

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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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