

**DRAFT**

**Sandown Cable Access Board Meeting**

**Town of Sandown, NH**

**Meeting Date: Tuesday, May 28, 2013**

**Type of Meeting: Public**

**Method of Notification: Public posting – Town Hall & Post Office**

**Meeting Location: Town Hall, Second Floor**

**Members Present:** Susan Godin – Chairman, Richard Lewis – Vice Chairman, Chris Donnellan – Station Manager and Brenda Copp – Selectwoman Ex-Officio.

Recording Secretary: Sue Reynolds

Meeting was called to order by Susan Godin at 7pm.

Chris is not present at this time.

Susan Godin stated the Board received a resignation letter from Betsy and she thanked Betsy for doing a great job and she will miss her.

Susan asked the Board to review the minutes of April 23, 2013.

**Motion by** Richard Lewis to accept the minutes of April 23, 2013 as written.

**Seconded by** Brenda Copp.

**In Favor,** Susan Godin, Richard Lewis and Brenda Copp.

**Motion passes unanimously.**

Susan asked the Board to review the minutes of May 14, 2013.

Brenda Copp stated that line 49 and 50 should read Mrs. Copp stated that there is new working on taxing polls that could influence Comcast Contract Benefits and line 85 should read....waiting for wording from Town Council.

31 **Motion by** Brenda Copp to accept the minutes from the Sandown Cable Access Board  
32 Workshop from May 14, 2013 as amended.

33 **Seconded by** Richard Lewis.

34 **In Favor,** Susan Godin, Richard Lewis and Brenda Copp.

35 **Motion passes unanimously.**

36

37

### **NEW BUSINESS**

38 There is a new member in the audience and Brenda Copp asked if she can come up and  
39 sit with the Board knowing that she can't vote until accepted by the Committee. The  
40 Board agreed to have Loraine Borin come to the table.

41 **Motion by** Brenda to accept Loraine Borin as a member of the Sandown Cable Access  
42 Board.

43 **Seconded by** Susan Godin.

44 Richard Lewis stated that when he joined the Board not too long ago he was asked to  
45 write a letter stating why he wanted to be on the Committee and is asking if Loraine  
46 should do the same. Brenda Copp asked Loraine to write a letter to the Board and  
47 Loraine agreed.

48 **In Favor,** Susan Godin, Richard Lewis and Brenda Copp.

49 **Motion passes unanimously.**

50

51

### **NEW ISSUES PENDING CONSIDERATION**

52 Chris Donnellan is present at this time.

53 Richard Lewis said he would like to respond to the items he looked into from the last  
54 meeting. He stated he contacted Brian Christensen from Comcast in regards to his  
55 questions. Richard said one of the questions was in regards to return feeds and who  
56 supplies the equipment. Chris Donnellan said after talking with other Station Managers  
57 in the area they recommended they purchase the HD version of the equipment even  
58 though HD may not be offered now it could be in the near future. Chris also stated that  
59 the signal is improved with the HD equipment. Chris said he will ask Brian about the  
60 wording of the contract in regards to adding HD in the future if they are not willing to  
61 provide it now. Susan Godin said this should be 3.2 of the contract and Brenda Copp

62 suggested adding it to the contract prior to the Public Hearing. The Committee agreed to  
63 move the Public Hearing date to the September meeting. Richard Lewis said he spoke to  
64 the Fire Department and they are not interested in the return feed to their building and  
65 neither is the Police Department so the return feeds are limited to the Library and  
66 Recreation Building. Chris Donnellan feels it makes sense to do the Police Station if they  
67 change locations. Richard Lewis said with the PEG Channel there is only 1 channel and  
68 that is Channel 17. He also said he asked about a Low Income Program and Comcast  
69 said that it does exist and it is limited to Broadband only with no cable TV and limited to  
70 families with 1 child that is eligible to participate in the National School Lunch Program.  
71 Richard wanted to the Board's opinion as to whether or not they should include this in  
72 their contract with Comcast.

73 **Motion by** Richard Lewis to put the Low Income Package that would include economy  
74 internet and basic cable.

75 **Seconded by** Susan Godin.

76 Brenda Copp is opposed to this because of the wording of and feels it may drop other  
77 items out of the contract. She said she feels Comcast would have to approve this for all  
78 Towns and not just Sandown. Richard feels that we won't know unless we ask. Richard  
79 said if the Board agrees, he would like to create the wording for the contract as he feels  
80 this would bring them more visibility and potentially more business. Brenda is concerned  
81 as to where would the cost be passed onto and Richard said he will ask them that question  
82 as well. Susan Godin feels it won't hurt to ask and is in favor of Richard creating the  
83 wording for the contract.

84 **In Favor** Richard Lewis and Susan Godin.

85 **Opposed** Brenda Copp.

86 **Motion passes 2-1-0**

87 Richard said he will draft the proposal and email it to the Board members for feedback  
88 prior to it being added to the contract. Brenda said the email can be sent out for review  
89 but the input needs to be done at the next meeting.

90

91 Richard stated that he inquired about Comcast providing video on demand service and  
92 they do not offer that at this time. Richard stated the current Franchise Rate is 2% and he

93 looked into other Town's and this is what he found out. Derry and Danville are at 3%,  
94 Chester is 1%, Hampstead at 2%, Fremont at 0%. Susan said Hampstead is negotiating at  
95 this time and Newton is at 5%. Brenda Copp asked how old the contracts are and  
96 Richard said that is not something he asked. Chris said that Derry is 1 ½ years. Richard  
97 also asked Comcast who would provide what equipment and Comcast said they would  
98 provide actual line and the modulator the Community would need to provide end user  
99 equipment, such as microphones, lighting, etc.

100

101

102

### **REVIEW OF THE BUDGET**

103 Richard said he wanted to review the Franchise Fee that is currently at 2%. He said the  
104 Town has the right to raise this up to 5%. Richard referred to a document of the budget  
105 overview from the Finance Director. Richard said the figures were based on a 9% growth  
106 rate from 2004 – 2012. He feels the numbers in the first few years are artificially low and  
107 does not feel that there will be a 9% growth rate moving forward. He said he started  
108 from today and looked at the budget for 1 year, 5 years or 10 years and also with a growth  
109 rate of 3%, 4% and 5% for projections. Brenda asks where the 3, 4 and 5% figures come  
110 from as the figures done on the 9% increase are actual numbers. Richard stated that the  
111 first few years of the report are very low and doesn't feel that a 9% growth will continue,  
112 which is why he estimated at 3, 4 and 5%. Again Brenda Copp states that the figures on  
113 the report are actual figures that need to be taken into consideration. Brenda referred to  
114 several line items not adding up for future years. Chris Donnellan said he feels that  
115 Richard's rationale works for some of the line items but not all. He refers to the Legal line  
116 and also refers to where they want the station to be in the future. He feels the payroll line  
117 is very low for the upcoming years and feels the staff will be doing more than just Town  
118 Meetings and hopes this will be taken into consideration. Chris also refers to the  
119 audio/video equipment line and feels the amount allowed may not be enough as well.  
120 Again Richard says that the last 10 years are artificially high and he tried to put in  
121 reasonable estimates for the upcoming years. He said that although it appears to have  
122 increased at a rate of 9% he feels it won't continue to increase at that rate which is why  
123 he chose 3, 4 and 5%. He stated that if he used the 5% figure that would bring the total

124 budget up to \$40,000.00 and he also wanted to mention that there is a balance in the  
125 account of about \$50,000.00 and there has been a budget surplus of about \$8,000.00 per  
126 year. Richard said if the rates were raised from 2% to 3% the franchise fee would go  
127 from \$26,000.00 per year to \$39,000.00, which would create a \$13,000.00 budget surplus  
128 for one year. Richard said if the Board is going to raise the franchise rates he wants to  
129 have a clear understanding as to why they are being raised and what the money is going  
130 to be spent on and feels that the Board can't answer that right now. Brenda Copp refers  
131 back to the report supplied with the lines of Telephone, Supplies and Audio/Video  
132 equipment and feels that the numbers are accurate and not inflated and according to  
133 Richards' proposal there won't be enough money in the budget to run it properly. Brenda  
134 also stated the Finance Director projected the budget in 2022 to be \$61,000.00. She also  
135 stated the reason there is \$44,000.00 in the account is because the Committee hasn't spent  
136 money in past years. Chris Donnellan stated he has visions far beyond the cable station  
137 now and would like that to be taken into consideration.

138 **Motion by** Brenda Copp to increase the Franchise Fees to 5% in the new contract for the  
139 next 10 years.

140 **Seconded by** Susan Godin.

141 Brenda said she has a premium contract with Comcast and her increase with the 5% will  
142 be between \$2.50 and \$3.00 more. She said she doesn't want to see cable leave the Town  
143 of Sandown and feels we have an excellent Station Manager and wants to provide him  
144 with the finances he needs to keep the station running smoothly. Richard Lewis agrees  
145 that Chris is doing an outstanding job and wants to be sure that the ratepayers of  
146 Sandown know what they are being charged for but at this point he doesn't feel the Board  
147 can identify that. Brenda Copp said they are increasing the Franchise Fees to run  
148 Channel 17. Chris explains that Richard feels that the 9% is inflated because of the  
149 amount in 2004 was very low because money wasn't being spent. Chris states that  
150 although he disagrees with what Richard is saying he understands it. Chris said if the  
151 station was running as it should have been and money was being spent then that number  
152 would have been higher in 2004/5 and there wouldn't be such an increase up to 2012.  
153 Chris asked for the future if the Board can do a 5 year plan vs a 10 year plan and look at  
154 the differences there. Richard agrees with Chris' statement and says that he never

155 questioned the Finance Director's figures. He just wants to look at all areas of the budget  
156 before being in favor of an increase of the Franchise Fees.

157 ***In Favor*** Brenda Copp and Susan Godin.

158 ***Opposed*** Richard Lewis

159 ***Motion passes 2-1-0***

160

161

162 Susan Godin states there will be no meeting with Comcast on June 25<sup>th</sup>.

163

164 Chris Donnellan compared apples to oranges by saying that Derry's Franchise Fees at  
165 3.5% generates income of \$300,000.00 per year because of the number of residents in the  
166 town.

167

168 Brenda Copp asked if the Board members received the new wording on the licensing  
169 polls change. Brenda shared the information with the Board and said the attorney will  
170 add it to the contract where it should be. Brenda explains that each poll is on Right of  
171 Ways of what the Town owns and says they are being taxed on the telephone lines and  
172 Granite State is looking for a rebate. They said that unless all users are taxed then no  
173 users can be taxed. This notice says that the Town can tax them. Richard asks if this  
174 does happen what would the costs be and Brenda said the cost can amount to hundreds of  
175 thousands of dollars to the Town. Richard said he is concerned that if this does happen  
176 then Comcast will be passing the charges onto the ratepayers of the Town. Brenda  
177 explained that states that the Town can charge them, not that they will, and the monies  
178 collected will go into the General Fund and offset the property taxes for the following  
179 year and would far outweigh the amount being charged to the residents. Richard stated  
180 that the next steps in preparing for the contract should be getting the wording and updates  
181 to the cable attorneys for review and possible recommendations. He said he is not sure  
182 where the proposal of the low income portion should go and he will reach out to the cable  
183 attorney. Chris also said the HD wording needs to be inserted into the contract as well.  
184 Richard offered again to meet with the cable attorney and Chris offered to go with him.  
185 Chris passed out the monthly budget report and asked that a few bills be paid.

186 Susan Godin stated that the next Cable meeting will be June 25, 2013.

187

188 ***Motion by*** Brenda Copp to go into non public session under RSA 91A:II(b) hiring

189 ***Seconded by*** Susan Godin

190 Richard Lewis – yes, Susan Godin – yes, Brenda Copp – yes.

191 ***Motion passes unanimously.***

192

193 It was announced that while in non public session the minutes of the meeting were sealed.

194 The Cable Committee hired David Koles and Daniel Peters for the broadcasting positions

195 at a rate \$10.00 per hour with a 60 day review. Also they Cable Committee hired Sue

196 Reynolds as the Recording Secretary at a rate of \$17.32 per hour.

197

198 Meeting adjourned 9:30

199

200 Respectfully submitted,

201 Sue Reynolds

202