

## **CABLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Thursday, July 16, 2020--6 PM—via Zoom**

### **MINUTES**

Present: Jeffrey Diamond, Ed Fechner, Tom Grizey, Neal Pilson, Sean Wilson, Kathryn Wilson (representing the Richmond Free Public Library), David Wyatt, Lauren Broussard (editor of the Richmond Record). Danielle Filleo acted as Zoom host for the meeting.

Absent: Jill Pompei

The sixth meeting of the CAC was called to order by Committee Co-Chairs Neal Pilson and Ed Fechner at 6:03 PM via Zoom.

Neal Pilson opened the meeting by introducing Amanda Wheeler, representing Magna 5, the owner of the Richmond telephone company, and Crista Proper, a former employee of Richmond Telephone, who is in negotiations to purchase the company.

As the first order of business, the Committee approved by unanimous vote the minutes of the June 4 meeting, which had been circulated previously.

Next, Sean Wilson reported on the lack of responses to the SurveyMonkey feedback survey and it was discovered that the town newsletter has not distributed for the last two weeks because of an injury in the Town Clerk's office. Sean will follow up to see that the link is posted in the town's newsletter, website and Facebook page next week.

Ed Fechner next summarized feedback collected from emails from the CAC email address. So far there have been 9 emails received with the following subjects comments –

- 2 respondents mentioned a desire for additional programming of Boston sports and 1 respondent mentioned a desire for more New York sport programming
- 4 respondents mentioned they would not be interested in adding phone service if it required a new phone number while 2 respondents indicated they would add phone service if it were available
- 3 respondents mentioned that they were unsatisfied with the internet speed and would like to see faster speeds or a lower price
- 1 respondent mentioned that the price of service was too high
- 1 respondent indicated they were not interested in a Richmond town channel
- 1 respondent indicated the town should add the ability to originate training programming from the Richmond Fire House
- 1 respondent suggested that Charter/Spectrum and Richmond Telephone should agree to release the rights to the 698 exchange so residents could add phone service to their TV and internet service for better bundled pricing.

Following Ed's presentation, Amanda Wheeler ([AWheller@magna5global.com](mailto:AWheller@magna5global.com)) explained that Richmond Telephone needed to execute a "porting agreement" with Charter/Spectrum in order to allow residents to transfer their existing Richmond Telephone 698 phone numbers to a new service but that the company was open to discussing this.

Next, Jeffrey Diamond reported on the production equipment and capabilities that would be required to support the origination of programming from the town's offices and facilities -

- For Richmond Consolidated School – 3 cameras, 3 mics, teleprompter, tripods and a large monitor to produce plays as well as a weekly "news" show for students. Estimated cost - \$7,500
- Other Locations – shared access to cameras, mics, recorders and other equipment. Estimated cost - \$4,000
- Distribution Capacity – two options exist for distributing the content produced by the school and town, using a network such as Pittsfield Community TV (PCTV) or using our own staff and equipment and "line drops" provided by Charter/Spectrum or via streaming on Facebook or YouTube. (The second option is the one used by West Stockbridge.) Estimated hardware costs for our own recorders and playback equipment - \$3,000 to \$4,000.

Jeff and Dave Wyatt will continue to explore the equipment, staffing and costs under these scenarios and report to the committee at a future meeting. In addition to the Town and School budgets and grants from Spectrum, the Massachusetts Cultural Council was also mentioned as a source of funding for town programming.

Next, Kathryn Wilson spoke on behalf of the Richmond Free Public Library. She said that the library depended on internet service to connect it to other libraries in the Commonwealth as well as email and other services for the library staff. With respect to originating programming from the library, while some speakers might not consent to having their presentations filmed and shared, others, such as authors, might welcome the opportunity to talk about their books.

Crista Proper was then introduced and briefly described her vision to extend fiber-optic cable to provide phone and high-speed internet service to Richmond residents if she is successful in acquiring Richmond telephone from Magna 5.

The Committee then discussed next steps. It was agreed that a public hearing should be scheduled later this summer once all the feedback from Survey Monkey and email have been received. At that point, the Committee will prepare a list of discussion points to present to the Selectmen and request authorization to begin negotiations with Charter/Spectrum. The Committee will discuss and decide timing for the public hearing at our next meeting.

Lastly, the Committee tentatively agreed to meet again on August 20 (via Zoom) to continue with the steps described above. Neal Pilson will confirm the date and time and circulate the agenda before the meeting.

A motion to adjourn was made, seconded and approved and the meeting ended at 7:20pm.

Respectfully submitted by Sean Wilson, Secretary