

Cable TV Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, March 29, 2022

1. A meeting of the Cable TV Advisory Committee ("Committee") of the Town of Hingham ("Town") was duly called to order by Chairman David Jones on Tuesday March 29, 2022 at approximately 7:05 PM. The meeting was held via a Zoom audio-visual conference call.

Mr. Jones commenced the meeting by discussing the Open Meeting Law and communicated the following: "This meeting is being held remotely as an alternate means of public access pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021 temporarily amending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law. You are hereby advised that this meeting and all communications during this meeting may be recorded by the Town of Hingham in accordance with the Open Meeting Law. If any participant wishes to record this meeting, please notify the chair at the start of the meeting in accordance with M.G.L. c. 30A, § 20(f) so that the chair may inform all other participants of said recording."

Mr. Jones informed the Committee that the meeting was being recorded and will be submitted to Harbor Media for potential use in future programming.

2. Members in attendance were Chairman David Jones, Vice Chairman John Rice, Recording Secretary Michael Leary and Nathaniel Stillman (via the phone). Committee member Christopher Baron joined the meeting at 7:54 PM. In addition, Executive Director Michelle Balconi of Harbor Media attended the meeting.

Cable TV Advisory Committee members present constituted a quorum. This quorum remained present throughout the meeting. There were no other individuals present.

3. The first order of business was a review of minutes from the March 8, 2022 meeting. Chairman David Jones requested comments from Committee members. There were no comments noted.

A motion was made by Vice Chairman John Rice to approve the March 8, 2022 minutes. Recording Secretary Michael Leary seconded the motion. A roll call of Committee members was initiated and all voting members present approved the motion.

4. Chairman Jones next proposed an additional agenda item referred to as the "Harbor Media Update". All members were in agreement with adding this topic to the agenda.

A motion was made by Vice Chairman John Rice to add the "Harbor Media Update" to the agenda. Recording Secretary Michael Leary seconded the motion. A roll call of Committee members was initiated and all voting members present approved the motion.

Chairman Jones then requested Executive Director Michelle Balconi of Harbor Media to present this topic. Ms. Balconi noted that since it is almost month end, it was an

opportune time to give a programming update. Per Ms. Balconi, Harbor Media is continuing to receive weekly contributed videos from members of the community and two area churches. One of the videos highlighted was an exercise program created by contributor Sue Thomas.

She continued her presentation by noting that a previous aired series created by an outside producer, known as "Hingham Hidden Gems", will be filming a second season with five episodes. In addition, a new show is being produced, by John Roegner of Curtis Hansen Productions, called "One Dish Hingham". This planned ten-episode series features local restaurants in Hingham. Mr. Roegner has already visited three locations including the Snug, the Boat House and Alva Nova. Vice Chairman Rice inquired how long each episode was; Ms. Balconi stated approximately five minutes.

Ms. Balconi next discussed programming created in conjunction with the Hingham Public Schools. Harbor Media recently filmed "Unity Week" at Hingham High School. This event was designed to promote equity, inclusion and spirit. In addition, East Elementary School's pen pal program with students in Spain was filmed with students showing and reading letters received. Finally, various athletic games were televised during the month.

In relation to government programming, Harbor Media broadcasted eighteen committee meetings, three government weekly updates, an overview with League of Women Voters regarding the Town of Hingham meeting warrant articles, a "Know Your Town" interview with a representative from the Historic District Commission and a monthly calendar of Town of Hingham meetings. She also stated that there are a number of upcoming events in the next two weeks including interviews with election candidates, and a planning session for the Town Meeting. Ms. Balconi disclosed that Harbor Media will be holding a video boot camp during April vacation and also host a tour of Harbor Media offices with thirteen eight-year-old girl scouts.

Ms. Balconi concluded her presentation and inquired whether there were any questions. None were noted. Chairman Jones thanked Ms. Balconi for her overview of Harbor Media's programming.

5. Chairman David Jones next requested Vice Chairman John Rice and Recording Secretary Michael Leary to review the Harbor Media agreement renewal discussion and approval agenda item. Mr. Rice commenced the discussion by noting that the contract is still in draft status with an anticipated completion date in early April. Since the contract draft is not final, the Committee will need to meet again to vote on its approval at a later date.

Mr. Rice reminded the Committee to perform a thorough review of the latest proposed contract. He then outlined the most recent changes and negotiating points between the Town of Hingham and Harbor Media. These items included the creation of production budgets for additional transparency, a 65% cap of payroll expenses, increased emphasis on the use of freelance producers and a production grant initiative to facilitate additional programming. Mr. Rice elaborated that he expects the production grant process to be managed by an independent committee/board.

Mr. Rice next asked Mr. Leary to further discuss the 65% cap of payroll. Mr. Leary commenced by noting that he just received an email from Executive Director Balconi

regarding clarification of this calculation. Specifically, there has been some questions as to whether payroll should include FICA taxes and employee benefits. This issue was originally introduced by Ms. Balconi during her review of a draft financial analysis of Harbor Media prepared by Mr. Leary to be presented at a future meeting. He elaborated that the above question(s) were not addressed to due to the ongoing contract negotiations between the Committee and Harbor Media.

Mr. Leary stated that it was his opinion payroll costs and FICA taxes/employee benefits are interrelated. Hence, they should be included in the calculation. Further discussion ensued including an impromptu review of the calculation by Mr. Leary utilizing the most recent Harbor Media audited financial statements (Please reference Exhibit #1 attached to these minutes). Mr. Leary and Ms. Balconi also discussed whether grant revenue or total functional expenses was appropriate to be used as the denominator of this calculation.

Ms. Balconi continued the discussion topic of the contract renewal by reviewing potential consequences of certain proposed revisions. She expressed some concerns regarding the use of freelance producers including availability and output. A discussion ensued between Mr. Rice and Ms. Balconi surrounding pros and cons of the topic. Specifically, Mr. Rice expressed concern with Harbor Media's emphasis on utilizing permanent employees at Harbor Media. In response, Ms. Balconi shared with the Committee that payroll costs over the past several years have fallen by 1.5%. In addition, head count has been reduced by approximately 1.5 full time employees during this time period.

Chairman Jones next observed that the contract was significantly enhanced in relationship to reporting requirements. Based on this observation, he inquired how the Committee will monitor. Mr. Leary stated that Mr. Rice and himself are in the process of creating a checklist to be assigned to a Committee member to facilitate oversight. He then shared an example of this checklist (Attached to these minutes as Exhibit #2). The discussion concluded by Mr. Rice emphasizing that the new contract was designed to facilitate a stronger partnership between the Town of Hingham and Harbor Media. He also shared that the Committee will be flexible on initial deadlines to assist Harbor Media with the new reporting requirements (Such as the production grant committee initiative).

Mr. Rice recommended that the Committee watch more programming either live or via DVR. He emphasized that reviewing the balance, mix and transition between content was essential. He also noted that there is a debate/trend within the industry regarding distribution of content through the "multi-verse" via Instagram, Facebook, Tic Toc and repurposing emails. Mr. Rice feels that it is important for viewers to access programming in a variety of manners. Ms. Balconi agreed and emphasized Harbor Media's connections with various entities such a businesses and schools in relation to their social outreach.

Committee member Chris Baron joined the meeting. John Rice gave a quick overview of the contract discussions for his benefit. Mr. Baron thanked Mr. Rice for his summary and asked whether his previous comments on the draft contract were received and addressed. Mr. Rice confirmed that Mr. Baron's comments were communicated to the Town of Hingham for potential inclusion.

6. Chairman Jones informed the Committee ed that he was in the process of composing the annual report to the Town of Hingham Select Board. Based upon the preparation of this report, he requested Executive Director Balconi provide some input to include in the submission. Ms. Balconi agreed.

Mr. Jones then opened dialogue for any other matters. There were no additional topics brought up for review. Mr. Jones noted that another special meeting for the HCAM contract renewal will be held in the near future depending upon the progress made in finalizing the draft. Mr. Jones stated that he will send the room and/or virtual room request via Zoom to the Town of Hingham and will distribute the agenda in advance once a date is established.

7. There being no further business to discuss, a motion to adjourn the meeting was proposed.

A motion was made to adjourn by Christopher Baron and Seconded by Vice Chairman John Rice. A roll call of Committee members was initiated and all voting members present approved the motion.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:15 PM.

Submitted for review to the Cable TV Advisory Committee on March 31, 2022 by Recording Secretary Michael Leary.

Approved by the Cable TV Advisory Committee on April 11, 2022