

MEETING MINUTES AUGUST 7th, 2007
FREMONT CABLE ACCESS CONTRACT RENEWAL COMMITTEE

Minutes Approved 08/21/2007

ATTENDEES:

CHAIRMAN - Brande McLean
Members - Peter Bearse
 Tom McGall
 Warren Yee
 Larry Morse
 Keith Stanton

Taking notes: Linda Stanton

Guest: Paula Bonasoro- Selectperson from Sandown &
Sandown Cable Committee, Chairperson.
Invited to attend by Brande McLean

Kathleen Bailey- Rockingham News

Neil Rowland-Fremont resident

Meeting called to order at 7:30PM.

Chair McLean thanked Kathleen Bailey for her article in the
Rockingham News.

A motion was made to accept the minutes of 7/24.

Mbr. Bearse said that not everyone had the chance to read the minutes
because Town hall had not given them to everyone and did not want to
waste meeting time reading them now.

Member Morse made a motion to table the motion. All in favor.

Several members made note that Jay Sommers from Comcast was not at
the meeting.

Mbr. Stanton said that the info packet given to us said that
'someone' from Comcast would be at every meeting.

Member Yee said that he had contacted Kevin from the Raymond Cable
Committee. He had a copy of the policy manual and other info on
bulletin board procedures. Warren said that the information was a
real eye opener because of the equipment they have and 2 production
rooms and a part time employee.

Guest Paula said that Sandown has a tiny space in Town Hall. She said
that she thinks that Sandown's cable contract extends to 2017.

Mbr. McGall asked Paula if the Selectmen in Sandown were receptive to
the idea of having the equipment in Town Hall. Paula said that they
were not, at first.

Mbr. Yee said that Kevin (from Raymond) was not there when the contract was written and could not say what Comcast had offered. Mbr. Morse said that we could get a copy of Raymond's contract and verify data and concessions when it was signed.

Guest Paula said to put that in writing when you ask for it. Information will be due within 5 days.

Mbr. Morse said that if we are going to get equipment it should be digital because within 5 years that is what is going to be needed. Paula said that it is essential that it be digital.

Paula said that franchise fees are to be used for nothing but cable access costs. She reported that Sandown gets \$20,000 per year from Comcast (two \$10,000 checks).

Chair Brande said that this appears to have been going on for almost 20 years (2 cent F.F.)

Mbr. Stanton said that he has asked the Selectmen where the 2 cents per month goes, and has not received an answer yet.

Mbr. McGall said that the Selectmen had put a tax on the lines and poles of the electric company and wondered if Comcast has to pay any of that and if Verizon has to pay any.

Mbr. Morse thought that only transmission towers are taxed and said that taxes on poles are different than franchise fees. Larry handed out copies of Newton's Cable Contract (24 pages). He pointed out the "definition" section and the section where you negotiate what you want and the length of contract.

Larry explained that Newton got \$25,000 from Comcast and franchise fee. Atkinson got \$20,000 and Comcast keeps the money and gives equipment of equal value. The money is kept in Comcast's account. Guest Paula said that was illegal. She has spoken to the Legal Center and Town attorney. The money can not be spent on anything else but cable access. She also reported that Towns can lose their access rights if they don't use the channels.

McLean asked when the 'Public Hearing' for the Committee was. Sept 18th was agreed on.

Mbr. Morse said that we needed to give advance notice for that hearing.

Everyone discussed where Old Ridge Road is and how far Comcast had wired it.

Chair McLean announced that the Selectmen would like to have the Committee meet with them on the 16th to give a progress report. It was mentioned that Comcast had not provided us with the spread sheet they promised us for this week. That spread sheet was going to give us the costs we are looking for.

It was mentioned that we do not have enough information to give the selectmen a complete report. Mbr. Stanton said that we are all still on a 'fact finding' mission and not into any negotiating yet. The costs of line 'drops' was bounced around and the fact that how many drops we ask for depends on the cost of each one. Comcast has not provided us that information.

It was mentioned that some people have said that they do not want to be video taped and have it broadcast.

Paula said that if you are a public servant, you will be taped. She said that the elderly and other people who can not go to these types of meetings need to see them at home. She said that Sandown broadcasts everything live except selectmen's meetings. Those are tape delayed because they tend to run into other scheduled programming. She reported that they sell copies of their tapes to earn extra money. She said that the Town and/or Comcast may owe the subscribers a credit for their franchise fee payments.

Mbr. Larry asked if we can find out if Comcast gave any money to the Town.

Guest Paula said that we **NEED** to find that out.

Mbr Morse said that bulletin boards can be run on local stations and we need to ask the selectmen to approve that.

Chair McLean said that all three of Fremont's State Reps. Were asked to come to this meeting and that one responded that he had company coming. Mbr. Stanton said that he got a message fro Rep. Pennington Brown that he was 'vacationing' in the mid-coast of Maine.

Mbr Bearse asked if the franchise fees can be spent on PEG programming. Paula answered, yes!

Mbr. Morse thought that the space used up in the Town Newsletter could be better posted on the access channel's bulletin board'. Paula said to make sure that we keep the selectmen informed on what is happening.

It was decided that the spread sheet from Comcast was a priority to get.

It was decided to go up the chain of command of Comcast and notify Wendy Copithorne (director of Northeast access). Paula mentioned that it would be good to have a booth at 'Old Home Days' events.

Mbr. McGall asked if we should all go to the selectmen's meeting. It was agreed that we all should.

Mbr. Yee mentioned that Raymond's equipment is in the High School.

A motion was made to adjourn at 8:55PM. Seconded by McGall and Morse. Motion to adjourn passed.

Submitted by: Linda Stanton