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CABLE TELEVISION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MARCH 26, 2019
130 Main Street, Sandwich, MA 02563
5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Douglas Lapp, Assistant Town Manager, Burt Fisher, Michael Solitro, Susan Miller, Richard McLean and Sean Rausch

ALSO PRESENT: Paula Johnson, Sandwich Community Television

- **Committee Organization**

Ms. Miller motions to appoint Mr. Solitro as Chair of the Cable Television Advisory Committee. Mr. Rausch seconds. The vote is unanimous.

Ms. Miller motions to appoint Mr. Rausch as the Vice-Chair of the Cable Television Advisory Committee. Mr. Fisher seconds. The vote is unanimous.

The committee members agree to have Ms. Watts continue to act as recording secretary as long as her schedule allows for it.

- **Old Business**

Mr. Lapp informs the committee members that at a recent meeting, the Board of Selectmen formally voted for the Cable TV Committee to hold the Ascertainment Hearing. Mr. Lapp has already posted the agenda and the public hearing will take place on April 30, 2019 at 7:30 p.m. in the Town Hall auditorium. Mr. Lapp reads an email from Atty. August that says the committee will be able to discuss rates with the public at the hearing, but they will not be able to negotiate rates as part of the license renewal. Ms. Miller would like to see the annual report from Sandwich Community Television (SCTV) and Mr. Fisher asks about the current number of viewers in Town. Ms. Johnson says the server will let her know the number of people viewing online content, but there is no way of knowing how many viewers are watching the PEG channels at any given time. Mr. Lapp says that one member from the Board of Selectmen may be in attendance. Additionally, Michael Galla, Senior Manager of Government and Regulatory Affairs, and Atty. August will be present. The committee will sit at the front of the auditorium. He feels a sign-up sheet should be utilized to document attendees that choose to speak. The legal ad will run in the "Sandwich Enterprise" two consecutive weeks leading up to the hearing. SCTV can run ads with the information to help spread the word. Mr. Solitro would like to put together information to let the public know that if they want to support SCTV and voice concerns over customer service they must attend the Ascertainment Hearing. This can be done with an ad in the local paper. Mr. Lapp encourages members to reach out to other Towns to see what they will be negotiating as each Town has its own licensing agreement. Falmouth has an active cable committee. Ms. Johnson offers to get the contact information for their Chair. Ms. Miller says they need to make sure residents are aware this hearing is to voice concerns regarding cable television only not internet issues.

Next, the committee members discuss the survey which will be used as a tool to gather information from customers about their cable television experiences. This will give the committee an idea of important items to negotiate with Comcast to include in the renewal agreement. The survey can be



prepared after the hearing, but Mr. Lapp would like the committee to begin working on the questions as soon as possible. He suggests utilizing the next meeting as a working session or even having members create a subcommittee that will be responsible for creating the survey. Mr. Fisher says he found the Town of Ludlow survey to be the best example that Mr. Lapp provided. Mr. Lapp adds the new Town website has functionality which would allow him to create an online survey and the results would be sent directly to him. It would not cost any money. Hard copies can then be made available for residents who do not want to go online. The committee members would like to have the survey and information available at the library and Council on Aging as well as using SCTV to spread the word through the PEG channels and social media. The committee members will all work on survey questions between now and the next meeting after the hearing.

There is a brief discussion about the number of subscribers year to year and that recently the numbers have been declining due to customers cutting the cord and/or jumping around from provider to provider. The committee also discusses the customer service office and renegotiating that in the licensing agreement. Mr. Lapp says it might be a good idea to get Mashpee residents to voice their support for keeping the Sandwich office open. The last negotiation kept the Sandwich office open because Mashpee agreed to close. They all agree that some of the survey questions should focus on customer service issues and whether people like utilizing the office or prefer dealing with issues over the phone or through web chats. As of now, there are customer service offices in Falmouth, Hyannis, West Yarmouth, Orleans and Sandwich. If Sandwich closes, there will not be one in this general vicinity. Mr. Lapp points committee members to Form 500 in their binders which include a Comcast complaint log as well as information on service interruptions.

- ***Approval of Minutes***

Mr. Rausch motions to approve the minutes from the meeting on February 26, 2019 as written. Ms. Miller seconds. The vote is unanimous.

- ***New Business***

The committee agrees to hold their next meeting on May 14, 2019 at 5:30 p.m.

- ***Public Comment***

None

- ***Adjournment***

Mr. Rausch motions to adjourn. Ms. Miller seconds. The vote is unanimous.

The meeting adjourns at 6:26 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Laura C. Watts
Recording Secretary