

CABLE TELEVISION ADVISORY COUNCIL (Litchfield)

MINUTES

Thursday, March 12, 2015

The regular meeting of the Cable Television Advisory Council (Litchfield) was held on Thursday, March 12, 2015, at 6:30 p.m. at the Oliver Wolcott Library, South Street, Litchfield, Connecticut. A quorum was present: Steven Simonin, Chairman, Diane Knox, Vice Chairman – Litchfield; Jeff Dunn, Thomaston; Andy MacDavid, Cornwall; Marie Soliani, Lucille Paige - Torrington; John Angevine, Warren, Richard Antonetti and Denise Russ, Watertown. Absent: John Luciano, Torrington; Raymond Nardella, Gary Lafferty, Watertown; Gerry Gault, Litchfield. Also present: Jennifer Young, Cablevision.

The meeting was called to order at 6:45 p.m.

Diane Knox reported that a subscriber experienced a loss of signal and the remote was not working. After the Cablevision repairman fixed the issues, he left wires on the front lawn and various debris around.

Denise Russ had several subscribers complain about the price increases from Cablevision. Further, she asked if and when "ala-carte" would be available. Many people are paying for too many channels that they do not watch, nor are interested in, yet because these channels are in the tier that Cablevision offers, they feel this is unfair. Jennifer Young explained the process of lining up channels with the programmer that the programmer offers. The programmers offer what is the most profitable for them. If Cablevision wants to offer these prime channels to their viewers, Cablevision must pay their price of those tier packages and pass those costs along to the customer. Steven Simonin reminded those present that HBO, CBS, NBC channels can be had for free on the internet.

John Angevine feels strongly that in the future, compromises between Cablevision and their programmers must be reached in order to better serve the viewing public.

Jeff Dunn stated that the prices from cable providers must start coming down. There seems to be a lot more outages, loss of signals or weak signals.

Richard Antonetti asked if Frontier was connected to Cablevision; answer, it is not. In response to his question regarding the Cable Television Annual Report to PURA, he was advised that PURA no longer requires these reports and there is no longer a department at PURA that handles filings and reports of this kind. Steven Simonin advised that Frontier is sharing signals resulting in those signals being compressed together; poor reception to the subscriber.

Marie Soliani reported that a customer (house-bound) has three televisions, along with three separate Cablevision boxes. Cannot one or two of these boxes be condensed and yet carry the same channels to each television; can the wires be reconnected to obtain this objective?

Jennifer Young replied that there must be one individual box for each television. Steven Simonin that there are ways to switch the wires on one or two televisions to carry only the basic channels.

Andrew MacDavid had no report or comments from subscribers.

Lucille Paige cited the "loss signals" to the channels she subscribes and pays for. While this condition is not permanent, it nevertheless was annoying and inconvenient.

Steven Simonin reported that a member from the State-Wide Advisory Council suggested that a tax be added for "internet". This member was advised that internet is not video and constitutes freedom of speech, therefore, a tax cannot be placed on it. Steven is working with Senator Richard Blumenthal and other Washington congressmen to address these problems with cable television providers and the PURA, and FCC. Everyone must have "equal access". With the FCC, internet is under Title 2: FCC has to protect internet access. Jennifer Young stated that Cablevision does not currently have any pricing, agreements with third party vendors. Comcast did have such an agreement in place with Netflix to allow for faster streaming, which is what the FCC says is not allowed on their new Title2 regulations; Internet service providers should not be allowed to pick winners and losers. Comcast was also found to be in violation for throttling a subscriber's service for large file sharing.

Steven Simonin reported that surcharges can be avoided by the subscriber (for sports and local broadcasts) can be had by using an antenna thereby getting these services free of charge. Subscribers opting to use this method should make sure their antenna has a good "line of sight" to pick up those channels. Change agreement on "repeater" on hill to increase line of site. Steven has placed an antenna on his home roof and found to have very clear reception and good audio. This is not the same signal that comes from Cablevision. John Angevine advised that the points should be cleaned occasionally.

Under Management's Report, Jennifer Young announced "Free Wheel" to those subscribers who have Optimum – the device is \$99. If you are an Optimum online subscriber, the monthly price is \$9.99/mo. The service is strictly Wi-Fi only. Jeff Dunn asked if Cablevision was going to develop any "apps". Cablevision is working toward developing an APP that would allow the same services.

Upon a motion by Steven Simonin, seconded by John Angevine, the minutes of the January 15, 2015 meeting were approved. Marie Soliani, Denise Russ and Richard Cantonetti abstained.

Diane Knox, Treasurer reported the current balance in checkbook is: \$2,180.

Lucille Paige explained the process that has begun in awarding scholarships in the amount of \$250 each to one graduating senior (2015) in each of the seven high schools within the franchise. Announcements have been made in the local newspapers and letters to each of the high school guidance departments have been sent.

Upon a motion by Richard Cantonetti, seconded by Diane Knox. The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m. Voted unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Lucille A. Paige, Secretary