

FIVE TOWN CABLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Representing the Towns of Great Barrington, Lee, Lenox, Sheffield and Stockbridge
Minutes
December 14, 2021
6:30pm
Great Barrington Town Hall, Great Barrington, MA

MEETING WAS HELD IN PERSON FOLLOWING COVID PROTOCOLS

Members Present: Linda Miller –Lenox
Dennis Arseneau - Lenox
Michael Canales – Stockbridge
Patrick White – Stockbridge
Tom Hatch – Great Barrington
Rene Wood – Sheffield
Bobby Paley - Lee

Others Present: John Maher - Charter
Rich Frederick – CTSB
Denise Curtin – Recording Secretary

6:30pm Linda Miller called the meeting to order.

MINUTES: Motion made by Rene Wood to dispense with the reading of the minutes of September 14, 2021 and move forward.
Seconded by Dennis Arseneau.
Motion carried, with Rene Wood abstaining from the vote.

NEW MEMBER: Linda Miller introduced a new member, Bobby Paley from Lee. We are happy to announce that now all 5 towns have representation on the committee.

CTSB REPORT:

- Rich Frederick presented the CTSB report.

Shakespeare Annual Fall Festival

- Rich Frederick was very happy to announce that the 33rd Annual Fall Festival was a huge success. Last year's event was canceled due to Covid and this year's was planned to allow the performances to take place with all Covid safety precautions put in place.
- We were able to stream the performance to the internet, as well as our cable channel 1302 for the first time in 33 years and we are very proud to say that it went flawlessly.
- Viewership for our website jumped from 52 visits to our site in mid-November to over 600 visits during the festival.
 - Patrick White asked were these hits just to the website itself or particular to certain pages?
 - Rich Frederick responded that he would have to look into that.
- DVD and streaming sales are already over \$1,200 to date and new orders continue to come in.

- Patrick White also asked if there were any plans to cover live school plays at each of the five town schools?
 - Rich Frederick said that most plays done at the schools are licensed (i.e. Disney) and cannot be broadcast due to licensing issues.
 - Rene Wood said she will ask the Superintendent of the South County school what plays are coming up and what is the licensing fee to re-broadcast.
- Bobby Paley suggested that you go after other institutions and act as a broker. The board agreed that this idea merits some thought.

Projects and Updates

- Rich Frederick said that CTSB continues to promote CTSB in the local Shoppers Guide and The Berkshire Edge website.
- We also now have postcards in addition to our decals we will be distributing throughout the community.
- A suggestion was made to put a placard on the table of the town Selectboard meetings and School Committee meetings that says “Thank you to CTSB for recording our meeting and can be found on channels 1301, 1302, 1303.
- CTSB has purchased a weather-proof camera and is now in the process of installing it on the roof to provide a “live” look outside at preprogrammed times through the day on their broadcast channels.
- Rich Frederick also happily reported that along with the great work and knowledge of their Finance Director, Gary Allan they have paid off the mortgage on the building at 40 Limestone Road in Lee. The investment in solar which generated a larger return than was spent on the panels contributed to allowing them to pay this off early.

CTSB and CAC Capital Funding Request (Rough Draft)

- CTSB is an important local outlet to be able to broadcast important information from public meetings and community events on cable television.
- In order to be able to provide this to the communities there are a number of upgrades and equipment replacements that will need to happen between 2023 and 2028 to allow us to continue to provide the service to our local communities and our estimated cost to do so will be around \$350,000.

SPECTRUM REPORT

John Maher presented the Spectrum report.

- John Maher requested that we keep the communication lines open.
- Let John know if issues pop up and not wait until each quarterly meeting.
- John Maher said that the issue that Linda Miller sent to him was rectified today and Linda Miller wanted to know why it was rectified on the day of the meeting and not weeks ago when it was addressed.
- Rene Wood indicated that any time she raises issues directly with John there is follow up between the two of them and issues are rectified.
- John Maher and some committee members said they still continually receive calls related to phone and internet but we are only responsible for cable television, but we still try to help the customer.
- John Maher said to encourage customers to take the customer service person name, date of the call and let him know so that he can follow up.
- John Maher concluded that this was the report and Linda Miller stated that this was not a report.
- There were discussions related to fiber and co-ax confusion. Fiber is located on streets, but co-ax cable to the homes. Are there any plans as to when the nodes to homes will go fiber and replace the co-ax? John Maher said there are no plans currently to do that.

Complaints

- The committee asked about the recording of customer complaints – in 2020 there was only 1 complaint recorded from the town of Sheffield.
- There is something wrong in the way the recording of customer complaints is currently being done.
 - The Form 500 is supposed to reflect this and as of the end of 2021 we still do not have the 2020 Form 500.
 - What was submitted was garbage as stated by Linda Miller.
- The discussion related to the Form 500 needs to go into an official letter to John Maher with Melinda Kinney cc'd that this committee will be filing a complaint with the FCC and DTC that the Form 500 report is not being recorded properly.
- Rene Wood made a motion to authorize the committee chairman, Linda Miller, to send a letter on behalf of the committee to file a formal complaint with the FCC and DTC. Motion seconded by Michael Canales and motion carried unanimously.

LICENSE RENEWAL

- With the license renewal work underway it has been determined that the committee will need to seek funding for legal counsel.
- The last license renewal that was done the cost to each town was approximately \$1,000.
- We would be working with William Hewig of K-P Law, who we have worked with before and who is a cable law specialist.
- Linda Miller drafted a letter and distributed to the committee.
- Dennis Arseneau made a motion to send the letter that Linda Miller drafted to request funding for legal services from the towns.
- Rene Wood asked to have a line stated in the letter that reads "Expenditure of money is by this committee".
 - Patrick White seconded the motion with the change requested by Rene Wood.

CITIZEN SPEAK

- None.

NEW BUSINESS

- There are currently 2 people on the License Renewal Working Group.
- Rene Wood said she will volunteer to be on the committee.
- Bobby Paley would be willing to work as needed.

OTHER BUSINESS

- None

Motion made to adjourn by Rene Wood, seconded by Tom Hatch and Patrick White. Motion carried unanimously and meeting was adjourned at 7:45pm.

NEXT MEETING DATE – Tuesday, March 8, 2022 in Sheffield.

Respectfully submitted,
Denise Curtin
Recording Secretary