CABLE TV ADVISORY COUNCIL V

Theresa Mulvey Town Office Building
Westbrook CT 06498

Minutes of Council Meeting – June 15, 2010

	SELECTMAN APPOINTEE	BOARD OF EDUCATION APPOINTEE	OTHER	
CHESTER				
CLINTON	**Elizabeth Siegel, Treasurer Wayne Church, Secretary**		***(Absent Rich Santonelli, Library Representative)***	
DEEP RIVER	**Rolf Peterson**			
DURHAM	**Hank Robinson**			
ESSEX	**Rick Stebbins**			
HADDAM	**Robert Zavod**			
HIGGANUM/ KILLINGWORTH		**Chuck Lewis**		
OLD SAYBROOK	**Kingman Snow (8:10PM)**	**Mike Terry**		
WESTBROOK	**Mary McCabe Bob Mathis, Chairman**			

John Bairos, Comcast Dan Matteson, Comcast Public Access Coordinator

GUESTS:

Adam Sullivan, 9 Barley Hill Road, Old Saybrook
Ken Hayward, 24 James Road East, Durham
Belinda Jones, 632 West Pond Meadow Road, Westbrook
Lauren Agnelli, 242 Middlesex Avenue, Chester
Brian Stiles, 173Wesley Avenue, Westbrook
Kathleen Skoezan, 13 Thrush Cross Road, Clinton

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Rob Mathis called the meeting to Order AT 7:05. Ms. Siegel announced that Roland Laine's (Old Saybrook Executive Assistant to the First Selectman) mother, Florence Henrietta van Doorn Laine had passed away.

COMCAST REPORT

John Bairos offered the floor to the members of the public.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Adam Sullivan - Former Chair of the Democratic Town Committee, long time member of the Red Cross, has produced several Public Access shows with Dan Matteson's expertise. Very concerned if Comcast sells this Public Access service to a 3rd party, will the studio be available and in this geographic area, what will be hours of operation. Matteson is professional, courteous, always available and very much appreciated. Matteson trains, edits and produces shows with us to be sure we know how to use the system. This type of customer service is so valuable. He would hate to lose Dan if the operation is moved to a 3rd party.

Belinda Jones – Are DPUC and CATV Council meetings recorded and shown on Public Access? Bairos if they were, Channel 99 - CTN (Connecticut Network). Some of the DPUC meetings are recorded, not all and that none of the CATV Council meetings are recorded.

Lauren Agnelli - expressed her concerns over the possibility of losing Dan Matteson and the studio. Dan has been so responsive to her questions and helpful with her needs. Wants the studio here.

COMCAST REPORT

Bairos stated Comcast's planning to transition the public access franchise, assets and equipment to Walter Mann's non-profit currently operating the "North Haven T.V." franchise with volunteer producers and a 10-member board. Several sites are being considered for locating the studio in the "Shoreline T.V." service area; Mann is working with realtors. Comcast is very comfortable with the one bid they have received. They have addressed favoritism elsewhere it is a legitimate concern.

Several guests asked Bairos if they were to create a non-profit with membership from this area to operate this franchise would Comcast consider this proposal or was it too late to submit? Bairos said that proposals are always welcome and will be reviewed, Comcast is very comfortable with the one bid they have received.

Bairos - Council was created by State Statute to assist in arbitrating disputes and making suggestions to Comcast. Council has no say in what is spent. Government programming will go from 2 to 3 channels. New non profit board will include community members and will hire someone to run the studio. Bairos said the board determines the hours of operation. Council will work with Comcast and board.

This Council is asking Comcast to inform every subscriber that the August 24th CATV Council meeting will invite public comments on this proposal, Mann will present his proposal. Bairos was asked to report that this Council recommends including in its billing statements a notice that August 24th meeting invites public comment and inspection of this proposal.

All guests and representatives were very concerned and unhappy that the non-profits' board structure consists of 5 members from the North Haven franchise area and only 5 members from this franchise area. This area consists of nine towns where North Haven is one. Each town should be allowed at least one representative. The proposed membership is not equal representation.

Kathleen Skoezan – Public Access is very important, resources for information that are available now are insufficient. There's no way to transition without management costs. Her $6.59 contribution to these services is best spent on current management structure and Dan Matteson who is available 40+ hours per week. Matteson meticulously teaches, advises and assists with production. Non-profits come with nice

salaries which need to be communicated to all this Council and all subscribers. Why was there no Request for Proposals issued? How could the subscribers know that proposals were anticipated? Not a responsible procedure. Outsourcing is never beneficial. She has many associates who could consider another service. Comcast should not fix what is not broken.

Lauren Agnelli – 2 Concerns – how many franchises does Mann have? Concerned about monopoly. Why won't Comcast consider another proposal? Bairos said Comcast is very comfortable with the one bid they have received. Mann has a good reputation with DPUC.

Mike Terry – Can assets and equipment be taken back if non-profit is unsatisfactory? Yes. Mann does not live in this service area? This service area should be managed by its subscribers. Can Mann acquire all 7 franchises? (No reply) Will Comcast consider a proposal from locals? There are parties interested but if Comcast is not open to consider another proposal we don't want to waste our time. Has Comcast already decided? Bairos said Comcast is very comfortable with the one bid they have received.

Belinda Jones – Adamantly opposed to outsourcing public access operations for our 9 towns to anyone out of area. How can they know our teachers, the makeup of our towns, our public access history and future needs and plans? The proposed board make up is nebulous. The proposal would include layers of salaries vs. our operational costs. The communities have not been advised of this plan, how can this move forward?

Mike Terry – How many towns can North Haven or Mann serve? What are current salaries? What are anticipated salaries? Not enough information is available. Concerned that AT&T U-verse isn't required to provide public access.

Chuck Lewis – Has communicated with education leaders, has been local voice for local communities, is pleased we are a local organization. If we lose local control where will $6.59 be spent? Now it goes to cover management salaries, insurance, pensions, insurance, taxes & benefits. Will it be reserved for this area? Will it be spent among both franchises? What backdoor discussions have there been? Concerned over blending 2 operations together/monopoly. Any guarantees that head end will remain in this area? Yes. Can't the new board decide move it? No reply.

John Bairos – Understands and has expressed these concerns to Corporate. The $6.59 stays here, board will have local members who will review policies and procedures for operations. There are 28 operators in State not all run Community Access. There's small group of experienced operators. Mann is dedicated to community access.

Brian Stiles – has interned with Clinton and is concerned over losing local control, local studio, and only having 5 members for 9 towns? Concerned proposal isn't public record, hasn't been made available.

Robert Zavod – Isn't main purpose to provide public access service locally? Bairos - "Meaningful service". Zavod - Does the Council approve of this plan? No.

Rolf Peterson – What is the definition of meaningful service? Are there inefficiencies now? How much money will Comcast save?

Mathis – Some points from Representative Marilyn Giuliano: The spirit of the legislation for local access is best served if smaller service areas remain; If conglomerates are the proposed direction of the industry, then the public should weigh in with the next legislature (January 2011) with public hearing testimony to see what the public input is; Rather than change the organizational structure of cable access with bigger areas, the DPUC should 'stay put' with the current legislation and bring this issue before the next legislature; CT has an aging population demographic. TV is still a watched and preferred medium of information and entertainment; Newer social networking venues are not nearly as popular; Cable access legislation as it is currently written seeks to support local control and local access; A move to bigger access areas reduces consumer access and reduces the times and opportunities for true local programming options. Thank you Representative Giuliano.

Mathis - We have asked Comcast to advise its subscribers of their intent to transition the public access to a 3rd party by simply putting a notice on the monthly bills and to invite feedback. Mathis hopes that more than one proposal is considered and that a proposal from the local community especially be submitted. Bairos said Comcast is very comfortable with the one bid they have received.

Wayne Church – we need to see and understand the proposal. We need to inform the subscribers of Comcast's plan and get feedback from them. How do they feel about Mann's proposal? Board structure, etc?

Robinson **MOVED** that the Council recommend that Comcast notify all subscribers in the 9-town area via a notice on the next monthly bills of its intent to transition Clinton Community Access facility to a 3rd party non-profit managed by Walter Mann who will present his proposal to the Council and public for comments/concerns at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the CATV Council on August 24th . Zavod **SECONDED.** Discussion. Bairos will mail a copy of Mann's proposal to Mathis for receipt by the first week in July. Mathis will advise DPUC of the need for time to organize and submit a proposal for consideration.

Belinda Jones - very important to inform the subscribers in advance.

Church - we need to alert and inform your subscribers and allow for input. **MOTION Unanimously carried.**

Mathis asked Bairos if Comcast will put notice on bill. No. They can put it on the Public Access Channel. Council asked Comcast to make an insert for the bill. McCabe **MOVED** to cover the cost of said insert, Siegel **SECONDED**. Discussion. Since Comcast will save money they should pay for the insert and see that every single subscriber is notified. **McCabe WITHDREW the Motion, Siegel WITHDREW her SECOND.**

MINUTES/NOTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING – Terry **MOVED** to enter the April 20th notes as the record of a sub-committee meeting and to include them as approved in the Minutes from tonight's meeting. Robinson **SECONDED. Motion carried** with **Abstentions** by Church and Robinson**.**

McCabe **MOVED** to defer the additional business items on the Agenda to next meeting. Terry **SECONDED**. **Motion carried.**

PUBLIC ACCESS REPORT Submitted by Matteson will be added to the Minutes for review. The following are highlights of Public Access activities: Town of Durham had 6 volunteers (including the 1st Selectman) complete production workshop. Two volunteers also completed workshops in order to

serve as crew. Four new shows are currently in production and are (or soon will be) on the air. "Sounds Local", "Finding Bliss", "Shore Talk", and the Durham show which is yet to be titled. By July we should have a total of 9 programs which air weekly on Channel 19 that are produced in house.

Clerk Plancon will advise the 9 towns and request they post an announcement.

Siegel – has received bill from Plancon for September 2009 and April 2010 for $211.40 Robinson **MOVED** to approve, Church **SECONDED**. **Unanimously carried.**

Lewis submitted a Past Due bill from October for $425.00 for Audio Visual Systems for a DVD player. Robinson **MOVED** to approve, Church **SECONDED**. **Unanimously carried.**

ADJOURNMENT
There being no further business, Stebbins **MOVED** to adjourn at 9:20 P.M.; **Seconded** by Robinson, **Unanimously Carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

Gale Plancon

NEXT MEETING
AUGUST 24th
7:00P.M.

Gale notice to all towns to announce