



Item #31

**Telecommunications & Regulatory Affairs
CITY OF AUSTIN
RECOMMENDATION FOR COUNCIL ACTION**

**AGENDA DATE: 4/6/2006
ITEM NO:**

Subject: Authorize execution of a five-month agreement with Grande Communications for playback services for the public access channels in an amount not to exceed \$70,550.40 with two, one-month extension options in an amount not to exceed \$14,110.08 per extension option, for a total agreement amount not to exceed \$98,770.56.

Amount and Source of Funding: Quarterly cable franchise fee revenue that is received from Grande Communications will be reduced by \$14,110.08 for each month during the quarter that playback services were provided.

Fiscal Note: Fiscal note attached.

Requesting Department: TARA

For More Information: Rondella Hawkins, (512) 974-2422

Prior Council Action:

Boards and Commission Action:

Purchasing Language:

MBE/WBE: (Related to item # 32)

In 2000, City Council granted a franchise to Grande Communications to provide cable television services in the City of Austin. One of Grande's franchise obligations was to provide playback services for the three (3) public access television channels 10, 11, and 16.

Playback services include the responsibility to provide 24 hour per day, 7 day per week audio/video feeds to each of the three public access channels and route the appropriate signals to both local cable television providers (Grande Communications and Time Warner). This requires the staffing, administration and control of manual and automated systems capable of streaming audio/video programming that has been prerecorded by producers on a variety of recording media devices. Each of these audio/video programs must be aired to meet precise program schedules.

With the recent passage of Texas SB5, Grande Communications terminated its Austin franchise and obtained a statewide cable franchise. The statewide franchise obtained by Grande no longer requires them to provide this service without compensation

No later than August 1, 2006, the City's public access tv contractor, Public Access Community Television (PACT), will assume responsibilities to provide playback services for each of the three public access channels. PACT cannot begin providing playback services until their facility is upgraded to include additional playback equipment. The City of Austin is negotiating a separate agreement with Time Warner Cable on the procurement of the playback equipment which is requested on a related Council agenda item.