

MILLBURY PUBLIC ACCESS/CABLE TELEVISION COMMISSION MINUTES

Municipal Office Building - 127 Elm Street – Large Conference Room

Thursday April 21, 2016 – 7:15 p.m.

Present: Paul DiCicco; Joseph Coggans; Richard Carew; Roger Desrosiers; Mary Krumsiek; Robert Sullivan; Public Access Director Kevin Krassopoulos

Absent: Jeffrey Dore; Associate Member Michael Lawton

Chairman DiCicco opened the meeting at 7:17 p.m.

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MILLBURY, MASS.
16 MAY 20 AM 11:50

PREVIOUS MINUTES

Motion made by Joseph Coggans, seconded by Mary Krumsiek to approve the meeting minutes of March 24, 2016. **Motion** carried unanimously.

Representatives from Charter Communications and Verizon were asked to attend this meeting; Public Access Director Kevin Krassopoulos received emails from both stating that they could not attend.

CITIZEN SPEAK

Mr. Jim Clifford of Millbury spoke about the problems he has with Charter: picture stalling, sound break-ups, random break-up of pictures, and what looks like lightning strikes across the picture – see attached. Mr. Clifford has an analog television, and has the next tier up from basic (no premium channels).

Mr. Desrosiers asked Mr. Clifford if he has called Charter to express his difficulties. Mr. Clifford said he has called, and Charter has no answer.

Mr. Sullivan stated that the Charter we have now is not the same as before Comcast tried to purchase the company. In the past, a representative always attended when asked to come to a meeting.

Ms. Krumsiek told Mr. Clifford that she had the same issues with Charter and now has Verizon and has no problems with Verizon.

Mr. Coggans said Mr. Clifford should not have to make a decision between Fios and Charter; he is a Charter customer and should be taken care of. And if someone is a Fios customer they should be taken care of as well. He said he has the same issues with Charter. It seems that their equipment is inferior; he has changed his cable box 3 times in the past 2 years. When you call and you get the initial person in another part of the country, they always start by telling you there is an outage in your area, to which Mr. Coggans asks "where?" He also said there is no excuse for the representatives to be asked to attend a meeting and not show up or not send someone else. He would like a firm letter sent this time, and insists that the next time we ask them to be here that someone is here.

Mr. DiCicco wants to make sure that the next time we have Charter here at a meeting that we also invite Mr. Clifford.

Mr. Desrosiers asked that other residents with other issues should bring them to the board's attention, even including the number of telephone calls that were made and any resolution.

Mr. Sullivan suggested that when we send a letter (to Charter or Verizon) that we should send a copy to the state advisory agency (that oversees them); he thinks the companies would listen better.

Chairman DiCicco thinks we are limited in what we can demand due to our contracts. Discussion ensued about sending a letter from the Town Manager; members decided that this board should fight its own battles.

Mr. Desrosiers is most concerned about the larger picture; they were supposed to be here to discuss the complaint forms and how we have not received them. He feels that is just part of the problem and it does not address the more significant problem – that is service to the customer and the ability to respond and have a satisfactory resolution. People are feeling overwhelmed.

Chairman DiCicco will follow up and call Mr. Garabedian at Charter to tell him that someone has to be here for the May 19th meeting; he asked Kevin to contact Verizon.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The fly pack (a portable studio with 3 remote control cameras, a switching device and microphones, for shooting meetings in alternate locations that are not wired permanently) has come in and is fully operational. The switcher component they sold us will record what we need to record, but we do not have the next step to make the DVD. We cannot leave the meeting with a finished DVD to upload for playback; we need a DVD recorder. Without it we have to export the video from the Anycast (the switcher unit) to another form in order to make the DVD. The piece we need is a down converter, which can be purchased for about \$1000.00. Chairman DiCicco said that with the board's approval he should purchase it.

Mr. Carew asked if the DVD down converter is the best choice; he realizes it is the easiest, but he thinks that DVD technology will not last much longer. Should we have a digital storage unit converter? Kevin replied yes, and no. Yes, because the education playback is DVD based. In the future, when we purchase the new playback system next year, we will have digital file capability.

A new playback system has not been purchased yet as Kevin is looking into another, newer, playback system. Also, he is still waiting for a demo of new cameras before purchasing them. Mr. Desrosiers asked if Kevin could see these cameras at other public access locations; Kevin said he has already spoken with our Associate Member Mike Lawton, who works at the Marlborough studio and has one of the cameras he wants to see; Kevin also knows someone at Lexington public access who has the other camera he wants to see.

Chairman DiCicco asked if public access directors have any associations that they can belong to; Kevin has been a member of one in the past but did not find that it was as useful as he wanted it to be. The Chairman wants him to follow up on this and possibly join one of these groups.

Chairman DiCicco asked about the apprentice program. Kevin contacted a few local colleges two or three years ago and received no response. He contacted Becker College, Worcester State University and 2 others. Becker did reply that they would advise students of this but he received no emails or calls.

NEW BUSINESS - Mass General Law Chapter 44 Section 53 F ¾

The state has decided that cable access funds, or grant money, from Charter and Verizon need to be in an enterprise account, or special revenue account, so that it can be better tracked. Kevin spoke with the Town Manager who said it needs to be done by July 2017 and had he (the Town Manager) known about it 2 weeks prior he would have added it to this year's Town Meeting Warrant as it has to be accepted at Town Meeting – see attached.

Mr. Desrosiers asked what would happen if this was not approved at town meeting; Kevin said the money that cable access has in its fund would go the General Fund.

Kevin said we have to have 2 articles at the next town meeting; one to have the town accept this new law, and one to transfer the money from our current account into the new account. The Town Manager wants Kevin to meet with the Finance Director and work on this. We have already found and printed warrant articles from other towns with the wording for these articles.

Mr. Desrosiers is concerned that anything relating to cable regulations and laws does not somehow get to the communities and the public access coordinators. This was approved in 2014 and those bodies or organizations did not get this sent to the proper people.

NEXT MEETING – Thursday May 19, 2016 at the Municipal Office Building.


ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Mary Krumsiek, seconded by Joseph Coggans, to adjourn the meeting at 8:18 p.m. **Motion** carried unanimously.


Respectfully submitted,
Joyce Sampson




Paul DiCicco, Chairman



Joseph Coggans, Vice Chairman




Richard Carew, Clerk



Roger Desrosiers



Jeffrey Dore

Mary Krumsiek


Robert Sullivan