

Montague Cable Advisory Committee  
Meeting was remote by Zoom  
Meeting Minutes for August 13, 2024.

Meeting convened 8/13/2023 at 5PM.

Members present: Jason Burbank, Rick Kuklewicz, Kristi Bodin, Ryne Hager.

Also present: Town Administrator Walter Ramsey, Assistant town manager Chris Nolan-Zeller. MCTV's Dean Garvin joined shortly after the meeting was called to order.

Meeting was called to order 5:05 PM

## 1. Review and Approve Minutes

Minutes were approved unanimously with no discussion.

## 2. Debrief on Survey to Unserved Residences

Chris provided a briefing on the process, methodology, and results of the survey for those identified as underserved by Comcast cable. Thirteen identified households in which cable service is not available (all in Millers Falls) were provided with surveys, and three responses were returned, all stating no interest in Comcast cable connection.

Dean Garvin joined during a discussion regarding methodology for identifying the households. The town lacked up-to-date "strand maps" provided by Comcast, though the town has asked for a map from Comcast or a list of households not served. Chris noted that he cross-referenced both cable and internet access systems through Comcast's sign-up process, and both were in agreement — though Chris stressed he didn't focus on internet access in either outreach or research, rather cable access provided by Comcast.

### a. Consider additional steps in Ascertainment Process

Jason Burbank noted that we may be able to call the ascertainment process complete following this, as the town's needs and MCTV's needs are now known and clear. The formal vs. informal process stages were discussed as a lead into the draft licensing agreement.

## 3. Update on Draft License Agreement

Kristi corrected a couple of typos and errors in the license and that details were in agreement both internally to the document and in regards to our requests for changes in the contract. One

page in the document will require greater edits on the part of the attorney, as it may have been a boilerplate inclusion from another town's license.

Walter, noting the insurance requirements for the contract, said that Kristi's request to increase the numbers there to agree with other town needs and requirements were reasonable, and though they may have been accurate ten years ago, they did not reflect current needs. Furthermore, the performance bond needs to be updated to reflect the total amount due to the town in the event of non-performance — in other words, Comcast needs to cough up more if it drops the ball on fulfilling the contract.

Ryne stressed that Comcast has not yet met its requirements under the prior agreement, and that it never supplied the town with "drops" at the tech school, as required under the prior contract, which could be important in negotiating the town's needs going forward. The changing requirements of Comcast's "racks" for transmission on the part of the town were discussed together with this, and the possibility that Comcast might be able to help MCTV with equipment to circumvent the lack of the needed drop, though this would require technical data on Comcast's changing requirements.

Committee members asked Dean about the equipment that was currently available and how it was used, for their context, as well as how broadcasts were relayed over Wi-Fi and cellular data at times, depending on the location and kind of broadcast.

Ryne asked if Comcast could supply wireless service to MCTV, since MCTV is already using Verizon to circumvent the lack of drops at sites, and Comcast is not meeting its current obligations in regards to drops. It could solve the problem for MCTV and allow Comcast an "out" for not meeting the terms of its current contract — a possible win-win for MCTV as well as Comcast.

## a. Consider next steps in Comcast engagement

These details indicated in discussion that the next steps were to include counsel Bill August at the next meeting to iron out the last changes and needs ahead of beginning the informal process.

Walter noted that the list of locations that have access to Comcast service through the license may not be accurate in the contract as one public building has changed since the last negotiation (the new DPW building) and not all locations that have that access may be taking advantage of it.

The committee understands that is limited in what it can ask for from Comcast, and Jason stressed that minimum inflationary increases are needed over the last contract, though that number won't quite meet MCTV's capital needs budget. Other members of the committee believed that we had intended to ask for the full capital needs to be funded as the need was

successfully demonstrated. This was noted as a point to discuss at the next meeting with counsel present.

## 4. Set next meeting date

September 17th was chosen as the next proposed meeting, with the same 5PM time hoped for, depending on counsel's availability.

## 5. Unanticipated Business

None.

Ryne Hager moved to end the meeting at 6:03 PM, and the meeting was adjourned, with the next meeting tentatively set (pending the availability of counsel) for September 17th at 5PM.