

FIVE TOWN CABLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Representing the Towns of Great Barrington, Lee, Lenox, Sheffield and Stockbridge
Minutes
June 13, 2017
6:30pm
Lee Town Hall
32 Main Street
Lee, MA

Members Present: Linda Miller –Lenox
Steven Moritz – Lee
Tom Hatch – Great Barrington
Rene Wood – Sheffield
David Parker – Lee
William Lehmann - Stockbridge

Others Present : Anna Lucey – Spectrum
John Fogarty – Spectrum
Leo Mahoney – CTSB
Jim Biancola – Lenox resident
Carole Owens – Stockbridge resident
Cory Willey – Berkshire Record
Denise Curtin – Recording Secretary

6:31pm Linda Miller called the meeting to order.
Quorum present. All 5 towns represented.

MINUTES: Linda Miller moved to dispense with the reading of the minutes of March 21, 2017 meeting.
Seconded by Rene Wood and Steve Moritz. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion made to accept the March minutes. William Lehman seconded.
Motion carried unanimously.

CTSB REPORT:

Leo Mahoney was present to give report.

- CTSB Annual meeting was held 2 weeks ago and the audit was presented on time. No red flags in the audit.
- Stats for last 3 months are:
 - Studio/Training/Editing/Class time – 150 hours
 - Covered 21 meetings, 8 live and 65 hours had been recorded.
- Annual Town Meetings coverage:
 - Lee meeting did not air live. The day of the meeting Leo Mahoney decided not to air the meeting live due to very poor signal. Lee Town Manager notified CTSB of his displeasure that the meeting was not aired live.
 - Lenox meeting was aired live but interrupted due to signal.
 - Great Barrington and Stockbridge did not air live as per their request.
 - Sheffield is unable to air live at their location.
- A meeting has been scheduled for June 22 at 9:30am at both schools with CTSB and Spectrum.

- The committee would like an email sent by June 24th with the findings.
- Rene Wood requested that Spectrum and CTSB come with a solution to the next meeting.

CTSB is a volunteer organization and is always looking for members and volunteers.

SPECTRUM REPORT:

Anna Lucey and John Fogarty present to give report.

- System outage on May 17, 2017 was caused by a power outage that damaged an amplifier.

Peg Fee pass through

- Pass through for PEG capital equipment was \$212k. There is \$153k remaining to be recouped.
- Committee requested that numbers for the quarter, up to date, be presented at each quarterly meeting.

Subscriber Questionnaire

- The questionnaire is included in the June customer bills.
- The committee reached out to subscribers through the taping of the meeting and asked them to please complete this questionnaire. We want to know what you think of your cable service.
- Please complete it and mail it back. It can be sent anonymously if you choose.

Mailing address is:

Spectrum

301 Barber Avenue

Worcester, MA 01616

- If you receive paperless bills you can download the survey.
- The committee thanked Spectrum for taking our input in creating the survey.

Intermittent Freezing/Tiling:

- It was noted that since the outage the freezing and tiling seems to have significantly improved.

E911 Fee

- The 911 fees are used to fund the 911 services paid to the state.
- The rates are set by the state and are out of our control.
- If you have any questions related to this fee increase please contact Linda Miller.

411 Usage

- Steve Moritz called and questioned the fee of \$13.00 per month for 411 usage on his bill.
- He was told that new Spectrum customers don't pay this 411 charge. Time Warner customers are grandfathered in and have to pay.
- There is a waiver that Spectrum can provide for subscribers with disabilities and vision impairment.
- If you wish to request this waiver please send an email to mdw.pac@twcable.com. Be sure to give your name, address, account number in the body of your message.
- Linda Miller stated it was not on her bill.
- It was explained that you are only billed if you use this service.

Legacy Time Warner vs. Spectrum service

- There is a lot of confusion around this, especially amongst seniors.
- If customers call in to change to Spectrum from Legacy Time Warner they need to be told what the price difference will be so they can make truly informed decisions on rate difference.
- Some Legacy Time Warner subscribers can pay different rates based on promotions or individual negotiated prices.
- Jim Biancolo, a subscriber from Lenox called to get a better rate.
- He currently has Time Warner direct connect and standard internet. He was told that you can keep your current package, however, if you switch to Spectrum you cannot go back to Time Warner.
- Jim provided Anna Lucey from Spectrum the information related to this call including the employee id#. Anna will look into to this to be sure he was give the correct information.
- Anna stated that there has not been a date set yet as to grandfathered customers needing to switch over.

Program Notices:

- WSHM not on app for tablets – why?
 - Tom Hatch called and couldn't get a straight answer. Anna will find out why it is not there now.
- WWLP
 - Committee has received a number of calls asking why this was removed and can we do anything to get it back.
 - If you want this channel back you have to call, write and email WWLP.
 - Anna has had some conversations with legislation regarding this issue.
- Guide changes
 - Linda Miller read an email that was sent by a customer, Carole Owens. She is a columnist for the Berkshire Eagle and was present at the meeting but couldn't stay.
 - Her concerns are about how the guide is displayed, commercials about new service are condescending and portray a corporate attitude.
 - John Fogarty asked that Linda forward that email to him and he will look into it.
 - Committee feels the guide is very different and much more complicated to use. It doesn't include as much information as before.
 - Complaints about the new commercials and the number of these commercials – it's overkill, way too many.
 - Poor insertion and some are in very poor taste.

Lineup changes

- An ad ran on May 26, 2017 for lineup changes taking place on June 14th. This is supposed to be 30 days in advance notice. John will check in to see if it ran prior to May 26th.

Signal Theft

- No signal theft has been detected and they do run periodic checks for this.

Digital Transition

- No concrete data at this time regarding switching to all digital in the fall/winter and finishing in early 2018.
- This is being done to provide a better viewing experience and faster broadband speeds.
- The committee would like clarification on digital sets and encryption and what are the financial costs going to be to subscribers.

Spectrum Internet Assist

- Eligibility time has been reduced from 60 days to 30 days.

Other:

- Spectrum News Channel says it's our local news – so far only 1 story related to Berkshire County.
- Temperature and weather is from Pittsfield.
- No local sports news.

Questions asked at past meetings –

- C-Span move to dash channel – no plans to move it.

OLD BUSINESS –

- None

NEW BUSINESS –

- None

Next meeting of the Five Town Cable Advisory Committee will be held Tuesday, September 12, 2017 at Stockbridge Town Hall at 6:30pm.

Motion made by Linda Miller to adjourn. Motion seconded by Tom Hatch. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned 8:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Denise Curtin
Recording Secretary