

STURBRIDGE CABLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF 9/9/14

John Clancey called the meeting of the Cable Advisory Committee to order at 4:30p.m. The following members were also present: Bruce Butcher, Steve Greenberg, Steve Tieri and Don Fairbrother (Kadion Phillips was unable to attend).

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES John Clancy made a motion to accept the minutes of 8/5/14. Steve Greenberg seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

DISCUSSION ON CONTRACT PLAN WITH BILL AUGUST:

- John Clancey provided a brief synopsis to Bill August in order to determine in which direction we should be going with our contract. Our contract will expire on April 26th, 2015. We did a town-wide survey and are in the process of processing that. We have received 202 responses so far. We are hoping to have a public hearing by the end of the month. We want to determine what we would like to see in the contract and also determining if we wanted to go with a 5 or 10 year contract. We would invite Charter to the public hearing. It would be good to have testimony from a good cross-section of people talking about the needs for the town of Sturbridge. Bill provided an introductory overview of the cable renewal process. Such topics were reviewed including; the Federal franchise renewal statute, License renewal public hearing, Overview of procedural framework for cable television franchise renewal and creating a record of ‘ascertainment’ of community cable needs, usually including adoption of ascertainment findings, including budgets for studio operating and capital/equipment needs, subject to Town needs. The most important things to consider: PEG Access and cable-related needs, budgets and capital and operating budgets. Bill also discussed the Federal statute on public, educational and governmental access. He shared sample Ascertainment Findings for future adaptation and possible Board of Selectmen adoption if needed. Bill suggested that we develop the budgets, this will make it easy for the cable company. They want to see what our budgets are with itemization, they will appreciate and respect that, collaborative negotiations. He suggested doing an analysis and then developing an equipment and capital budget (as realistic and accurate as possible, a credible figure). We also need to be aware and advise the town regarding the potential contract transfer if Comcast is to take over ownership and hold a public hearing regarding the pending license transfer application. Another thing to think about is with a 5 year license option, we may be able to to an amendment vs. a whole new license renewal, however, a full new renewal is the only way to go for a 10-year renewal which would yield much more capital dollars.

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PRODUCTION COORDINATOR'S REPORT

- We are covering all of the town government meetings; however we did miss one meeting last week due to lack of staff.
- After consulting with the interim Town Administrator, Suzanne Kennedy, Bruce recruited Attn.

Bill August to help us with Charter contract negotiations.

- Bruce has three new camera recruits. Training for one of them begins tonight at the Planning Board meeting in the COB. If they work out, he'll have a staff of six. Bruce put some new training aids together.
- Had problems with the cablecast over the Labor Day weekend. Government Chanel 11 was out from Friday August 29th through Tuesday evening September 2nd. Bruce was on phone with Tightrope customer service thinking we might have a server problem but it ended up being a Charter issue.
- Members of the "Friends of the Sturbridge Public Library" came to Bruce for consultation on another project. They're considering one project per month.
- Last Thursday Bruce recorded his final program at WESO Radio. He has recorded many, many programs over the last two years. If he created a studio space in the Senior Center, he'd continue recording "Politics As Usual" and whatever other shows we can.
- The cost for setting up a studio set-up at the Senior Center...
- Paying Lawyer Bill August will play a financial role in the Senior Center.

ORIGINAL PROGRAMMING ON SCTV

Weekly Drive-In Movie; Sat. 8pm

Gourmet Grannies series

Senior Center Seminars/Events

Second Chance Animal Shelter series

WESO Various guest programs:

WESO Bob Briere Sturbridge History series

WESO Politics as Usual series

WESO Know the Law with Thomas Marino series

UPDATE ON THE MAILINGS/SURVEY UPDATE:

- We have 202 survey so far and hopefully all of them will be entered by the end of the week.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Don and Bruce will work on the budget reports for the next meeting, including a capital budget and an operational budget.

The next meeting was scheduled for 4:30 p.m., October 14, 2014, in the second floor conference room of the Town Hall.

On a motion made by John Clancey, seconded by Steve Greenberg, and voted 3-0 the meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.