Board approves archiving of board meeting video

Features

By: Nick Mordowanec | Fraser - Clinton Township Chronicle | Published December 28, 2016

CLINTON TOWNSHIP — One Clinton Township trustee is elated that one of his desired changes to local government came to fruition.

Mike Keys, who was elected as trustee in November, ran on a platform of transparency. That included giving residents and other interested parties the ability to watch township board meetings at their own

volition. On Dec. 12, the Board of Trustees unanimously approved the archiving of past and future videotaped meetings. Up to that point, the

policy involved rebroadcasting meeting footage at 2 p.m. the following Saturday and at 8 p.m. the following Tuesday.

Jim Perpich, the director of the township's cable TV department, said

the tape-based footage was considered an expense and tape was reused.

There was no prior township policy to archive that footage, he said, and nearby communities such as Shelby Township, Macomb Township and Sterling Heights aren't doing things much differently.

"With new technology and very little effort, we were able to keep digital files," Perpich said. "We had these files and said, 'How do we make them available?"

He said that in 2014, former cable department employees Joe Peruzzi and Linda Badamo purchased DVD recorders. That allowed for the ability to create backup files via the burning of DVDs. It essentially replaced old VHS formats.

said. CTTV, the township's local cable channel, will continue to broadcast

"In reality, we have recorded meetings from not all of 2014, but part of 2014, all of 2015, and in 2016, we started the digital service," Perpich

meetings live and will rebroadcast via Ch. 5 on Comcast/Xfinity, Ch. 10 on Wide Open West and Ch. 99 on AT&T U-Verse.

The channel will also continue to live stream meetings through the township website www.clintontownship.com/cable-tv. This will be accomplished using a new service cable Cablecast Live Reflect.

Perpich said the new service is part of 2016 capital outlays and is offered by Tightrope Media Systems. It is an app that provides video on-demand and live streaming services, with streaming done in association with a third-party company.

The township's old server was made by Tightrope, too, so there is familiarity. The township will pay an annual fee of \$1,960 for the web-based subscription services made available by Tightrope.

The board's decision to make digital video available impacts many areas: CCTV will be able to store digital video files for upload in a cloud-based service for on-demand availability through Cablecast; meetings from 2016, and those that occur in 2017, will be available for a 24-month period via the Live Reflect service; and afterward, such videos will be part of a continuing archive on YouTube.

Currently, videos from 2014 and 2015 are available on YouTube through playlists or by searching terms related to Clinton Township board meetings.

Perpich said the township began recording in high-definition about one year ago. While the local cable channel footage is recorded in high-definition, it's still broadcast in standard definition. High-definition videos admittedly look better on YouTube.

Some may think it's antiquated, he said, when it's actually not.

"(Recording in high-definition is) kind of the standard now," he said. "Our videos look real nice. ... It becomes kind of a valued warehouse for a viewing of a hi-def version of our shows. I think there's a stigma of broadcasting cable television because they're not in hi-def."

Keys said he's "extremely satisfied that we're moving further toward a transparent government here," referring to residents who haven't been able to catch meetings in the past.

He said he's happy with the YouTube aspect of archiving, due to limited server space for video on-demand files and the cost to sustain that method. YouTube uses the same accessibility without charging taxpayers more money, he said.

"I think it's just a first step of getting exactly what the public wanted communicated with the township and different departments," Keys said.

In future meetings, he would like the board to draft an actual policy so it sticks with future boards, as well as to evolve the YouTube page so videos include meeting dates and agendas.

"These things are free and things we can take advantage of," he said.

Residents can visit www.clintontownship.com/board-agendas-minutes--videos to find board meeting videos, agendas and minutes.



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