

## **CABLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Thursday, June 4, 2020--6 PM—via Zoom**

### **MINUTES**

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

Absent: None

The fifth meeting of the CAC was called to order by Committee Co-Chairs Neal Pilson and Ed Fechner at 6:00 PM via Zoom.

As the first order of business, Neal Pilson read a message from Governor Baker regarding procedures for holding public meetings remotely during the present health emergency. The remainder of the meeting was conducted according to those procedures.

Next, Neal introduced Mark Mael, Municipal Liaison from the Department of Telecommunications and Cable (DTC). Mark then addressed the committee to explain the process set out in Massachusetts law for renewing cable franchise agreements. According to Mr. Mael, Ascertainment is the first step in the renewal process and should be completed approximately six to four months prior to the renewal date. During the Ascertainment process, the relicensing committee collects feedback on the cable operator's performance from the public through one or more public hearings, surveys or other means. That feedback then informs the committee's recommendations for changes in the licensing agreement which are communicated to the cable operator and, subject to negotiation, included in the new license proposal. The new license proposal must be presented by the cable operator to the licensing authority (in Richmond's case, the Board of Selectmen) at least 120 days prior to the renewal date to allow for review and decision.

According to Mr. Mael, the most common points of negotiation between towns and cable operators are term of the agreement, license fee percentage, grants for town or school-generated programming, connections for town offices and line extensions to expand service. The DTC website includes links to most of the license agreements in the Commonwealth and these are available to the public for reference.

Following Mr. Mael's presentation, the Committee discussed the following steps to accelerate the renewal process in Richmond –

- Begin the Ascertainment process via notice in the Town's newsletter and website (SCW to draft notice). Possible public meeting (NP/EF to discuss).

- Contact surrounding towns for suggestions and examples of their Ascertainment procedures (DF).
- Review technical requirements and costs estimates for recording and streaming town meetings and school programming. (JD, RZ)
- Contact PCTV (Shawn Serre) to discuss potential to engage them to record and stream town meetings and other programming (DW, JD).

Next, the Committee reviewed and approved unanimously the minutes of its last meeting from February 6, 2019.

Lastly, the Committee agreed to meet again in mid-July to continue with the steps described above. Neal Pilson will circulate potential dates via email for the Committee's consideration.

A motion to adjourn was made, seconded and approved and the meeting ended at 7:30pm.

Respectfully submitted by Sean Wilson, Secretary