

**Town of Ipswich
Cable Renewal Advisory Committee
Meeting on March 20, 2017**

Meeting Minutes

Pursuant to the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. Chapter 30A, §§ 18 25, written notice posted by the Town Clerk and informed to all Board members, a meeting of the Cable Advisory Committee was held on Monday March 20, 2017 at 7:00 P.M. in the Resource Room located on the Lower Floor at 25 Green Street, Ipswich MA., The meeting began at 7:05 pm with a quorum present.

Members Present: Eric Krathwohl (Chair), Frank Antonucci, Elizabeth Meyer, Jim Maloney, Pat McNally, Special Counsel Bill Hewig, Rachel Roesler

Jay Somers is the Comcast Representative and joined the meeting at 8pm for Draft Contract Review

Purpose of the Meeting

Eric Krathwohl, Committee Chair opened the meeting stating that the purpose is to review the Comcast proposal. Special Counsel Bill Hewig began the contract proposal review and discussed various cable related issues. Comcast must match the Verizon level of support due to the level playing field clause.

Citizen Inquiries: None

Discussion of Cable Issues

The negotiation process with Comcast is different because Ipswich has completed the Verizon contract. Verizon did provide Ipswich with all of the requested support based on the ascertainment process. Comcast proposed \$60,000 in support which does not meet the cable needs in Ipswich based on the ascertainment process. If Comcast does not meet the needs of Ipswich then the company will not get a cable license. Rachel Roesler inquired about whether granting a 7 year term will be a disadvantage for the Comcast negotiations. Mr. Hewig stated that Comcast has a different opinion on the term of the contract. They are more likely to grant a license of ten years. The Comcast negotiation is simple. The Town receives funding and the company must address any technical issues on set-up. There are no technical issues but need to give address for setup.

Mr. Hewig stated that Plymouth, Long Meadow and Amhearst will meet with Comcast in two years to discuss the possibility of developing PEG HD. Beth mentioned that there is a private company that is able to provide a program guide feature based on a monthly fee. Jim Maloney talked with Newton about program schedules and the contract differences between the two companies. In the old contract Comcast would grant \$100,000 for PEG access needs but take back the funding through deductions over 5 years from the franchise fee. Verizon contract of 2007 was more generous. Mr. Hewig and Mr. Maloney discuss capital grants. It is permitted to

use funding for both capital projects and operational funding and there is no conventional separation of the two funding purposes. PEG funds must not be used to build a ball field or fill potholes but all spending needs to be cable related. We need to get what we need based on the business plan calculations. Payments are quarterly. The liquidated damages section on signal quality is not there but the technology has improved so that clause is not needed.

Draft Contract Review:

Jay Somers joined the meeting at 8pm and Special Counsel Hewig led the negotiation with significant input from various Cable Advisory Committee Members. The Cable Committee asks for the 4% contribution from Comcast which is the same as Verizon. The calculation for capital is 65 cents per subscriber. Mr. Somers then asked a series of questions about cable operations, programming offerings, sports and volunteer participation. He inquired about the community survey that was conducted as a part of the ascertainment process in 2015 and Frank Antonucci will send him the final report. Mr. Somers then shifted the conversation to talk about the request for public safety cameras on town buildings and questioned whether it is cable related. The committee in general asked about senior discount for cable customers and Mr. Somers mentioned doing a side letter agreement on the issue. Comcast accepts a 10 year term and needs an updated list public buildings that will receive the cable hook-up. The new cable is located at 127 High Street and ICAM can go live in 3 different locations. Mr. Somers needs to consult with his company and will respond with a timeline for the cable renewal process.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes from the 12/6/16 meeting are approved with two edits.

Next Meeting Date & Timeline:

Some tentative dates for the next meeting are April 25th or May 3rd.

New Business: None

Adjoin at 8:15