FIVE TOWN CABLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Representing the Towns of Great Barrington, Lee, Lenox, Sheffield and Stockbridge

Minutes

September 11, 2018

6:30pm

Stockbridge Town Office

50 Main Street

Stockbridge, MA 01262

Members Present: Linda Miller –Lenox

Doug Slier - Lenox

Steven Moritz – Lee

Tom Hatch – Great Barrington

Jim Brown – Great Barrington

William Lehman - Stockbridge

Others Present: Melinda Kinney - Charter

John Fogarty – Charter

George Doin - Charter

Leo Mahoney – CTSB

Denise Curtin – Recording Secretary

Dick Lindsay - Press

Jim Biancolo – resident

Dan Miller - resident

6:34pm Linda Miller called the meeting to order.

A moment of silence was had in remembrance of the 9/11 victims.

**MINUTES:** Linda Miller moved to dispense with the reading of the minutes of June 12, 2018. Motion was seconded by Tom Hatch and William Lehman.

Tom Hatch made a motion to accept the minutes as submitted. Motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

If anyone would like copies of the documents and emails sent to them electronically there is a sign up sheet at the table.

**NEW MEMBERS**: Linda introduced 2 new members to the committee:

Jim Brown from Great Barrington

Doug Slier from Lenox

After new members were introduced Linda requested that all committee members introduce themselves.

**CTSB REPORT:**

Leo Mahoney was present to give the report.

* PEG Franchise Fee was increased from .19 to .33 without any explanation as to why.
  + Melinda will address this when she gives the Spectrum report.
* CTSB Financial Audit
  + Audit is conducted yearly as opposed to every 5 years that most PEG stations opt for.
  + The report was positive and shows $1,364,919 in total net assets (equipment and property).
  + Audit is available on CTSB website.
* Bylaw Change
  + Students are always a free membership.
  + Change was approved that student members under the age of 16 are not considered voting members.
* THE BUZZ
  + Is a new show that is a student run promotional show hosted by Lee High sophomore Quinn Burnell that will promote upcoming school events and other happenings at area schools.
  + The first show was an interview with Monument student organizers for “Out of the Darkness” which is a national campaign for Suicide Prevention.
* Studio Night
  + Every Tuesday the studio has open time from 4:30 – 7:30 for people to stop by and tour the studio.
* Stats
  + 59 meetings covered, 26 were live, and 165 hours recorded.
  + One Stockbridge Selectmen’s meeting was not recorded due to scheduling.
  + All broadcasts that were recorded live had no technical issues.
* Volunteers
  + Are always needed at CTSB.

**SPECTRUM FOLLOW-UP:**

* Melinda Kinney and John Fogarty present to give report. George Doin was also present.

CTSB on guide-

* The change to list CTSB on the guide can happen. Change will happen within 90+ days.
  + CTSBPB – public access – channel 1301
  + CTSBED – educational access – channel 1302
  + CTSBGV – government access – channel 1303
* Leo asked for notification of timeframe.
* Leo and Melinda to talk off-line regarding guide content.
* Channels 1301, 1302, 1303 are part of basic package.
* It was again asked why can’t these be in the lower channels as the Berkshires have a demographic of older people and don’t use the TV as young people do. They won’t scroll all the way into the 1300’s.
* Steve Moritz indicated that the “favorites” button can be programmed on the remote so that these channels would be easy to access.
* Technicians could help with the remote programming.
* Melinda indicated that the channels are not going to be moved back to the lower channel numbers.
* Lenox resident Jim Biancolo asked if these 3 channels were used for public channels everywhere and Melinda said yes, they are the same across 41 states.
* Member asked if it is possible for whoever changed this to explain to use why it was changed? Melinda said she will ask.
* You can also set your cable box to turn on to any channel you choose when turned on.

Public Service Announcement–

* Question was asked - where is it going to show? Melinda will provide that information to the committee.
* Also asked – How long will this run and Melinda said it is scheduled for 3 months.

Double charge for Guide –

* Linda inquired into why there are 2 charges for the Guide (1 in package, 1 as a separate guide charge).
  + She received a call back with unsatisfactory answers.
  + One charge is included in the package bundle and one as a separate listing for tv services.
  + Melinda agreed to discuss off-line and do a conference call with the supervisor of customer service to answer these issues.

On Demand service on App –

* Request into the programming department to get more details.

**SPECTRUM SEPTEMBER REPORT** –

* Peg Fee Increase:
  + Increase from .19 to .33 was not approved by this committee.
  + The $212k grant is over and above the 5% franchise fee and was paid upfront when the franchise went into effect.
  + The “pass through” fee of .19 is not going to cover the amount needed to recoup the $212k so an increase was implemented. This amount is dictated by subscribership.
* Loss of WCVB and Massachusetts coverage:
  + As stated previously Berkshire County is in the Albany market.
  + Federal efforts are in the works and the bill is written, however, it did not make it to the floor before the recess.
  + Discussion was had relating to coverage of the Patriots football team.
  + Dick Lindsay told the attendees that the NFL dictates coverage. NY teams will get preference on NY markets.

Earnings Report:

* Available online

Form 500:

* All five town reports were sent to the committee.
  + Linda thinks they are incorrect.
  + Melinda stated that the data is collected very differently from Time Warner.
  + Linda states that she attended a DTC meeting and volunteered the committee to work with the DTC to develop a new 500 form that would be more relevant and beneficial for all.

Subscriber Questionnaire Scheduled for 2019:

* Linda has started working on this.
* Needs to be in the June mailing.
* Melinda will provide a timeline to get it into the June mailing.
* We need to discuss the on-line inclusion for automatic payment subscribers.

Customer Service:

* Difficulty getting through on the phone.
* Customers still getting different answers from different customer service reps.

Internet:

* Question was asked what the internet speed was for Charter.
  + Charter basic speed is 100 x 10
  + Time Warner Legacy standard speed is 20 x 2 and the ultimate speed is 60 x 5

**CITIZEN SPEAK –**

Jim Biancolo – Lenox resident said he was enjoying his current service.

* Some concerns he has that live shows sometimes are not available. He has a Roku and Spectrum TV app.
* He thinks maybe the servers are not able to make a connection.
* One week he could not control the closed captioned.
* He won’t call in to discuss these issues as it is sometimes a 30 – 40 minute wait.
* Melinda suggested setting up a conference call with a Roku expert in Denver to speak about these issues.
* He also said he is getting an error code “report this error code”.
* Jim would like the name of someone he can email instead of calling; Melinda gave him the name and number.

Dan Miller – resident

* Founding member of CTSB and an original member of the Cable Advisory Committee.
* He asked if the debates for Massachusetts government could somehow be funneled through CTSB through the government channel, either live or re-broadcast?
  + Linda will call Leo and ask.
* Installation from sub-contractors
  + He said he was at an installation that was done by a sub-contractor and said it was very shoddy work. Melinda asked for him to provide her with the name of the subscriber where this was installed.
* Does the Spectrum app and Cable box provide same offerings?
  + Answer was that is it not fully up and running yet.

Cell Phone offering:

* What company’s towers are being used – Verizon.

**OLD BUSINESS –**

* No old business.

**NEW BUSINESS –**

* Jim Brown asked who is responsible for the postings on the town websites? Inconsistency in how the documents are named.
  + This would be done by the people posting the documents in each individual town.
* Does the FCC require that cable boxes be available for purchase?
  + No, you cannot purchase cable boxes from 3rd party.
* New York State vs. Charter
  + An extension was granted of 60 days.
  + Charter believes that the claims are without merit and they are prepared to defend themselves.

**NEXT MEETING:**

December 11, 2018 at 6:30pm in Lee.

Motion made by Steve Moritz to adjourn. Motion seconded by Tom Hatch. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned 8:36pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Curtin

Recording Secretary