

CABLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, NOVEMBER 12, 2020--6 PM—via Zoom

MINUTES

Present: Jeffrey Diamond, Ed Fechner, Tom Grizey, Neal Pilson, Jill Pompei, David Wyatt, Sean Wilson. Danielle Filleo acted as Zoom host for the meeting.

Absent: None

The eleventh meeting of the CAC was called to order by Committee Co-Chairs Neal Pilson and Ed Fechner at 6:00 PM via Zoom. The purpose of this meeting was twofold. The primary purpose was to host a public hearing to collect feedback from Richmond residents with respect to Charter/Spectrum's service under its existing licensing agreement with the town and input to be considered by the Committee in negotiating a Renewal Agreement.

Neal Pilson opened the Public Hearing, noting that few, if any, members of the public were in attendance. He asked for comments but there were none. Pilson noted that the Committee had received numerous comments from the public in response to its survey, which was published in the town newsletter and available on the town website. Pilson closed the hearing and the Committee then conducted a regular meeting to discuss ongoing business.

Rick Bell, a member of the public residing on Jolindy Road, also joined the video call.

As the first order of business, the Committee approved, by unanimous vote, the minutes of the October 22nd meeting, which had been circulated previously.

Next, Jeff Diamond summarized the meeting with Sean Serre, of Pittsfield Community Television (PCTV) on October 30. Neal Pilson and Ed Fechner attended the meeting in person and Jeff joined by video. All agreed that the facilities at PCTV were impressive and that PCTV seemed able and willing to distribute Richmond programming over their channels (which are also available to Richmond subscribers) but the cost was not discussed. In addition to the expense of PCTV's services, Richmond would bear the cost of equipment and labor to produce and manage the programming.

The Committee then discussed priorities to address with Charter/Spectrum in the Renewal Agreement and funding alternatives for improvements at Town Hall, Richmond Consolidated School (RCS) and Richmond Free Public Library and decided as follows –

1. Programming "Drops" – In order to support the production of programming from the town, it was agreed that we would ask Charter/Spectrum to install high-speed, "programming drops" at Town Hall, RCS, the Library, the Town Garage and the Firehouse. Also, in anticipation of the construction of a new town hall

and library building starting in 2022, we will also add language for “future” drops to these buildings as well.

2. Dedicated Richmond Channel – Given that we are likely a year or more away from being able to support programming for our own channel, it was agreed that this would be a future request for Charter/Spectrum.
3. Franchise Fee – The current Franchise Fee is set at 2% and totals approximately \$12,000 per year for the town and it was agreed the Committee would recommend to the Select Board to continue the fee at this level in the Renewal Agreement.
4. Grant Funding – It is still uncertain exactly what costs the town will be asked to pay for equipment or labor to support town programming, and, so, it was generally agreed that we should provide for future grant requests in the Renewal Agreement. Since grants from Charter/Spectrum are recovered through subscriber fees and it was agreed that this source of funds should be limited to cover costs that benefit subscribers.

Ed Fechner will redraft his letter to Charter/Spectrum and then forward this to Beth Goodman, Richmond Town Counsel, for her to review and use as a basis for marking up the boilerplate Renewal Agreement which Charter/Spectrum provided.

Next, Rick Bell, Richmond resident, commented that he had recently asked Charter/Spectrum about adding residential phone service to his account and was told that this was not available in town. He further reported that he had contacted Richmond Telephone and was told that they had given permission for Charter/Spectrum to offer residential services. Mr. Bell then asked whether the Committee would also request that Charter/Spectrum commit to offer residential phone services and the Committee assured him it would.

Lastly, Neal Pilson described the upcoming schedule for Board of Selectmen (BoS) and suggested that the Committee target to meet with the BoS at their December 16 meeting to present the Renewal Agreement mark-up. The Committee agreed and tentatively decided to meet again on December 10 at 6pm (via Zoom) to prepare. 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 7:12pm.

Respectfully submitted by Sean Wilson, Secretary