

FIVE TOWN CABLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Representing the Towns of Great Barrington, Lee, Lenox, Sheffield and Stockbridge
Minutes
March 9, 2021
6:30pm
MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM

Members Present: Linda Miller –Lenox
Dennis Arseneau - Lenox
Tom Hatch – Great Barrington
Jim Brown – Great Barrington
Michael Kernan – Great Barrington
Rene Wood – Sheffield

Others Present: John Maher - Charter
Rich Frederick – CTSB
Eileen Mooney – The Newsletter
Denise Curtin – Recording Secretary

6:32pm Linda Miller called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL: Linda Miller, Jim Brown, Dennis Arseneau, Tom Hatch, Rene Wood, John Maher, Rich Frederick, Denise Curtin

MINUTES: Motion made by Rene Wood to dispense with the reading of the minutes of December 15, 2020.
Seconded by Tom Hatch.
Roll call vote was taken on the motion with Tom Hatch, Dennis Arseneau, Jim Brown, Rene Wood and Linda Miller all in favor and minutes were accepted as written.

AMENDMENT: Motion was made to amend these minutes as such:
Michael Kernan arrived 10 minutes late and wasn't there for roll call.
Motion carried unanimously and minutes are hereby amended as such.

New Committee Member

- Dennis Arseneau from Lenox was introduced.

CTSB REPORT:

- Rich Frederick presented the CTSB report.
- At the January Board meeting, Rich stated that all the 2020 goals were accomplished, within their budget, and all during Covid.
- Goals included:
 - Recording of hundreds of virtual meetings that allowed the communities to watch from the safety of their home.
 - Upgrading the studio with a large floor to ceiling green screen.
 - In talks with WBCR radio in Great Barrington to create a partnership to allow sharing of content and the addition of a live community morning radio show to be broadcast on CTSB.

- Working on our 2021 goals to include:
 - Jim Brown asked if it would be possible to do a “bullet” list of your 2021 goals?
 - Rich Frederick said yes.
 - Coverage of live high school basketball games.
 - New YouTube channel to complement our new website and other social media platforms.
 - Difficult goal for us this year will be our new ad campaigns and being able to make the community aware of where our broadcast channels are.
 - Graphics have been created for “Where to Watch” and “How to Join”, but physical and digital spaces are extremely expensive and may not work within our budget.
 - It continues to be a no-win solution in being able to let our subscribers know where to find us.
 - A suggestion was made by Rene Wood to look into doing an insertion in our transfer station renewals or some other handout to find the channels?
 - Mailers were discussed at the last CTSB board meeting.
 - On Spectrum website the channels are listed as:
 - 1301 – Peg
 - 1302 – Higher Ed Access
 - 1303 – Gov
 - These do not let people know that this is CTSB.
 - Could we have these channels renamed as:
 - 1301 – Community TV
 - 1302 – Community Education
 - 1302 – Community Government
- John Maher will look into this.
- Jim Brown asked if we could get an answer before the next meeting.
- Rene Wood thanked Rich Frederick for hosting these Zoom meetings. Very much appreciated.

SPECTRUM REPORT:

- John Maher presented the Spectrum report.

Billing

- Please have customers call our customer service number with any issues they may have.
- Michael Kernan said that he missed a payment, and he received a reminder that was mailed on 2/8, he received it 2/16 with a payment date of 2/21. On 2/22 his service was cancelled.
- His new bill had a \$5.00 termination fee and a \$4.00 late payment fee.
- Rene Wood suggested filing a consumer complaint with the state.
- Michael Kernan said he has filed a conflict of interest form with the Town of Great Barrington town clerk.
- John Maher asked Michael Kernan to send him an email.

Robo Call Blocks

- Charter is working on this issue.
- Linda Miller noticed a Scam Alert on her cable id and showed a number.
- People can choose to not answer if they don't recognize the number.
- Best to ignore or if you choose to answer they have your number and can sell from there.

- Tom Hatch said that if you have your phone line through cable go to NOMOROBO website and you can sign up for no more robo calls.

Communication

- We need to start communicating better with each other.
- Need to resolve things in between meetings.

License Renewal

- Linda Miller will establish a working group from our side.
- Asked John Maher to create a working group on his side and let us know the names and titles of who would be on the Charter Committee.
- Linda Miller put a formal request forward that we have John Maher be the representative from Charter and also someone from corporate legal on the Charter committee.
- Rene Wood said that the working group is a “sub-committee” of this committee and she formally requested that we handle this according to the Open Meeting Law.
 - Public needs to be notified about the meetings and minutes need to be recorded.
- Rene Wood indicated that if this is not handled correctly, she will file an open meeting law complaint.
- Eileen Mooney from the Newsletter also stated that this is a sub-committee and needs to be adhered to under the open meeting laws.
- Linda Miller asked to start looking at meeting dates for the sub-committee to meet with John Maher.
 - This can be done on Zoom as long as Zoom meeting rules are followed.
 - If we can have live meetings that would be better.
- Dennis Arseneau presented a Power Point on Renewal process and research on other state contracts and where we compare.
 - Jim Brown thanked Dennis for a great presentation.
 - Rene Wood impressed with this work and feels this will be very helpful going forward in our negotiations.
 - Rene Wood asked, did you find any carefully worded paragraphs from other contracts that would help us?
 - We should survey our community and find out what their needs are as things have changed dramatically since last contract.
 - Dennis Arseneau will send out the presentation to the committee.
 - Each member needs to go back to your town to budget money for legal funds for contract renewal as they are preparing their budgets for fiscal 2022.
 - Budgets are currently in process, so we need to address this soon.
 - We asked each of the towns to hold \$1,000 for the budget for previous negotiations.
 - Bill gets shared amongst each town so total funds would be \$5,000.
 - Linda Miller asked if we should ask for more than \$1,000 and Rene Wood said she thought we would be good. If the towns feel they would like to put more money in that would be up to the town.
 - Linda Miller will discuss with town of Lee and Stockbridge as we do not have representation for those towns.

PSA Schedule

- Never received the information we requested multiple times.
- Will remove from the agenda going forward but would like to be made aware of your viewing schedule for any future service announcements.

Report to Town of Great Barrington

- Tom Hatch, Great Barrington representative, read the report he presented to the Town of Great Barrington.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Great Barrington zip code has been corrected on bills!
- Coldbrooke South in Lenox services issues have been addressed.
- Unserved areas in Sheffield will be handled case by case.

NEW BUSINESS –

- None.

OTHER BUSINESS –

- What if we work out with each of the towns to include CTSB on each of the town websites? They could see the meetings on your channels.
 - Rich thinks that would be considerable cost to the towns.
 - This would be just a promo for CTSB.
 - Keep it permanently on the bulletin board to let people know where CTSB is.
 - Linda Miller will poll the 5 towns.

Rate Increase

- Michael Kernan spoke about the internet increase, taxes and fees.
- Should be a listing of what these additional charges are for.
- Internet just went up \$5.00 (7%), 10 months later up again. Increased 14%.
- We should know what we are paying for.
- Jim Brown indicated that there are questions on Spectrum business practices.
- We need to go to the DTC in Boston and to the FCC with issues.
- Rene Wood said that our representative, Richie Neal is in a very powerful position now and has been a champion on these telecommunication issues. You should send your issues to his office to get started.

Election of Cable Advisory Committee Chairman

- Jim Brown nominated Linda Miller as Committee Chairman.
- Michael Kernan seconded.
- Roll Call – Tom Hatch, Dennis Arseneau, Jim Brown, Michael Kernan, Rene Wood – all in favor for Linda Miller to be voted as Committee Chairman.
- Rene Wood thanked Linda for accepting this position.

Great Barrington –

- Tom Hatch asked who would report to Great Barrington on the meeting tonight? There are 3 representatives from Great Barrington.
- Can we get together outside of this meeting to discuss open meeting law rules and make the decision on who will be the reporting town representative.
- Rene Wood indicated that each town can have 3 reps as long as you are not a majority of the committee, you are not a quorum, so you should be ok meeting together.

NEXT MEETING DATE – Tuesday, June 8, 2021 at 6:30pm in Lee, if we are able to meet in person.

Motion made by Michael Kernan to adjourn. Motion seconded by Rene Wood. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned 8:00pm by Linda Miller.

Respectfully submitted,
Denise Curtin
Recording Secretary