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Contact: Megan Pillow Davis
Public Information Officer
704-940-9602 (office)
704-930-8683 (cell)
mdavis@ci.davidson.nc.us
www.ci.davidson.nc.us

Towns may add communications exec to MI-Connection Board Kasberger, Howard stepping down

DAVIDSON, N.C. – The towns of Mooresville and Davidson may be adding a Huntersville communications executive to the MI-Connection Board of Directors as well as bidding farewell to two current members.

At their meeting Monday night, Mooresville commissioners approved a slate of five members, four current and one new, to serve as the five at-large members on the MI-Connection Board of Directors. That slate is scheduled to be considered by the Davidson Board of Commissioners on Tuesday, April 12 at their board meeting.

The transition of members off of and onto the board comes at an opportune time: The towns recently approved a revised interlocal agreement which changed the number of board members from six to nine and implemented new term limits.

The current members who are returning to the board are Treasurer John Venzon, Secretary Ken Essex, member Dawn Huston and Cornelius representative Steve Miller. Depending on the Davidson board's approval, also joining the board for a first term will be D. Brett Ellis of Huntersville.

Ellis, Vice-President of Business Planning and Financial Reporting for Charlotte-based FairPoint Communications, Inc., has eight years of experience in the communications industry and holds a masters degree in accounting. He said Monday that he's excited for the opportunity to serve on the board.

"I look forward to the opportunity to work with the management team and the Board of MI-Connection," he said. "The success of the local community and MI-Connection are uniquely tied together. Accordingly, the management team and the Board of MI-Connection will work together to ensure that we are providing services that the community needs and deserves."

John Kasberger, the board's current chairman, also announced Monday that he will be resigning from the board, effective May 1. "The demands on my time from my own business are increasing," he said. "I am not able to devote the necessary time to being Chairman of MI-Connection."

Kasberger said he feels he's leaving the system in a good position to continue its move toward profitability. "I believe that the board of MI-Connection has reached some significant milestones over the past 12 months," he said. "We have improved transparency. Also, we have begun the transition to an internally managed operation with local accountability. The MOU executed with BVU will facilitate this transition.

"Improvements that were implemented for the MIC system will enable the two towns to attract additional growth," he said. "I trust that the new MIC organization will reach its goals going forward."

Rick Howard also said that, although he has thoroughly enjoyed his tenure on the board, it felt like the right time to step down due to his current work schedule. "I've looked at my time on the board as a very positive experience, but felt that with all the positive changes we have made, the new board structure, the planned change of management from BVU to the local MI management team, it would be in the best interest of the new board going forward," he said.

Howard, said, however, that he will still be available if and when the board needs him. "I intend on still being involved and doing anything I can to help in the success of MI-Connection," he said. "We all need to remember this is our company; it's up to us to help with the success. I think we're on the right track for the future."

John Venzon, who served with both Howard and Kasberger, said both men have brought incredible insight to the board and have helped to move the system forward. "I am thankful that both John and Rick served the community with their time on the board," he said. "They provided great leadership and insights that helped drive our earnings while offering creative sales and marketing guidance. Both were instrumental in negotiating a restructured operating agreement with BVU. We will miss their wisdom and service."

The revised interlocal agreement allows the new members to serve staggered terms. If approved, Venzon, Ellis and Huston will all serve two-year terms; Essex and Miller will serve one-year terms. In future years, all board members will serve two-year terms. All five members will serve in an at-large capacity. If all nominees are approved by both boards, they will likely be seated at a special meeting called this month.

For more information on the Town of Davidson, visit www.ci.davidson.nc.us or contact Megan Pillow Davis at 704 940-9602 or at mdavis@ci.davidson.nc.us. For more information on the Town of Mooresville, visit www.ci.mooresville.nc.us. For more information on MI-Connection, visit www.mi-connection.com.