



**Iowa Telecommunications & Technology Commission
Grimes State Office Building, 1st Floor
400 East 14th Street, Des Moines, IA 50319
Meeting Minutes March 20, 2025**

FINAL

The Iowa Telecommunications and Technology Commission's meeting occurred on Thursday, March 20, at 11:00 a.m. in the Grimes State Office Building, ICN Thompson Conference Room, 400 E. 14th Street, Des Moines, IA. To ensure the most efficient use of State resources, the ITTC meeting also included a video conference connection pursuant to Iowa Code section 21.8. A video conference ensured that more Commissioners, staff, and the public were able to participate in the meeting. The meeting was accessible to members of the public.

Roll Call

Commissioners Present

Steve Olson, Chair
Bob Holz, Member
Brett Mason, Member
Carmine Boal, Member
Denise Sturm, Member
Drew Stensland, Representing the State of Iowa Auditor, Ex-Officio Member

Commissioners Absent

Matt Behrens, Representing the Chief Information Officer, Ex-Officio Member

Iowa Communications Network Staff

Ryan Mulhall, Executive Director
Patricia Townsend, Chief Financial Officer
Mike Cruise, Director of Finance
Patrick Kazeze, Director of Operations
Connor Kuehl, Director of Facilities
Brian Clayton, Executive Officer 2
Lori Larsen, Executive Officer 2 (Recorder)

Guest Attendees

Senator Doug Campbell
David Merchan, Iowa AAG
Daniel Stalder, Iowa Communications Alliance
Kyle Holmgren, High Point Networks
Nick Jensen, Cohesity
Michael Eischeid, Granite
Ray Warner, Aureon
Bill George, DOM DoIT

Call to Order:

Chair Olson called the meeting to order at 11:00 AM. It was noted that a quorum was present.

Approval of the February 20, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Chair Olson requested a motion to approve the February 20, 2025, meeting minutes. Commissioner Holz moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Mason seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

None.

New Business

Agency Updates

Contracting Update – Mike Cruise

- Request for Proposal (RFP) for Tech Labor – The RFP for tech labor services will be released. This is for prequalification for tech labor vendors to be able to be used.
- Iowa Department of Education data circuits – The contract was executed on March 14.
- Hoover UPS Move – DOM DoIT has a large UPS that they no longer need. ICN offered to take it, and we are working on how to get it moved to JFHQ.

COMMENTS

None

Finance Update – Mike Cruise

Monthly Revenues and Expenses:

The month of February resulted in an operating margin of negative \$265,311 which is negative 10.9% of revenue. This is \$145,000 unfavorable to the budget which was negative \$120,356. The main factor this month is a large purchase order for the server upgrade project.

MRC revenues were unfavorable for the month only by \$2,851. That is an increase from last month. Direct expenses were unfavorable to budget by \$23,000 and nothing specific to report.

Total allocated indirect expenses are a combined \$85,000 unfavorable to budget.

Year-to-Date (YTD) Revenues and Expenses:

Through February, we now have an operating margin of negative \$2.1M which is \$433,000 unfavorable to the budget which is negative \$1.68M. MRC revenue is now \$90,000 favorable to the budget. OSP cost recovery is \$248,000 favorable. Direct expenses are \$259,000 unfavorable to budget through February. Total allocated expenses are \$36,000 favorable to budget.

Other:

- OpenGov/Billing System – We continue to move forward on those two projects.
- We have an accepted offer for the Accounting Technician 2 (AT2) position in Payables. Mary (Kate) Murphy will start on April 4.

- Reviewing how to fill the now vacant AT2 position in Billing. We are looking at the construction and duties of all Finance positions.

COMMENTS

Commissioner Mason asked if the allocated equipment will return back to us in future months?

Mike Cruise said we allocate it out by the percentages of revenue by the different cost centers.

Business Services Update – Patrick Kazeze

Service Updates:

No new customers, and no new waivers.

Sales for the Month of February 2025.

- Great River Health - Internet upgrades at all clinic and hospital locations.
- Maharishi University and Iowa Office of Ombudsman requested additional Zoom licenses and services.
- Iowa Homeland Security Emergency Management (HSEMD) - Adel added FirstNet and shared services.

Project Management Updates for February 2025

- City of Des Moines Colocation/ADVA order - Splicing and fiber runs continue to proceed. It is an ongoing project.
- Iowa Department of Inspections, Appeals, and Licensing (DIAL) - Emergency order to move 70 people from the Wallace State Office Building and Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) to DIAL's location in 1.5 weeks. Normal installation time is 30 plus days when porting numbers.
- HSEMD Clinton County Sheriff's Office turn-up is completed.
- Our DAS solution for elevators, fire panels and phones are in the works. Installation went well at the Wallace State Office Building as a proof of concept. An additional emergency installation happened at the State Historical Building due to a vendor equipment failure. We had been fielding a test solution, and testing went over very well. We were able to work with Granite on short notice, and able to implement a cellular solution with the Department of Administrative Services (DAS). Our goal is to partner with DAS in any areas where we have a 1FB backup solutions.

Marketing and Communications.

- We released the Iowa Department of Revenue's Case Study explaining the upgrade of their Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) solution to the Genesys NexGen cloud platform.
- We released an article explaining our aggregation upgrades within the Southern Tier.
- Patrick Kazeze represented ICN at a student "Save the Data" cybersecurity tabletop exercise at Drake University on March 7.

COMMENTS

Commissioner Mason asked what is the exposure still with other elevators?

Patrick Kazeze said we are building a statement of work. This technology is now a legacy. When you are dealing with network outages, 1FBs tend to fall on the lower end of network outages.

There was additional discussion about the elevator service.

Network Services Updates

Network Operations & Security Update – Patrick Kazeze

DDoS Mitigation Service: The Invitation to Bid (ITB) for the DDoS Mitigation platform upgrades closed with just two vendors submitting bids. As required by State rules, we went with the lower bidder and this past week, the agreement paperwork was completed. We will now move forward with purchasing the first phase of hardware. We've built out a split purchase schedule which will allow us to purchase as we implement it, thereby minimizing the need to warehouse a large amount of hardware with the potential of warranty clocks that would begin running while the equipment sits on a shelf awaiting installation.

Core upgrades: Members from the Operations team have been coming in after hours to implement the Core upgrades to lessen the impact on our customers by conducting the work off peak hours. A few months ago, I mentioned that we had run into a problem with a site because of a hardware mismatch. Our team developed a course of action to resolve the issue.

Aggregation Upgrade: We have received a support agreement for the aggregation hardware. The new equipment arrived loaded with an older firmware version. When we updated to the current revision, the upgrade caused more issues which forced us to roll back to a more stable revision. We've submitted a support request and will be working directly with the vendor to work through the bugs.

COMMENTS

None

Facilities and Inside Plant (TAC) Updates – Connor Kuehl

Facilities

- We have made significant progress on several power projects. We are working with DAS to see if we can use current equipment for existing power and infrastructure.
- We initiated efforts at the Argonne Armory, which is a datacenter and fiber distribution point. There will be a lot of coordination and partners that we meet there.
- Operationally, the Facility's team updated our power standards. We will be starting to work with HSEMD and other partners that are critical sites.

Inside Plant (TAC)

Inside Plant team has completed several projects including:

- Supporting 117 work stations and 9 wireless access points for Administrative Law Judges.
- Fiber builds for the Iowa Department of Education.
- Completed extension of LEC circuits for the Iowa Department of Corrections.



- Proof of concept with Granite to support the elevator phones and fire panels on the Capitol Complex. The ICN team was diligent, making sure that the services were fully working.
- Copper infrastructure work for 158 workstations for IDAL.
- Working with DAS to see what other scope of work we can help with.
- Copper work for DAS electricians moving out of the Wallace State Office Building.
- Iowa Workforce Development needs 43 work stations, which will be supported by 85 cables.

FirstNet: We added the Clinton County sheriff to the list of FirstNet installs.

Outside Plant (OSP)

In February, there were 18 new OSP projects opened. Five were billable with one cable damaged.

The team continues to use our escalation process for outstanding invoices. We currently show a little over \$183,000 in outstanding OSP invoices 90 days and older, which accounts for \$113,000. We gained \$142,000 in expense recovery for FY25.

COMMENTS

None

Legislative Update – Executive Director Ryan Mulhall

We are now past the first funnel where Senate bills had to be voted out of Senate Committees and House bills had to be voted out of House Committees. Most of the time has been spent debating bills in their respective chambers the last two weeks. There are 19 pieces of legislation the ICN is tracking that may directly or indirectly affect the ICN and the ITTC.

We previously talked about an NG911 bill, House Study Bill 104 which was ultimately tabled, in which the ICN would build and operate an IP network to modernize the state's 911 network. There are still discussions going on regarding the topic, and we'll continue to support interested parties however we can.

Another piece of legislation we are tracking is Senate File 477/House File 879 relating to critical infrastructure sabotage and making penalties. This would create significant penalties of up to \$85,000 fines for damaging communications infrastructure. We have seen an uptick in recent years in our fiber being damaged, presumably by individuals thinking it is copper. It is currently on the debate calendar in both chambers.

Commissioner Mason's reappointment has officially been submitted to the Senate, along with my appointment as Executive Director. Congratulations to Commissioner Mason. Both of the appointments will be going through the Senate Technology Committee during the confirmation process.

FCC: The US Supreme Court will hear arguments on March 26th on the lower court's ruling that the Universal Service Fund is unconstitutional. This directly relates to the E-Rate and Rural Healthcare Programs our customers use to pay for services. It also relates to the telecom industry in Iowa, where companies received \$193 million last year from the High Cost Service Area program and it has been as high as \$220 million within the last 5 years. We will continue to monitor and update the Commission on this.

COMMENTS

None

Other Business:

ITTC Committee Updates – Staff/Commission

Personnel Committee – Executive Director Ryan Mulhall

There was no personnel committee meeting for March.

Finance Committee – Mike Cruise

Meeting Date: March 19, 2025.

Attendance: Commissioner Holz, Commissioner Sturm, Executive Director Mulhall, Patricia Townsend, Brian Clayton, and Mike Cruise.

Topics Covered:

- Brian Clayton provided the update on contracting.
- Changed the format to tie the regular financials to the budget-to-actual report.
- The FY25 budget-to-actual as presented today.
- Talked about the FY26 and 5-year budgeting process.
- Upcoming 5-year budget process.

Customer and Services Committee – Patrick Kazeze

Meeting Date: March 11, 2025.

Attendance: Commissioner Mason, Commissioner Boal, Stephanie DeVault, Patrick Kazeze, Scott Pappan, and Lori Larsen.

Topics Covered:

- Discussed the financial support agreement with the aggregation equipment vendor.
- SIP development and how we are building a plan.
- Discussed the Granite application.
- Anamosa MVS installed an upgraded Voice platform.

Technology/Operations Committee – Patrick Kazeze

Meeting Date: March 11, 2025

Attendance: Commissioner Mason, Commissioner Boal, Scott Pappan, Patrick Kazeze, Stephanie DeVault and Lori Larsen.

- Challenges we are facing with modernizing the Network, and the costs associated with it.

Public Comment

A brief update was provided about the upcoming student outreach events:

- Students from our Statewide Youth Broadband Advisory Council (SYBAC) will be visiting the Capitol Complex on April 8.
- Student trainees from the Ottumwa Job Corps' Network Cabling Installation Program will be visiting on April 22.



Adjournment

The ITTC meeting adjourned at 11:31 AM.

ATTESTED TO:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Olson".

Steve Olson – Chair, Iowa Telecommunications and Technology Commission