

## **Wareham Cable Advisory Committee (CAC) Minutes**

Thursday, April 7, 2022  
Virtual Meeting via ZOOM  
Meeting called to order at 4:06pm

### **I. Roll Call**

- a. Matt Underhill            present remotely
  - b. Dan Butler                present remotely
  - c. Dave Rogers              absent
- A quorum was established.

### **II. Public Participation**

- a. Judith Whiteside, Chairman, Wareham Board of Selectmen (BoS)
- b. Attorney William “Bill” Solomon, Special Counsel for the CAC
- c. Christian Fernandes, acting Director, WCTV

### **III. Approval of Minutes**

- a. Deferred to next meeting.

### **IV. Discussion with Counsel**

- a. Judith Whiteside was invited by the CAC Chairman to provide the CAC with the roles and responsibilities charge from the BoS. Following discussion with Counsel and CAC members on the matter, Selectman Whiteside charged the CAC and Counsel with:
  - i. Negotiating favorable cable TV franchise licensing term renewals with Verizon and Comcast and recommending licensing terms to the BoS for their action.
- b. She also charged the CAC, secondarily, with:
  - i. Examining the contract between the Town of Wareham and WCTV, evaluating services being provided to the Town and citizens of Wareham under the contract, and making any appropriate recommendations for action to the BoS.
  - ii. Examining ways to improve internet services to the Town and citizens of Wareham.
  - iii. Matt Underhill agreed to provide Selectman Whiteside a proposed, formal CAC charge in writing for BoS approval. He also stated he would request the appointment of a BoS Liaison to the CAC to assist with deliberations and contract negotiations.
- c. Attorney Bill Solomon provided a brief, historical overview of prior negotiations with Verizon and Comcast. Regarding Verizon, he commented Verizon “had 1 ½ feet out the door” when it came to providing cable/fiber optic TV services. He stated Verizon is no longer building out FIOS fiber optic networks in Massachusetts and seemed to be

postured to transition and eventually exit that way of delivering entertainment television to consumers.

- d. Bill Solomon discussed potential negotiating positions regarding length of the license renewal, payments, etc., and then asked Matt Underhill for past revenue summaries for both Verizon and Comcast to help him calculate reasonable terms for the renewals, which he agreed to compile and forward on to Mr. Solomon.
- e. Bill Solomon discussed a tentative preparations/negotiations timeline with members. He plans to provide the CAC with proposed, draft terms of a Verizon license renewal contract no later the May 9<sup>th</sup>, sooner, if possible. He requested a discussion sometime in May with WCTV leadership regarding their capital planning, with a goal of an initial meeting with Verizon representatives in June.
- f. Under-served communities. Regarding potential areas/issues to negotiate with cable TV providers, Dan Butler pointed out that recent federal legislation highlighted the importance of ensuring that under-served communities have access to broadband services. He asked if this was an area the CAC should address with current licensees. Mr. Solomon asked if there are neighborhoods in Wareham that do not have coverage from the licensees. He was advised that CAC members knew for certain that Verizon FIOS was not available in some neighborhoods and those citizens had only one potential terrestrial provider of cable TV services. Matt Underhill agreed to request up-to-date “strand” coverage maps from Verizon and Comcast to inform negotiations. Mr. Solomon pointed out that Verizon is no longer investing in FIOS infrastructure buildout in Massachusetts while Comcast, on the other hand, is required in their contract to service all communities in Wareham. He agreed this topic merited discussion with both companies.

#### V. Survey

- a. Chairman Underhill reported he revised the draft ascertainment survey and posted it live to the CAC website on March 31st. There have been no responses yet to the survey. He stated he will ask Selectman Whiteside to mention the survey at an upcoming BoS meeting and ask that it be highlighted on the main Town webpage to gain better visibility. He asked Christian Fernandes if he could arrange to promote the survey on WCTV, to which he agreed.

#### VI. Business unknown until the previous 48 hours. None.

#### VII. Adjournment. In summary, it was agreed the following action would be taken following the meeting:

- a. Dan Butler will write an initial draft of a formal BoS charge to the CAC for discussion/approval at the next meeting.
- b. Matt Underhill will request a formal BoS Liaison to the CAC.

- c. Matt Underhill will request current strand maps from Verizon and Comcast.
- d. Christian Fernandes will provide a WCTV capital plan to inform negotiations.
- e. The next CAC meeting will be scheduled for in-person attendance at 6pm, Thursday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022, in room 24 of the Town Hall.
- f. Dan Butler moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Matt Underhill. Vote:

- i. Chairman Underhill                      Aye
- ii. Mr. Butler                                      Aye

Motion Passed 2-0-0

Meeting adjourned at 5:32pm