

FIVE TOWN CABLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
Representing the Towns of Great Barrington, Lee, Lenox, Sheffield and Stockbridge  
Minutes  
June 12, 2018  
6:30pm  
Lenox Town Hall  
6 Walker Street  
Lenox, MA 01240

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

Others Present: Melinda Kinney - Charter  
John Fogarty – Charter  
George Doin - Charter  
Leo Mahoney – CTSB  
Denise Curtin – Recording Secretary  
2 Members of the Press  
12 Local Residents

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

MINUTES: Linda Miller moved to dispense with the reading of the minutes of March 20, 2018. Motion was seconded by Rene Wood and Steve Moritz.

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

CITIZEN SPEAK TIME was moved to top of agenda:

- Linda Miller asked the members of the public if they were here to hear about the elimination of WCVB channel out of Boston.
- 6 public attendees present indicated that they wanted to know why this channel was removed from their programming.
- Linda Miller explained that the committee has been exploring all Massachusetts channels with our legislators to bring about change.
- We have to get the FCC to exempt Berkshire County from the current DMA designation and move out of the Albany market and into the Springfield/Boston market.
- We worked with our state legislators to make some noise and get our federal legislators to draft and sponsor bills in both houses to move Berkshire County to a Massachusetts market, and out of the Albany market.
- There are bi-partisan co-sponsors in agreement to help get this done.
- When we get this done, the Springfield market will have local and state coverage, and local advertising.
- All our elected representatives are pushing for this. Smitty Pignatelli got the ball rolling. Adam Hinds, Richie Neal, Elizabeth Warren and Ed Markey are all on board.

- Melinda Kinney from Spectrum told the audience that if the FCC redefines the market then they will be bound to carry MA stations.
- Melinda and John Fogarty from Spectrum said that they are bound by FCC market areas. Satellite providers have different sets of rules on broadcast channels.
- John Fogarty spoke about the negotiations between Charter and the broadcast networks. The broadcast network affiliates are asking exorbitant amounts to carry their out of DMA market channels and this is what led to the elimination of WCVB.
- Public comment was that their bills continue to increase significantly and we are being held hostage to New York.
- John and Melinda said it was out of Charter's hands – they do not have the ability to change market areas.
- Linda Miller stated that there will be a list of our government officials, including the Attorney General's office and the Mass Department of Telecommunications and Cable, to contact on the CTSB website, [ctsbtv.org](http://ctsbtv.org)
- The committee strongly suggests that you file any and all complaints to any member on this list as well as with the Cable Advisory Committee.
- Service issues were discussed regarding internet speed and download time.
- David Parker said that when he turns on in the morning there is a long wait time to load. George Doin, Technical Operations Manager explained that there are updates that continue during the night and that may explain why it takes longer download times. He asked if it persists to please put in a service call.
- Rene Wood is concerned about unacceptable service. Every meeting customers have issues over and over and the #1 complaint is about having to reboot their boxes daily.
- Committee strongly urges customers to send complaints directly to the Attorney General's office (information can be found on the government listing on the CTSB website).
- Local Lee office hours were discussed and customers are wondering why they go to the office and the office is closed. No hours posted. Melinda will follow-up as she took care of this months ago and it was supposed to be taken care of.

## **CTSB REPORT:**

Leo Mahoney was present to give the report.

- Annual report was handed out to the committee members and Charter members.
- Annual meeting was held on May 22, 2018. Current executive board was re-elected as were 3 members whose terms expired. Treasurer reported that the company is financially sound.
- High School fiber is now connected to four area high schools. Project completion was done on time for the annual town meetings.
- No live meetings had to be cancelled due to technical issues.
- Two \$1,000 scholarships were awarded for 2018 to Michelle Desiata of Lee and Daniel Santos of Glendale.
- Membership is currently at 138 members (6 new, 5 renewals and 3 expired).
- Jim Biancola from Lenox indicated that he has 1 set top box and a Roku stick. Leo told him that the Roku stick does not provide CTSB on that equipment.
- Leo was not sure if this has been communicated to subscribers, but you have to have at least 1 set top box to receive the 3 community channels.

## **SPECTRUM REPORT:**

- Melinda Kinney and John Fogarty present to give report. George Doin was also present.
- Linda Miller requested that agenda item “Encryption cost ramifications to subscribers” be held and will move to next meeting agenda.

### **CTSB on guide-**

- Melinda sent screen shots of the guide to the committee prior to meeting. It does not say “CTSB”. Linda said that subscribers do not know what “PEG” channel means - (Public, Education and Government channels).
- Melinda will ask if we can have CTSB as a banner on the guide.
- Spectrum will be doing a Public Service Announcement to let subscribers know where to find their local access channels.
- Steve Moritz asked the timeframe for this announcement and Melinda said it would be sometime within a month.
- Steve also asked if there could be a local Lee phone number for subscribers to contact their local office directly instead of going through an 800 number.

### **Subscriber complaints –**

- Subscribers are saying that if they call 3 times they get 3 different people and 3 different answers.
- Question was asked if customer service people are on commission or are salary based. Melinda and John, believe that they are salary based, with bonus, but that is not something within their realm to speak about.
- They did say that when calling always ask for the customer service rep’s name and ID#.

### **Double charge for Guide –**

- Linda asked why there are 2 charges for the Guide (1 in package, 1 as a separate guide charge).
- Melinda will look into this.

### **High Berkshire Sports & Local News –**

- Neither of these are carried on “Spectrum News” channel 9 – we only get Albany coverage.
- This is a “Spectrum” owned and operated channel, over which they do have control, and we should be getting local coverage.
- Melinda will look into this.

### **Communication –**

- Spectrum communication needs to improve.
- 30 Days notice required – Melinda said that they are complying with this and notices are sent to municipal offices and to committee within that timeframe.
- Hearing Notice did not include the required Spectrum petition for rate increase.
- Melinda will review the notices and get back to committee.

### **Peg Fee –**

- Ongoing discussion and will be tabled until next meeting.

Subscriber Questionnaire Scheduled for 2019–

- We need to set up a structure for tabulating responses.
- Should be sent out end of June 2019.
- Remove any places where they need to put their names or account numbers. Needs to be anonymous.
- Melinda and committee will set up a conference call to discuss further best options for this survey.

**OLD BUSINESS –**

- No old business.

**NEW BUSINESS –**

- No new business.

**OTHER BUSINESS –**

- Sean Carroll, Deputy General Counsel, and Michael Mael of the Mass DTC spent a day in the Berkshires with Smitty. A lot of information was exchanged and concerns of the Berkshires were voiced.
- Rate hearing – letters were sent from Linda Miller as representative of the committee and Rene Wood sent a letter as a personal subscriber, opposing any rate increases, for inclusion in the record of the rate hearing.
- DTC meetings are generally held at 10:00am in Boston. Request was made that these meetings be moved to 1:00pm so that Berkshire County would be able to attend.

New procedure-

- Sign up sheet was made available at the meeting for any information requested to be emailed.

Motion made by Linda Miller to adjourn. Motion seconded by Rene Wood and Steve Moritz. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned 8:16pm.

NEXT MEETING – SEPTEMBER 11, 2018 at 6:30pm in Lee.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Curtin

Recording Secretary