

Minutes
Five Town Cable Advisory Committee
Negotiations Subcommittee
December 12, 2022; Lenox Town Hall Auditorium

Subcommittee members present: Linda Miller, Chair
Dennis Arseneau
Rene Wood

The meeting was called to order by Chair L. Miller at 3:00pm.

The primary focus of the meeting was upcoming Cable TV license renewal agreement with Charter Communications, including how the subcommittee wanted to structure the negotiations and what additional information was needed for the negotiations.

Discussed were further refinements to the draft letter and requested information to be sent to Berkshire County and Western MA Charter Communications municipal customers having a Cable TV contract that was not directly negotiated with Charter Communications, such as a Time Warner Cable contract taken over when that acquisition was made. R. Wood had gotten a recently signed Charter Contract from the Town of New Marlborough, which prior to this contract had no service.

D. Arseneau will continue his work on building a database of such municipalities so the initial letter may be sent with follow-on communication as needed. R. Wood had made consolidations to the "Items of Importance" table, and all will review with the goal of finalizing at the next meeting. R. Wood will draft a cover email to go with the letter and its request. D. Arseneau will contact all non-Berkshire County municipalities and R. Wood will handle Berkshire County.

R. Wood, who had agreed to set up the previously discussed meeting with appropriate Berkshire County municipalities at the Pittsfield Community Television Station, stated she saw no value to doing so until this work had been completed. All concurred.

Once this draft letter is approved, the cc list will be expanded to include all appropriate MA legislators, MA US Congressional delegation, and MA Federal delegation. After the MA house and senate organize in 2023, appropriate member of committees and joint committees will also be copied on the subcommittee's communications.

The letter to Charter Communications and their attorney finalized at the last meeting has been signed and sent, with emails to the cc list. R. Wood volunteer to brief Senator-elect P. Mark as soon as possible.

Given weather possibilities, Zoom meetings hosted by CPTC for future subcommittee meeting will be investigated by L. Miller. For a proper meeting notice, complete Zoom data is required so the public may attend.

Next discussed was the suggested format for upcoming Charter negotiations. This focused on sending them a letter, with the cc list to be expanded to include newly elected Senator Mark. The proposed date is Wednesday January 18, 2023 at 2pm over a Zoom platform. CTSB would host – this needs to be worked out. A set time, yet to be determined, would be allowed for each meeting. R. Wood suggested no more than 1.5 hours, as exhausting sets in and actions may become counterproductive. A single topic will be proposed for each session. The Proposed Five Town Cable TV renewal license agreement will be the document all parties work from.

Also discussed was how to avoid subcommittee members potentially negotiating against themselves; it was suggested a single subcommittee member have the negotiating lead for each session with the lead rotated. Time outs may be taken or just information collected from Charter, and nothing agreed to until the next negotiating session or later.

For negotiations, it was felt the first order of business will be to determine what the parties can agree on; next, what is negotiable from Charter viewpoint; and what is non-negotiable. The first topic would be CTSB, with all CTSB related sections in the proposed draft license renewal agreement sent to Charter.

Bill Hewig's input on the draft letter is required, as well as any negotiating suggestions he may have.

There was discussion if other Five Town Cable Committee members might be added to the subcommittee.

The proper housing of subcommittee documents and minutes was reviewed. R. Wood volunteered to see if the Town of Sheffield would store such documents.

Legal bills were discussed and L. Miller will determine who is getting them, how approved, and how billed to the five towns.

The full committee's next quarterly meeting on 12/13/22 was next discussed with it decided that D. Arseneau will report to the committee on subcommittee's activities since the last quarterly meeting. CTSB will report on the Charter Communications CTSB site visit and tour.

The next meeting was tentatively set for 12/21/22 at 3pm, same location. **On a motion from R. Wood, seconded by D. Arseneau, and approved 3-0, the meeting adjourned at 4:03pm.**

Respectfully submitted,



Rene C. Wood

Sheffield delegate to Five Town Cable Advisory Committee

Documents from the meeting:

- Agenda 12-14-22; Draft minutes from of 12-14-22; Letter to municipal leaders with Charter contract; Chart with items of importance.