

Cable TV Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, June 22, 2021

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 June 22, 2021 at 7:08 PM. The meeting was held at the Hingham Town Hall located at 210 Central Street Hingham in the East conference room on the third floor.
2. Members in attendance were Chairman David Jones, Vice Chairman John Rice, Recording Secretary Michael Leary, Christopher Baron, and Jeffrey Cutler (telephonically). Superintendent of the Hingham Public Schools Paul Austin was present. In addition, Executive Director Michelle Balconi of Harbor Media attended the meeting telephonically.

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 May 25, 2021 meeting. Chairman Jones requested comments from Committee members. There were no comments noted.

A motion was made by Christopher Baron to approve the May 25, 2021 minutes. Vice Chairman John Rice seconded the motion. All voting members present approved the motion.

4. Chairman Jones commenced discussion by introducing the first agenda item relating to the Cable Advisory Committee ("CAC") requests to Harbor Media. Per Mr. Jones, there were no new or completed requests. No other matters were noted for discussion.
5. The next order of business presented by Chairman Jones was in regards to the format of future Committee meetings. Since March 12, 2020, the Open Meeting Law was modified through an order by the Governor of Massachusetts. This order allowed meetings to be held remotely. Based upon this order, the Cable TV Advisory Committee has met remotely over the past year utilizing Zoom audio-visual conference calls.

Mr. Jones explained to the Committee that the above order had recently expired. Hence, the Chairman scheduled the June 22nd meeting in person. Subsequently (after the meeting was scheduled), Governor Baker issued an extension to the Open Meeting Law allowing meetings again to be held remotely. In order facilitate debate, Mr. Jones requested the Committee members to discuss the future format of the Cable TV Advisory Committee meetings (i.e.: In-Person or Remote).

Vice Chairman Rice stated that he would prefer "In Person" meetings. Recording Secretary Leary and Chairman Jones agreed. Mr. Cutler suggested that a "Hybrid" approach (Both In-Person and Remote). Discussion ensued including the challenges of a "Hybrid" approach. Based upon the discussion, the Committee agreed that the

next meeting in September would be “In Person” and going forward the Committee will assess the format on a month-to-month basis.

Mr. Rice inquired whether the Committee should broadcast the meetings on cable tv. Specifically, Mr. Rice suggested that meetings of importance could be televised. For example, the presentation of Harbor Media’s annual written report (due 30 days after filing its Annual Report [Form PC] to the Massachusetts Attorney General’s Office). Executive Director Balconi asked the Committee whether a presentation of the Harbor Media annual report is required.

The Committee discussed Ms. Balconi’s inquiry. Per review of the Town of Hingham and Harbor Media contract (Section 13 & 14), Recording Secretary Leary and Vice Chairman Rice noted that a presentation is required only if the Select Board or its Designee requested it. Members agreed that the Committee would be considered a Designee. Mr. Rice suggested that the next report should be formally presented by Harbor Media. The Committee and Ms. Balconi agreed.

The Committee next discussed the logistics regarding the broadcasting of an “In Person” meeting. Superintendent Austin volunteered the use of the School Committee room that already has cameras installed to facilitate the filming of the meeting. The Committee thanked Mr. Austin and agreed that filming future (important) Committee meetings would be appropriate and could facilitate a better understanding of Harbor Media and the Cable TV Advisory Committee.

6. Chairman Jones next requested a Hingham Public School curriculum update from Superintendent Austin. Mr. Austin stated that himself, Executive Director Balconi and Assistant Superintendent James LaBillois had a recent meeting regarding the Committee’s request for video production classes to create more content for the public access channel(s). A discussion ensued including the origins of the partial funding of the teaching position by the Committee. In particular, Mr. Austin asked whether there was a formal written agreement. Mr. Leary stated that he recently reached out to the Town Administrator/Town Clerk Department for this document. However, Mr. Leary stated that he believes that the funding agreement was probably not formally documented.

Vice Chairman Rice next discussed the history surrounding the funding based upon his past experience with the Committee. In particular, he stated that previous Hingham Public School liaisons were in agreement with the creation of content by students when the funding was initially agreed upon. Mr. Rice noted that the video production classes have never created content for Harbor Media. He elaborated that the school is missing an opportunity to promote further learning and interest in video production. For the benefit of the Committee and those in attendance, Mr. Leary read Section 3.E. of the Harbor Media contract that outlines the interaction with the Hingham Public School system.

Based upon the above discussion, Chairman Jones requested that Mr. Austin, Ms. Balconi and Committee Member Mr. Baron to meet separately to outline expectations of deliverables in regards to the partial funding of the teacher’s position in a formalized agreement. Mr. Austin, Ms. Balconi and Mr. Baron agreed to the request and stated that they would present a draft of the agreement to the Committee during the September meeting.

Mr. Rice then introduced a related topic regarding the maintenance a “RACI Matrix”, which outlines contact information and delineates who is responsible, accountable, consulted & informed (RACI) as outlined in the Harbor Media contract Section 3.E.b. Ms. Balconi stated that Harbor Media does maintain this matrix across all schools and utilizes the document to “chase” down ideas and events for programming content. Mr. Rice questioned whether Harbor Media should be acting in the production capacity rather than the schools. A discussion ensued including the roles of each entity and the ability of the Hingham Public Schools to act as a producer. Mr. Jones concluded that both Harbor Media and the Schools should work in a collaborative manner. Mr. Rice agreed, but recommended that the Hingham Public Schools should be responsible for some production.

7. Chairman Jones introduced the next order of business regarding the Verizon license renewal agenda topic. Mr. Jones referred and reviewed with the Committee the signed contract between Attorney William H. Solomon and the Town of Hingham. Attorney Solomon will be utilized to assist the Town of Hingham with the Verizon contract negotiations. Mr. Leary noted that the contract expires on April 22, 2023. Mr. Jones will be inviting Attorney Solomon to the September Committee meeting to discuss the engagement.

A related discussion commenced regarding the commitment of Verizon to the cable tv line of business. Mr. Jones stated that he heard that Verizon might consider exiting this industry in the future. Mr. Leary inquired whether the Committee should consider another cable provider to ensure healthy competition in the Town of Hingham. The Committee members agreed to consider this action in the future, if warranted.

Vice Chairman Rice asked Executive Director Balconi for an update on the State of Massachusetts’s pending legislation regarding streaming fees. Ms. Balconi reminded the Committee that the current proposed law (co-sponsored by Massachusetts State Representative, third Plymouth district, Joan Meschino) would allocate 5% of streaming fees as follows: 40% restricted for local use (Public Access), 30% unrestricted for Town and 30% unrestricted for the State. Ms. Balconi stated that an open question is whether families would pay for these fees for each streaming service utilized or just once as a household. Harbor Media is in contact with State Representative Meschino for future updates. The timing of the vote regarding this law is not know at this time.

8. The next item for discussion was an update of the status of the Harbor Media review. Chairman Jones updated the Committee on the contract status. Due to the delays in performing the review, a six-month extension of the contract to March 2022 was created by the Town of Hingham’s new procurement specialist. The contract has subsequently been signed by both parties. Ms. Balconi next informed the Committee that she met with the Harbor Media review consultant, Bob Kelly from Newton TV, last week. Mr. Kelly will commence interviews with staff and Board of Director in the near future. The Cable TV Advisory contract sub-committee comprised of Chairman Jones, Vice Chairman Rice and Recording Secretary Leary will be meeting tomorrow with Mr. Kelly surrounding scope.
9. Chairman Jones introduced the next topic relating to an update on Harbor Media’s ongoing programming initiative. Ms. Balconi stated that a number of new content was released over the last month. This included a live stream of a recent Hingham High

School lacrosse game in conjunction with the Hingham Sports Partnership. Per Ms. Balconi, the quality of the sports programming has improved with the purchase of new equipment. On a related note, she stated that Harbor Media will be streaming a live July 4th pre-parade show. The Committee commended Harbor Media on this initiative.

In addition, Harbor Media also created programming surrounding the following: “Boo Boo” the bear, Juneteenth, the Weir River Picnic, Pride and a new Hingham trail piece produced by Bob Mellors and Sky Thaxter. Ms. Balconi also informed the Committee of new Hingham Public School related content including the fifth-grade promotions and the High School graduation.

10. Chairman Jones opened dialogue for any other matters. Mr. Cutler informed the Committee that his three-year term is almost complete and that he will not be renewing for another term. He stated that he plans on staying on the Committee until a replacement is found and promised that he will complete his project on how to create and submit a video to Harbor Media. The Committee thanked him for his service. Mr. Jones stated that he has reached out to request a replacement for both Mr. Cutler and a liaison from the Select Board (replacing Mary Powers). He is waiting for a reply from the Town.

After the above discussion, there were no other topics brought up for review. Mr. Jones recommended that the next meeting date be held on Tuesday September 21, 2021 at 7 PM (in person). All members were in agreement with the proposed date. Mr. Jones stated that he will send the room and/or virtual room request via Zoom to the Town of Hingham and will distribute an agenda in advance.

13. 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 Jeffery Cutler. All voting members present were in agreement with the motion.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM.

Submitted for review to the Cable TV Advisory Committee on June 24, 2021 by Recording Secretary Michael Leary.

Note: The September 2021 meeting was moved from the 21st to the 22nd. The Committee meeting was held remotely via Zoom.

Approved by the Cable TV Advisory Committee on September 22, 2021