

Groton Cable Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes 6/24/10

Meeting was called to order at 7:40 p.m. in Rm. L22 at Groton-Dunstable Regional High School. Present were members Dave Melpignano, Dorothy Davis, Neil Colicchio, and Janet Sheffield. Also present was Access Director Bob Colman.

GENERAL UPDATE:

Website: Bob's interested in updating the Groton Channel website and will form a committee to work on it.

INTERNSHIPS:

One additional internship application was received and reviewed by members. Dorothy moved that we approve the internship for Jimmy Russell, Neil seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously. With this addition, the Groton Channel has six student internships this summer, being funded at up to \$1000 each: Francesca Covenov; Nick Colicchio; Mackie Enright; Connor Sebastyn; Noah Paul, Ryan Henry and Nathan Goss; and Jimmy Russell.

CABLE ACCESS FUNDING MECHANISM RESPONSE:

The committee discussed its response to the suggestion of the Town Manager that we use a different way to account for cable revenue in the town budget, rather than the current method of putting it into a gift account.

Dorothy reported on her conversation with Bill Hewig of Koppelman and Paige. Regarding the idea brought forward by Valerie Jenkins at the last meeting that the revenues are fees, Mr. Hewig clarified that the cable providers (Verizon and Charter) collect fees but give grants to the town. He said this money has to be spent on cable and that in cases brought to the Mass Cable Commission, that's the precedent that has been established. Since the account has grown so large, Mr. Hewig suggested we spend the money or consider changing the fee structure with the cable providers. Another suggestion he had was to set up a capital depreciation account for purchasing new equipment. Dorothy asked him about possibly using the funds for TV courses in the schools, and he said we might be able to do that.

Dorothy presented a draft of a letter she'd prepared to town treasurer Valerie Jenkins, based on her discussion with Mr. Hewig and closer inspection of the contracts with Charter and Verizon. The committee discussed possible revisions to the letter.

Neil made a motion that based on our contracts with Verizon and Charter and on the conversation with Mr. Hewig, we keep the money in the gift account and send a letter to Ms.

Jenkins and Town Manager Mark Haddad with that recommendation. Dorothy seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Dave agreed to prepare a final version of the letter to forward to committee members before it's sent to Ms. Jenkins and Mr. Haddad.

EQUIPMENT CHECKOUT POLICY:

Bob handed out a draft policy, the Groton Channel Equipment/Facilities Usage Requirements, to members who suggested some possible revisions.

OPEN MEETING LAW CHANGES:

The committee discussed the changes to the Open Meeting Law which take effect on July 1. We'll now have to submit an agenda with the meeting postings.

ACCOUNTS AS OF 5/31/10:

Main Account: \$176,441.95
Equipment Grant: \$ 22,989.54
Sponsorship Acct: \$ 2,466.67

The committee discussed some ways to spend down the account since Mr. Hewig had suggested we keep less of the money unspent since as long as subscribers keep paying the cable companies, they'll continue funding our local access operations and we don't have to plan so far ahead. Dave asked Bob to come up with some recommendations based on what we spent this year and what we expect to spend next year.

PURCHASE REQUESTS:

Dorothy moved that we spend up to \$610 for Gobos for ellipsoidal lights, and Janet seconded the motion. Three members (Dave, Janet and Dorothy) approved the motion and Neil abstained, since these will be used for his program.

Janet moved that we approve spending up to \$320 for Ethernet cables and a switch, Dave seconded, and the vote was approved unanimously.

Neil moved that we approve an amount up to \$430 for the purchase of an Audio Delay Box, Dave seconded the motion, and it was approved by unanimous vote.

OTHER: The next meeting date was set for Mon., July 12th at 7:30 p.m. at the studio. The meeting was adjourned at 9:38 p.m.