



EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Information Technology Division
Memorandum

To: Mayor Diane Marlin, City Council
CC: Carol Mitten, Bourema Ouedraogo
From: Sanford Hess
Regarding: UPTV Internet Stream issues on February 13
Date: February 20, 2023

During the Township Board Meeting on February 13, UPTV staff noticed that the Internet Stream on Vimeo was not broadcasting. From approximately 6:10 until 6:45 PM, staff in the studio attempted to get the broadcast to start while I worked from home to do the same through the website. Given that we were unable to start the stream, I made the decision at 6:45 to stop trying – because any additional actions (e.g. restarting the device) could have disrupted the TV signal, which was working.

On Tuesday morning, we began looking into the issue by starting a help desk ticket with Vimeo, our streaming service. Vimeo support reported back to us Wednesday evening that they were seeing latency (delays) in the signal. Thursday morning, we initiated calls with Volo about the signal strength – but the answer we received from Volo support was that the strength was good... at the time they checked. Urbana staff also checked the antenna that receives the Volo signal on Thursday, and found no issues. We provided detailed times when we saw errors to Volo support technicians, who are investigating their logs – but we have no results yet.

During the week we applied a recommended change from Vimeo to reduce the bitrate and we performed test broadcasts, which seemed to work. On Friday, we allowed the regular schedule to start – and it worked. We will continue to monitor the scheduled broadcasts.

So there is no clear answer as to why there were issues, except that the Internet connection experienced latency.

Moving forward, we are considering two longer-term resolutions to improve the situation.

- We are dissatisfied with Vimeo as a streaming provider because their support responses are not quick, nor have they answered all of the questions that we asked. We plan to investigate other streaming options and find a different partner. Making a change will take UPTV staff time and money.
- Our Internet service from Volo is delivered by antenna. Although this has worked reasonably well over the past few years (and been cost-effective), we initiated a conversation about upgrading that connection to be fiber. One of the weakness of the antenna is that it can be impacted by weather conditions, such as high winds. Replacing the antenna with fiber will take money and staff effort, and will require scheduling work with a service provider.

Given workloads and staffing levels in Urbana IT (including UPTV), any of these improvements will take weeks or months before they are noticeable to the public. I will provide further updates once there is concrete progress to report.