

The first meeting was held at Town Hall on Thursday, August 2 from 5:30-6:45pm. Those present were: Marc Miville, Matt Mercier, David Pearl, Bryan Christiansen (Comcast Rep.) and Nan Comai, Council. Not in attendance: Dean Shankle and Peter Farwell

The present Cable Television Franchise Agreement between the Town of Hooksett and Comcast term ends December 15, 2012. This group met to review the contract and identify options to update and renew the agreement to best serve the residents of Hooksett.

While it was agreed the overall contract is binding to pricing, programming, technology, internet and telephone, we did find three areas of concern to address:

1. Area to be served
2. Fee percentage
3. Guarantee of Manchester Channels

1) Article 3 on page 13 states the density requirement for service delivery. Since the last contract was drawn in 2004, the committee felt the need to ask Comcast to review our current service delivery. Bryan was going to work with Comcast to establish a list of homes in town without service. **Bryan is this correctly stated?**

The idea would be to ensure residents who qualify to receive access to cable under the current density definition are in fact offered the service. Those who do not qualify would not be able to get service at this time. The cost to provide new lines etc. would garner future discussion. **Matt Mercier asked if the current Comcast cable coverage in town was sufficient to handle new home construction in town, and if the strand system maps reflected all current and potential new homes that would be able to receive Comcast cable in the future. He also asked whether there were areas in town that currently desire to obtain Comcast cable service, but are not within the current Comcast cable system area, to allow any of those customers to have Comcast service. Understanding that the more cable to be installed for its system infrastructure, would potentially result in a higher cable service bill to customers, in order for Comcast to reach out to outlying areas without current service with its cable equipment.**

2) It was pointed out the fees we receive are from video portion only. This 3% is reported to our finance department quarterly and approximately \$120,000 in funds are received annually.

Open discussion on the present use of these funds, and if the percentage is reasonable. More discussion and fact finding is needed. **David is this correctly stated?**

**Consensus thus far was that the franchise fee should be used for a cable PEG channel or for On Demand online services, such as enhancing the town's website video capabilities to tape and broadcast meetings and events, with continued focus on improved equipment for such, and should no longer be placed into the town's general fund and then used for**

**2) continued**

**general town appropriations, such as “fixing potholes.” If the franchise fee is not used for video / cable purposes, that it should be removed or reduced in percentage on the renewed contract.**

3) Public Educational and Government (PEG) Access Channel(s) Presently, Hooksett residents receive Channel 16, 22 and 23 from Manchester.

Open discussion on the guarantee Hooksett will continue to receive these channels.

Open discussion on options with Manchester.

**Bryan made it clear that the current contract does not contractually include nor obligate its service for the Manchester PEG channels to Hooksett at this time – that Comcast could legally remove access to the Manchester channels to Hooksett and any date and time that they wish, if that wanted to do so. Hooksett is currently not contracted with Comcast to have access available to the 3 Manchester PEG channels. Comcast is allowing Hooksett to view the 3 Manchester PEG channels, without it being written into our current contract.**

Other items discussed:

A) We did request additional copy change (marked in red) to page 7 section (p) Public, Educational and Governmental Access Channel – Video channel designed for non-commercial use by the public, educational institutions such as public or private schools, but no “home schools,” community colleges, and universities, as well as the Franchising Authority.

B) Internet access at a reduced rate to children and their families who are eligible to receive free and reduced rate for lunch. **Internet Essentials** is a program provided by Comcast and processed by a third party to ensure privacy. **This federally mandated school program is not related to this Comcast cable contract. The discussion was for merely for our own comprehensive informational benefit only.**

C) Page 21 Regarding remote control rentals. Wording should be changed to reflect free.

D) Brian suggested we change the contract to read strength or power of service versus number of channels to better reflect what is actually available. Number of channels change constantly.

E) Should we consider a shorter or longer contract term? We can include another time to review service delivery within a longer contract term to ensure updated service being provided to town residents.

F) Should we consider Memo of Understanding with Manchester?

We can invite Jason Cote from MCam Manchester to come to the next meeting and discuss options.

E) Should we gather information from Assessors office and establish our own list of new homes?

Next meetings are set for:

Thursday, August 23 at 5:30pm

Discussion with Jason Cote, Manchester MCam Executive Director

Wednesday, October 3 at 5:30pm

Hopeful to be ready for presentation to Town Council and subsequent public hearing

A hard copy of the contract is being held at the Town Hall office for anyone who wishes a copy. Please see Evelyn Horn for your copy. Thanks!

Respectfully submitted,

*Nan Comai*

Cable Committee chair