfully completed their probationary period and are scheduled to work 40 hours per week, 12 months per year. Such employees are eligible for full benefits provided by the NMTC.

Part-Time Employees:

Employees who have successfully completed their probationary period, and are normally scheduled to work less than 40 hours per week. Vacation pay, holiday pay, and sick pay will be pro-rated and calculated on scheduled hours on a  $\frac{1}{2}$  or  $\frac{3}{4}$  time basis (20-29 hours will be  $\frac{1}{2}$  time and 30-36 hours will be  $\frac{3}{4}$  time). Employees working less than an average of 20 hours per week shall not qualify for benefits.

### **Compensation**

Paychecks are issued every other Friday for full-time staff. Paychecks are issued monthly for part-time staff.

Payroll deductions are made for state and federal income tax based upon individual earnings and the number of exemptions an employee takes. Social Security, FICA, and Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) deductions are made based upon a percentage of earnings. Deductions for benefits, including deferred compensation, will be noted on your paystub.

Additionally, child support withholding, or other garnishments will also be deducted in accordance with Minnesota state laws.

Employees are responsible for notifying Human Resources of any change in status, including changes in address, phone number, email address, names of beneficiaries, marital status, etc.

As provided for in Minnesota law, all employees are required to participate in direct deposit unless a written objection is submitted from the employee to Human Resources as required by Minnesota Statute §177.23(4)(3).

### **Improper Deduction and Overpayment Policy**

If an employee believes that an improper deduction or overpayment, or another type of error, has been made, they should immediately contact the payroll specialist. If NMTC determines it has made an improper deduction from a paycheck, it will reimburse the employee for the improper amount deducted and take good faith measures to prevent improper deductions from being made in the future.

In cases of improper overpayments, employees are required to promptly repay the NMTC in the amount of the overpayment. The employee can write a personal check or authorize a reduction in pay to cover the repayment. Payment and recovery will be made in accordance with applicable law.

NMTC prohibits and will not tolerate retaliation against any employee because that employee filed a good faith complaint under this policy. Specifically, no one will be denied employment, promotion, or any other benefit of employment or be subjected to any adverse employment action based on that person's good faith complaint about an improper wage payment or deduction. In addition, no one will be disciplined, intimidated, or otherwise retaliated against because that person exercised rights under this policy or applicable law. If you believe you have been the victim of retaliation in violation of this policy, report your concerns to Human Resources.

### **How Pay Is Determined**

All positions within the NMTC are listed in the Personnel Classification Plan according to the responsibilities and duties of the position. The entire plan is reviewed periodically to ensure that responsibility levels and salary ranges are commensurate with the work performed. Each job in the classification plan has a salary range containing pay steps. New employees typically begin at the first step. When the probationary period has been successfully completed, they are eligible for a

salary review. Subsequent pay increases are based on job-related performance as evaluated by the performance appraisal process.

## **BENEFITS**

### **Insurance**

All full-time employees participate in a comprehensive insurance program which includes major medical, dental, life, short term disability, long term disability, and accidental death and dismemberment coverage.

If the employee is covered through different insurance, they may decline the coverage provided by the NMTC.

The NMTC will provide a set amount per month for the sole purpose of securing the above insurance coverage for employees and their dependents. Employees are responsible for any costs that exceed that amount per month.

### **Worker's Compensation**

All full-time NMTC employees are covered by long-term workers compensation insurance, which provides benefits to employees who suffer personal injury or illness arising out of, and in the course of, their employment.

### **Retirement Program**

The Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) is a mandatory program under state law to supplement Social Security retirement benefits. Minnesota law provides that upon retirement, an eligible public employee and their covered dependents can participate in the group health insurance program at the same premium rate as active employees until age 65. Retirees must, however, pay the entire premium to the NMTC by the first of the month.

### **Educational Opportunities**

The NMTC encourages full-time employees to further their education, by taking job-related courses, in order to prepare themselves for advancement. NMTC will reimburse up to \$500 a year, per employee, for qualifying courses. The following procedure must be followed:

- The course must be pre-approved by your supervisor.
- Receipts must be turned in for the tuition amount.
- Documentation verifying course completion at a grade "C" or better, or a certificate of completion where grades are not applicable must be turned in.
- A written critique of the course, summarizing its value in light of the student's job duties with the NMTC.

Books, lab fees, and other peripheral costs are not eligible for reimbursement.

The availability of this benefit is subject to funding considerations.

## LEAVE

### Vacation

Paid Vacation leave is available to eligible employees in accordance with the schedule below. Part-time employees who work at least 20 hours per week on a regular basis year-round will accrue vacation leave on a prorated basis. Temporary and seasonal employees will not earn or accrue vacation leave.

1-4 years of service	- Ten (10) work days	3.08 hrs per pay period
5-10 years of service	- Fifteen (15) work days	4.62
11 years of service	- Sixteen (16) work days	4.92
12 years of service	- Seventeen (17) work days	5.23
13 years of service	- Eighteen (18) work days	5.54
14 years of service	- Nineteen (19) work days	5.85
After 15 years of service	- Twenty (20) work days	6.16
After 21 years of service	- Twenty-five (25) work days	7.70

Vacation leave may be used as desired upon completion of the first three months of employment, provided that your supervisor approves the time you wish to schedule. Request for Vacation forms should be initiated at least two weeks prior to anticipated vacations.

Vacation leave may accumulate up to 17 working days, or, for employees with five or more years of service, 25 working days. Vacation leave must be taken in increments of one hour or more.

### Holidays

Full-time employees receive eleven paid holidays each year. The following days are scheduled holidays:

New Year's Day  
Martin Luther King's Birthday (3<sup>rd</sup> Monday in January)  
President's Day (3<sup>rd</sup> Monday in February)  
Memorial Day (Last Monday in May)  
Juneteenth (June 19)  
Independence Day (July 4)  
Labor Day (1<sup>st</sup> Monday in September)  
Veteran's Day (November 11)  
Thanksgiving Day  
Day after Thanksgiving Day  
Christmas Day

If New Year's Day, Independence Day, Veteran's Day, or Christmas Day fall on a Saturday or Sunday, the previous Friday or following Monday will be classified as a holiday at the supervisor's discretion.

One additional leave day or "floating holiday" is available each calendar year. This floating holiday is renewed each January 1 and must be taken during that same calendar year.

### **Sick Leave**

Sick Leave/Earned Sick and Safe Time (ESST) is paid leave employees can use when an employee is sick, to care for a sick family member, or to seek assistance if an employee or their family member has experienced domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking.

Full-time, part-time, and temporary employees (including seasonal and interns) are eligible for ESST.

#### **A. Earned Sick and Safe Time for Part-time and Temporary Employees**

For all part-time and temporary employees, Earned Sick and Safe Time (ESST) is accrued at one hour for every 30 hours worked by an employee, up to a maximum of 48 hours per year.

Part-time, temporary employees are eligible for carry over of accrued but unused ESST into the following year, but the total of ESST carry over hours shall not exceed 80 hours.

#### **B. Sick Leave/Earned Sick and Safe Time for Full-time Employees**

Full-time, benefit eligible employees on Sick and Vacation Leave will continue to accrue sick time at a rate of one day per month. They will be able to use their Sick Leave/Earned Sick and Safe Time for all ESST eligible uses. The maximum accumulation for Sick Leave/ESST is 90 days. Sick Leave/Earned Sick and Safe Time does not accrue during an unpaid leave of absence.

#### **C. Sick Leave/Earned Sick and Safe Time Use**

Sick Leave/ESST may be used as it is accrued once the employee has worked for NMTV for 80 hours. Sick Leave/ESST may be used only for days when the employee is scheduled to work.

Sick Leave/ESST may be used for the following circumstances:

An employee's own:

- Mental or physical illness, injury, or other health condition
- Need for medical diagnosis, care or treatment, of a mental or physical illness, injury or health condition
- Need for preventative care
- Closure of the employee's place of business due to weather or other public emergency
- The employee's inability to work or telework because the employee is prohibited from working by the city due to health concerns related to the potential transmission of a communicable illness related to a public emergency, or seeking or awaiting the results of a

diagnostic test for, or a medical diagnosis of, a communicable disease related to a public emergency and the employee has been exposed to a communicable disease or the city has requested a test or diagnosis.

- Absence due to domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking of the employee provided the absence is to:
  - Seek medical attention related to physical or psychological injury or disability caused by domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking
  - Obtain services from a victim services organization
  - Obtain psychological or other counseling
  - Seek relocation or take steps to secure an existing home due to domestic abuse, sexual assault or stalking
  - Seek legal advice or take legal action, including preparing for or participating in any civil or criminal legal proceeding related to or resulting from domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking

Care of a family member:

- With mental or physical illness, injury or other health condition
- Who needs medical diagnosis, care or treatment of a mental or physical illness, injury or other health condition
- Who needs preventative medical or health care
- Whose school or place of care has been closed due to weather or other public emergency
- When it has been determined by health authority or a health care professional that the presence of the family member of the employee in the community would jeopardize the health of others because of the exposure of the family member of the employee to a communicable disease, whether or not the family member has actually contracted the communicable disease.
- Absence due to domestic abuse, sexual assault or stalking of the employee's family member provided the absence is to:
  - Seek medical attention related to physical or psychological injury or disability caused by domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking
  - Obtain services from a victim services organization
  - Obtain psychological or other counseling
  - Seek relocation or take steps to secure an existing home due to domestic abuse, sexual assault or stalking
  - Seek legal advice or take legal action, including preparing for or participating in any civil or criminal legal proceeding related to or resulting from domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking.

**D. For Sick Leave/Earned Sick and Safe Time purposes, "family member" includes an employee's:**

- Spouse or registered domestic partner

- Child, foster child, adult child, legal ward, child for whom the employee is legal guardian, or child to whom the employee stands or stood in loco parentis
- Sibling, step sibling, or foster sibling
- Biological, adoptive or foster parent, stepparent, or a person who stood in loco parentis when the employee was a minor child
- Grandchild, foster grandchild, or step grandchild
- Grandparent or step grandparent
- A child of a sibling of the employee
- A sibling of the parent of the employee or
- A child-in-law or sibling-in-law
- Any of the above family members of a spouse or registered domestic partner
- Any other individual related by blood or whose close association with the employee is the equivalent of a family relationship
- Up to one individual annually designated by the employee

**E. Advance Notice for use of Sick Leave/Earned Sick and Safe Time**

If the need for Sick Leave/ESST is foreseeable, NMTC requires seven days' advance notice. However, if the need is unforeseeable, employees must provide notice of the need for Sick Leave/ESST as soon as possible.

Sick Leave/ESST will normally not be approved after an employee gives notice that he or she will be terminating employment. Exceptions must be approved by the executive director.

**F. Retaliation prohibited**

NMTC shall not discharge, discipline, penalize, interfere with, or otherwise retaliate or discriminate against an employee for asserting ESST rights, requesting an ESST absence, or pursuing remedies. Further, use of ESST will not be factored into any attendance point system the city may use. Additionally, it is unlawful to report or threaten to report a person or a family member's immigration status for exercising a right under Earned Sick and Safe Time.

Any employee who makes a false claim for Sick Leave/ESST will be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

**G. Benefits and return to work protections**

During an employee's use of Sick Leave/ESST, an employee will continue to receive the city's employer insurance contribution as if they were working, and the employee will be responsible for any share of their insurance premiums.

An employee returning from time off using accrued Sick Leave/ESST is entitled to return to their employment at the same rate of pay received when their leave began, plus any automatic pay adjustments that may have occurred during the employee's time off. Seniority during Sick Leave/ESST absences will continue to accrue as if the employee has been continually employed.



## **Unpaid Leave of Absence**

Upon recommendation of management, an employee's leave of absence without pay for up to ninety days may be approved.

## **Minnesota Paid Leave**

NMTC provides time off to eligible employees who qualify for Minnesota Paid Leave (MNPL) benefits under Minnesota law. NMTC is a participant in the State of Minnesota's Paid Leave program. MNPL benefits are funded through premium contributions payable to the State of Minnesota. The premium cost will be split between the city and employee as follows: The NMTV will pay 50% of the required premium and employees will pay 50% of the premium cost through payroll deductions starting January 1, 2026.

### **Eligibility**

Eligibility determinations for MNPL benefits are made by the State of Minnesota. Generally, to be eligible for MNPL, you must:

### **Benefit Amount**

An employee's weekly MNPL benefits are calculated and determined by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED).

### **Leave Entitlement and Usage**

The State of Minnesota may approve MNPL leave for the following conditions in a benefit year:

- Up to 12 weeks of medical leave (for yourself) to take care of yourself for a serious health condition, including pregnancy, childbirth, recovery, or surgery.
- Up to 12 weeks of family leave to:
  - Bond with a child through birth, adoption, or foster placement
  - Care for a family member with a serious health condition
  - Support a military family member called to active duty
  - Receive covered types of care for yourself or a family member because of domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking

You can take both types of leave in the same year, but you cannot exceed 20 weeks total within a single benefit year. For example, an employee may be entitled to 12 weeks of family leave to bond with a child and another 8 weeks of medical leave for their serious health condition. Your benefit year starts the first day you take Paid Leave. There is no waiting period for MNPL if you are granted the benefit.

### **MNPL Intermittent Leave**

Employees may apply for intermittent leave in most cases, provided the leave is reasonable and appropriate to the needs of the individual requiring care.

In addition to the other eligibility requirements under the MN Paid Leave law, employees seeking intermittent leave must have at least eight hours of accumulated leave (unless more than 30 days have lapsed since taking the initial leave).

In situations where employees seek MNPL on an intermittent basis, employees must make a reasonable effort to provide written notice to the NMTC of the need for intermittent leave *before* applying for MNPL benefits through the State program. As part of the notice, employees must provide the NMTC with the following: 1) proposed intermittent leave schedule; and 2) a completed certification from a health care provider identifying the leave as necessary and a reasonable estimate of the frequency and duration and treatment schedule for the leave.

Consistent with other forms of leave provided by the city, employees may take intermittent leave in increments of **one** calendar day]. If eligible for intermittent leave, the NMTC allows a maximum of 480 hours of intermittent leave in any 12-month period. After reaching the maximum amount of allowed intermittent leave, employees may request continuous MNPL provided the continuous leave does not exceed the maximum amount of MNPL allowed by law.

#### Definitions

- Family member includes:
  - Spouse or partner
  - Child (including biological, adopted, step, or foster children, or a child you raise even if you are not legally related)
  - Parent or person who raised you
  - Sibling
  - Grandchild or grandparent
  - In-laws (including son, daughter, father, or mother)
  - Anyone close to you who depends on you like family, even if not related by blood
- A **serious health condition** means a physical or mental illness, injury, impairment, condition, or substance use disorder. Taking care of yourself for this serious condition may involve evaluation, treatment, inpatient care, recovery, or not being able to perform regular work, attend school, or do regular daily activities. This includes childbirth, conditions related to pregnancy, or surgery.

#### How to Apply for Minnesota Paid Leave

Prior to starting a claim with the State, employees should reach out to the NMTC Executive Director to notify your intention to take leave. After your leave has been discussed you may apply for MNPL through the Minnesota Paid Leave's portal online.

#### Maintaining Health Coverage During Leave

Unless the employee revokes coverage while on MNPL, the NMTC will continue to provide group health insurance coverage for an employee on MNPL under the same conditions as the coverage was provided before the employee took leave. You must continue to make timely payments of your share of the premiums for such coverage. If you are not using paid time off to cover part or all of the leave, you will be responsible for remitting your portion of health premiums to the NMTC in order to ensure continuation of benefits.

### Reinstatement

Upon return from covered MNPL, you will be reinstated to your previous position or to an equivalent position, with the same status, pay, employment benefits, length-of-service credit, and seniority credit as of the date of leave as long as you have worked for the city for a minimum of 90 calendar days.

Upon return to work, if it becomes evident that the employee is unable to perform the key essential functions of their position (with or without reasonable accommodation), the NMTC may engage in an interactive process, consistent with the American with Disability Act (ADA) and/or Minnesota Human Rights Act (MHRA) and other applicable workplace policies, including workplace safety protocols, to determine appropriate next steps.

### Retaliation

The NMTC will not interfere or retaliate against employees who request or take leave in accordance with the MN Paid Leave law.

### **Pregnancy-related Disability Leave and Childcare**

Disability caused or contributed to by pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions is treated the same as disabilities caused or contributed to by other medical conditions.

- A pregnant employee unable to perform the duties and responsibilities of their position due to disabilities caused or contributed to by pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions is eligible to use sick leave.
- An employee who desires a leave of absence for the purpose of childcare may request an unpaid leave. A period not exceeding three months time requires management approval.

Benefits will not accrue for employees on unpaid leaves of absence. Insurance coverage may be maintained by employee contribution of the full group coverage premium.

### **Inclement Weather**

NMTV facilities will generally be open during adverse weather. Due to individual circumstances, each employee will have to evaluate the weather and road conditions in deciding to report to work (or leave early). Employees will be allowed to use accrued vacation time or ESST or with supervisor approval, may modify the work schedule or make other reasonable schedule adjustments.

### **Funeral Leave**

Employees may use up to four days of sick leave in the case of death of immediate family, household members, or co-workers. Immediate family means spouse, parents, spouse's parents, children, brothers and sisters, brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, grandparents, or stepchildren. Other use of sick leave for serious illness or death may be granted in special circumstances by the executive director.

### **Jury, Court, and Public Duty**

Employees who are required to be absent for jury duty or subpoenaed appearances before a court or other public body in connection with the job will receive that portion of their regular salary which, together with jury pay or fees, will equal their regular pay. Court reimbursement of mileage is retained by the subpoenaed employee.

## **REVIEWS AND DISCIPLINE**

### **Corrective Action**

The NMTC wants to correct inappropriate behavior so employees may perform their jobs in a way that is satisfactory to them and to the organization. The NMTC has established corrective action which allows an employee with work-related problems to know, at any time, where they stand in relationship to performance expectations. NMTV's management retains the sole discretion to determine what behavior warrants disciplinary action and what type of disciplinary action will be imposed. Each individual's case will be addressed according to its particular circumstances. Providing counseling or administering discipline is a management responsibility which will be handled by the level of management where the problem occurs. The NMTC reserves the right to terminate employees at any time and for any reason that does not violate local, state, or federal law, with or without notice.

This corrective action procedure may include but is not limited to the following:

1. Verbal Counseling – an employee may be counseled about his/her performance problems.
2. Written Warning 1 – an employee may receive a documented verbal warning from his/her supervisor which will be placed in the employee's file.
3. Written Warning 2 – an employee may receive a written warning from his/her supervisor which requires corrective action.
4. Suspension – An employee may be suspended without pay, for no more than ten (10) days per incident by his/her supervisor when the employee's behavior warrants such corrective action.
5. Termination – An employee may be terminated from employment as a first or last disciplinary step.

### **Performance Evaluation**

All performance evaluations and employee self-evaluations must be prepared in writing. The original copy of the evaluations will be filed in the employee's personnel file and a copy will be given to the employee.

The employee should sign the performance evaluation to acknowledge they have read and understand their review. The employee's signature on the review form does not mean they agree with the contents of the appraisal, however, an employee's refusal to sign the form should be noted on the form. Employees may respond in writing, and it will be attached to the evaluation form and filed in their personnel file with the review.

### **Annual Review**

In addition, employees will have their performance reviewed annually, unless otherwise needed.

Performance reviews will not necessarily indicate an adjustment in wages, however failure to attain satisfactory reviews may result in a delay of step increases until unsatisfactory issues are resolved.

## **SEPARATION OF SERVICE**

### **Termination by Resignation**

Notice of at least two weeks is required of all resigning employees to allow the NMTC time to assign a replacement for the position. Written notice shall be submitted to your supervisor.

Use of vacation leave during the resignation notice period (14 days) will not be permitted unless the interests of the employer are better served by the employee taking some vacation during the notice period which may then be allowed at the sole discretion of the employer. As this is a transition period for NMTC, the departing employee should ensure that things are in order as a courtesy to whomever assumes responsibility.

Resigning exempt employees are encouraged to submit written notice to the NMTC at least 30 days before leaving.

Failure to provide the specified notice will result in disqualification from receiving severance pay.

If an employee is terminated for reason of misconduct, the employee will not be considered terminated in good standing and will not be eligible for severance benefits.

### **Returning NMTC Property**

Employees leaving the NMTC employment are required to return all property and equipment in their possession prior to their last day of employment. This equipment includes but is not limited to building keys, vehicle keys, and all other equipment employees may have been issued or checked-out during the course of their employment.

Failure to comply with this policy will impact an employee's good standing determination for final severance pay.

**Benefits Continuation**

Employees leaving NMTC employment may continue their health and dental insurance benefits under COBRA for 18 months after their termination date at the current monthly premium rate.

**Severance Pay**

All employees who leave in good standing will be paid for their accumulated vacation time and compensatory time.

Severance pay equal to one-half of accumulated sick leave is paid to employees separating from NMTC, after five years of service, provided that the employee leaves in good standing.

**Updated**

**10/15/2025**

DRAFT

## **Employee Handbook Receipt Acknowledgment**

The employee handbook describes important information about the North Metro Telecommunications Commission (NMTC), and I understand that I should consult the executive director regarding any questions not answered in the handbook.

This manual and the policies and procedures contained herein supersede any and all prior practices, oral or written representations, or statements regarding the terms and conditions of your employment with NMTC. By distributing this handbook, NMTC expressly revokes any and all previous policies and procedures which are inconsistent with those contained herein.

I understand that any and all policies and practices may be changed at any time by NMTC.

I understand and agree that nothing in the employee handbook creates, or is intended to create, a promise or representation of continued employment and that employment at NMTC is employment at-will, which may be terminated at the will of either NMTC or myself. Furthermore, I acknowledge that this handbook is neither a contract of employment nor a legal document.

I have received the handbook, and I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policies contained in this handbook and any revisions made to it.

Employee's signature

Employee's name (print)

Date

**KEEP FOR YOUR RECORDS**

### **Employee Handbook Receipt Acknowledgment**

The employee handbook describes important information about the North Metro Telecommunications Commission (NMTC), and I understand that I should consult the executive director regarding any questions not answered in the handbook.

This manual and the policies and procedures contained herein supersede any and all prior practices, oral or written representations, or statements regarding the terms and conditions of your employment with NMTC. By distributing this handbook, NMTC expressly revokes any and all previous policies and procedures which are inconsistent with those contained herein.

I understand that any and all policies and practices may be changed at any time by NMTC.

I understand and agree that nothing in the employee handbook creates, or is intended to create, a promise or representation of continued employment and that employment at NMTC is employment at-will, which may be terminated at the will of either NMTC or myself. Furthermore, I acknowledge that this handbook is neither a contract of employment nor a legal document.

I have received the handbook, and I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policies contained in this handbook and any revisions made to it.

Employee's signature

Employee's name (print)

Date

**RETURN TO SUPERVISOR - TO BE PLACED IN EMPLOYEE'S PERSONNEL FILE**



**NORTH METRO TV MEMO**

**TO:** CABLE COMMISSION

**FROM:** ERIC HOUSTON AND DANIKA PETERSON

**SUBJECT:** INSURANCE LIABILITY WAIVER

**DATE:** 11/25/2025

Every year, as an administrative matter, the Commission has to decide whether or not to waive the statutory tort limits for insurance purposes. This decision determines the amount an individual would be able to recover on any claim to which the statutory tort limits apply. In the past, the Commission has opted to NOT WAIVE the monetary limits on municipal liability.

We are handling this matter in December as the Commission is not scheduled to meet again until after the deadline.

**RECOMMENDED MOTION:** To recommend the Commission NOT WAIVE the monetary limits on municipal tort liability.

## Amazing stat: Only half the homes in America have cable TV anymore

By Peter Kafka

Transcribed from an article published at [businessinsider.com](https://www.businessinsider.com)

Nov 12, 2025, 1:03 PM CT

You know that the cable TV industry is in steep decline.

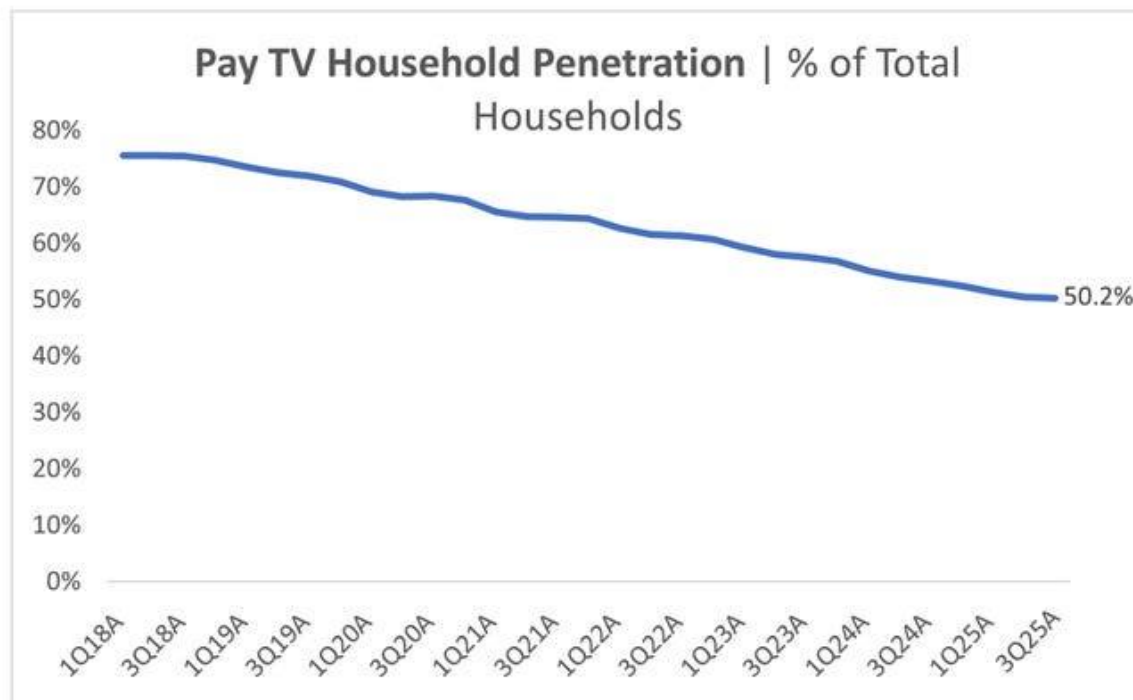
You know it because of all the evidence around you. And you know it because we tell you about it over and over.

Still, sometimes you see a stat that helps put it all into even sharper perspective. Like this:

Fifteen years ago, nearly 9 in 10 US households had a pay TV subscription. By the end of 2025, that number will be down to five out of 10.

That estimate comes from Madison and Wall, the technology/media advisory firm. CEO Brian Wieser also helpfully shows what those stats – which include traditional pay TV providers like Comcast, and digital ones like YouTubeTV – look like in chart form:

Madison and Wall



(That 50.2% number is for Q3 of this year; Wieser thinks that should get down to 50% or lower by the end of December.)

Again, this is not news for people who invest in or operate media companies. It explains, for instance, why everyone from Comcast to Warner Bros. Discovery to A&E is trying to sell, spin off, or otherwise ditch most of their cable TV assets. (Larry and David Ellison's Paramount, meanwhile, insists that it won't spin off its cable channels, even while it acknowledges that "each quarter is accelerating decline.")

It also has implications for advertisers, who stuck with TV for a long time, even when it became clear it was in decline, because that was tried-and-true way of reaching a lot of people. No longer.

"Linear TV can still deliver high levels of reach and retains an outsized share of inventory, but higher levels of audience reach can be found elsewhere," the Madison and Wall report published Tuesday notes. "As consumers migrate to streaming, endemic digital video, and even social video, those environments increasingly deliver similar awareness outcomes."

As many TV executives, employees, and investors note, pay TV isn't shutting down tomorrow – the business still makes money, even as it shrinks. Which reminds me a bit of my AOL's dial-up internet business, which stuck around for many years after just about everyone had moved on to broadband.