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Boone County leaving cable board

By Paul McKibben
pmckibben@nky.com

Boone County plans to be operating its own cable television franchise starting in the summer of 2011.

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The Boone County Fiscal Court on March 2 unanimously approved an ordinance that tells the Telecommunications Board of Northern Kentucky that it plans to leave the organization effective June 30, 2011.

"And during the ensuing 15 months, we would begin to flesh out in greater detail, bringing pieces back to the court, our game plan to administer our own cable TV franchise agreement," Boone County Administrator Jeff Earlywine said.

TBNK's members are unincorporated Kenton County, unincorporated Boone County and 15 Kenton County cities. TBNK manages franchise agreements with Insight Communications Co. and Cincinnati Bell Inc. TBNK also provides local programming, something the county will have to do on its own when it is no longer a TBNK member.

Judge-Executive Gary Moore noted that all three of the county's cities (Florence, Union and Walton) are not part of TBNK. He said the county has talked about looking for ways to collaborate with them as well to create a countywide system that could serve the community.

Earlywine again expressed confidence that the county can manage its franchise cheaper than what it pays yearly to TBNK. He said the county won't hire more administrative staff. He said the county will need some help whether its part-time technicians or partnering with a community group or college that might have an interest in working with the county.

Commissioner Charlie Kenner said what he likes best about the county having its own franchise are partnerships it can take up with both public school systems (Boone County Schools and Walton-Verona Independent Schools) and different programming the county can do.

In November 2008, the Boone County Fiscal Court first unanimously approved leaving TBNK. The county had wanted to manage its own cable television franchise starting this summer.

But the county and TBNK disputed how the county could depart. The matter went to court with county filing suit against TBNK in July 2009. This past December, Boone Circuit Judge J.R. Schrand ruled against the county, pushing the withdrawal date back another year.
