

Groton Cable Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes 12/14/09

Meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. Present were members Gabe Nucci, Dave Melpignano, Dorothy Davis, and Janet Sheffield. Also present were Access Director Bob Colman and reporter Pierre Comtois.

MINUTES:

Two changes were requested to the November 18th minutes – correcting the spelling of Dave’s name and deleting the word ‘pay’ in the sentence about the starting salary for the Prod Technician. Dorothy moved to approve the minutes as amended, and the amended minutes were unanimously approved.

GENERAL UPDATE:

Notice of Meetings: Dorothy informed the committee that the town clerk told her they can accept phone calls, mail or email notices of meetings, but they must arrive 48 hours in advance of the meetings. We are allowed to post two dates to include an alternate date (e.g. snow date) and then cancel the second date.

Yearbook ad: Bob showed the committee the draft copy of the ad he’s planning to send to the high school. The committee suggested a change in wording to “graduating volunteers” instead of graduating seniors. Bob will make the change and submit the ad.

“According to Jimmy” – new program: Bob informed the committee of a new talk show produced by a GDRHS student, which will run every other week.

VERIZON:

Bob reported that Verizon just added the local access channels to its Groton cable line-up. The Groton Channel is on channel 41, and the Government channel is on Channel 40. There was a discussion on whether we should consider changing the name of the “Government Channel,” since it may imply that the town controls the content, but the group decided to keep the name intact since the channel primarily broadcasts official town meetings.

Verizon also offers a third channel for local access, Channel 39. It’s currently broadcasting color bars. Gabe suggested Bob consider replacing that with a still image showing the Groton Channel website and channel line-up. A suggestion was also made that this channel could carry the Community Bulletin Board, which is currently airing on Verizon and Charter on the “Government Channel” in between broadcasts of meetings.

Verizon is currently working on hooking up at the Middle School and Senior Center and is expected to complete all the wiring by the end of December. Bob also reported they may be giving the studio a Rack Cabinet. Gabe suggested Bob check on whether the ventilation in the

equipment room could be improved, possibly with an exhaust fan to remove the heat, since adding any more equipment could cause serious problems.

COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD:

The Selectman's office (Patrice) would like to come up with a formal written policy to govern what citizens and local organizations can post on the cable Community Bulletin Board. Patrice came up with a draft based on what other towns currently use. The Committee has been asked to review the policy document and suggest changes before it goes to the Selectmen for approval.

In reviewing the draft, Dorothy suggested we remove the restriction on including church schedules and also remove the reference to private schools (restricting the use of the bulletin board for 'recruiting students.')

The committee made a few other suggestions for changes and clarifications.

Gabe will send the Committee's changes to Patrice.

CHARTER RENEWAL:

After the Committee received a letter from Charter seeking to begin an "informal" negotiation process, she contacted Mark Haddad to seek his permission for the Committee to contact the town attorney (Bill), and he gave the go-ahead.

The Committee decided to come up with an outline of the questions we want to ask the attorney and draft a letter, getting Mark's approval before sending it out. The group will attempt to draft the letter at the next meeting.

TOWN REPORT:

Bob presented the Committee with a draft of the report he prepared for inclusion in the town's Annual Report. The Committee discussed and made suggestions for changes. Bob will incorporate them and send the report to the town by the end of the year.

PRODUCTION TECHNICIAN VACANCY:

Dorothy raised concern that the Committee had not formally voted on whether to fund the position as a full-time one or keep it part-time.

Dave moved to fund the Production Technician position for full-time, with Janet seconding. The motion passed with 3 votes in favor and 1 abstention.

Bob will go ahead and make an offer right away to his first choice candidate, George Cox.

EVALUATION:

Bob's annual evaluation to the town is due Dec. 31. Gabe will complete the paperwork and will be accepting comments from other committee members.

NEW BUSINESS:

Committee chair Gabe Nucci announced he will resign from the Committee effective at the end of December due to work commitments and a planned move out-of-state to take a new position. The committee discussed the need to recruit one or two new members and elect a new chair.

The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for January 6, 2010.

Respectfully submitted by Janet Sheffield, secretary