

Wareham Cable Advisory Committee (CAC) Minutes

Tuesday, December 14, 2021
Room 24, Wareham Town Hall
Meeting called to order at 1:00pm

I. Roll Call

- a. Matt Underhill present
 - b. Dan Butler present
- A quorum was established.

II. Public Participation

- a. There were no members of the public present.

III. Introductions

- a. There were none required.
- b. Mr. Underhill made a motion to nominate/elect Mr. Butler Clerk of the CAC. Mr. Butler seconded the motion.
 - i. Vote: 2-0-0 passed.
- c. Mr. Butler made a motion to nominate/elect Mr. Underhill Chairman of the CAC. Mr. Underhill seconded the motion.
 - i. Vote: 2-0-0 passed.
- d. It was agreed Chairman Underhill would be responsible for scheduling meetings and establishing and posting the meeting agenda; and, Mr. Butler would be responsible for meeting minutes.

IV. Discussion on counsel

- a. Chairman Underhill provided CAC members copies of the following documents:
 - i. A definition and responsibilities of a Cable Advisory Committee from State of Massachusetts regulations (source: MASS.GOV)
 - ii. Cable Television Renewal License granted by the Town of Wareham to Verizon New England, Inc., dated March 20, 2018
 - iii. Cable Television Renewal License granted by the Town of Wareham to Comcast of Massachusetts I, Inc., for a term of June 16, 2015 to June 15, 2025
 - iv. Financial Balance Sheet and Statement of Ownership for the combined Massachusetts cable television operations of Comcast Cable Communications, LLC for the FY ended December 31, 2020
 - v. Comcast Payment Statement for payments to the Town of Wareham for the Jul-Sep, 2021, quarter
 - vi. Verizon PEG Grant Report for the Jul-Sep 2021 quarter

- b. Chairman Underhill discussed the negotiations process and advantages to the Town of Wareham of retaining an experienced Special Counsel to represent the town during the course of those negotiations. It was agreed that retaining Special Counsel would benefit the town.
 - i. Mr. Butler made a motion to task the CAC Chairman with responsibility for discussing the need for Special Counsel with the Chairman of the Wareham Board of Selectman with the goal of retaining Special Counsel. Seconded by Chairman Underhill.
 - 1. Vote: 2-0-0 passed.
 - ii. Members discussed various aspects of CAC responsibilities (e.g., ascertainment, public hearings, surveys, etc.) and benefits desired for the town and citizens of Wareham as an outcome of negotiations (franchise fee revenue, support of WCTV community television, better access and convenient service for all citizens of Wareham, etc.)

V. Business unknown until the previous 48 hours

- a. Mr. Butler presented for CAC consideration a proposal to explore establishment of a Wareham Municipal Light Plant (under Massachusetts General Law chapter 164) for the purpose of creating and managing a fiber optic network to enable all of Wareham reliable, high capacity, high speed (1Gig), symmetric, inexpensive access to the internet for the purpose of obtaining entertainment video, and for all other purposes (e.g., municipal/government business, public safety, education, telestudy, telework, telemedicine, private business/e-commerce, entertainment, communications, etc.). Mr. Butler pointed to recent, local examples (Fairhaven and Falmouth). Presentation attached for the record.
- b. Discussion ensued. Mr. Butler recommended the CAC either "...examine alternatives to current licensees and make recommendations to the BOS regarding potential ways to address Wareham's broadband infrastructure and service shortcomings... or, ...advise the BOS to consider establishing a Broadband Study Committee/Task Force to evaluate and expeditiously recommend a course of action to address Wareham's broadband infrastructure and service shortcomings."
- c. It was agreed Chairman Underhill would approach the BOS Chairman to discuss the current CAC charge/mission and recommend the CAC continue to assess the needs of Wareham and subsequently recommend an appropriate course of action (e.g., expand CAC charter and membership, or establish a separate, new committee/task force to more fully examine Wareham's broadband requirements and potential solutions.)

VI. Adjournment. In summary, it was agreed the following action would be taken before the next CAC meeting:

- a. Chairman Underhill would speak with the BOS Chairman regarding Special Counsel to represent Wareham interests in coming license renewal negotiations.

- b. Chairman Underhill will schedule the next CAC meeting and, if authorized by the BOS Chairman, invite Special Counsel.
- c. Chairman Underhill will obtain up-to-date cable coverage maps from the town library or from Verizon and Comcast, if not yet available at the library.
- d. Chairman Underhill will draft a survey that could be posted to the CAC website for the purpose of ascertaining citizen satisfaction with current licensees.
- e. Mr. Butler will visit WCTV to learn more about this community resource.
- f. Chairman Underhill will solicit a capital plan from WCTV to inform upcoming negotiations.
- g. Mr. Butler made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Chairman Underhill.
 - i. Vote: 2-0-0 passed.
- h. The meeting was adjourned at 3:23pm.