

Groton Cable Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes 8/2/14

Meeting was called to order at 9:44 a.m. in the television studio at the Groton-Dunstable Regional High School. Present were Committee members Dave Melpignano, Jane Bouvier, Neil Colicchio, and Janet Sheffield, along with Groton Channel Program Director Bob Colman. Also present were Channel volunteer Lee Davy and prospective committee member candidates: John MacLeod, Art Campbell, Robert Piche, and Russ Harris.

LIST OF MATERIALS AT MEETING:

1. Program Director Notes

CANDIDATES FOR OPEN POSITION ON CABLE COMMITTEE

Chairman Melpignano welcomed the four candidates interested in filling the Cable Advisory Committee member position recently vacated by Dorothy Davis: Art Campbell, John MacLeod, Robert Piché and Russ Harris. He told the candidates the committee has recently started work on developing a 5-year plan for the Groton Channel, with goals that include expanding programming while maintaining high quality, and increasing the involvement of the community and schools/students.

Each candidate was asked to introduce themselves by sharing their interests and backgrounds – Mr. Campbell has an education and background in Journalism and technical writing and had helped wire the schools for Ethernet, which led him to develop the “Talk About Groton” list serve. He currently publishes *the Groton Line* online newspaper. John MacLeod has a background in industrial design and experience in technology and web development and served on the town’s sign committee. Mr. Piche has been a Groton resident since 1983, having worked for Digital in network operations with past experience as a radio DJ, and he recently started volunteering as a camera operator for the Channel’s Senior Spotlight and other programs. Mr. Harris served on the Cable Advisory Committee in the past, and is currently the publisher for the Groton Herald.

The candidate interviews evolved into a discussion of ideas for the future of the Channel and how each of them might contribute. Among the topics discussed were live streaming programs, adding more on-demand programming options, indexing segments of long shows that are made available on-demand, allowing students the option to upload their own videos to the Channel for possible broadcast, more sharing of programs with other local access channels, conducting mock electronic voting during town meetings to encourage more citizen involvement in the political process and improve meeting attendance.

The Committee thanked the four gentlemen for their interest and time, and Chairman Melpignano told them the Committee would be making a recommendation to the Town Manager and the Board of Selectmen early next week.

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After a brief discussion, the Committee unanimously voted to recommend Robert Piche for inclusion on the Committee.

CHARTER LICENSE

The renewal of Charter's license has recently been held up due to a disagreement over Charter installing additional live access points. Chairman Melpignano recently asked attorney Bill Hewig to communicate with Charter that the contract will be approved when they agree to install live feeds from the Country Club and the Fire Station.

GENERAL UPDATE

Studio Bids - Bob reported the bids for Studio Upgrades were advertised and are due to come to be opened on Aug. 15.

Talk on Main Street – this new program produced by Selectman Jack Petropoulos, Dave Melpignano and Art Campbell was taped on July xxx in the Black Box theater and was streamed live. Dave told the Committee a new program will likely run every few months.

National Conference – Bob Colman will be attending the national conference of the Alliance for Community Media (ACM) next week, Aug. 6-8, in Philadelphia and will report back to the Committee at the next regular meeting.

Interns – five high school/college interns are currently working on projects and helping with the news program.

Volunteer Appreciation Night – Bob proposed the event take place on Thursday, September 25.

Organization Night – local schools and non-profits will be invited to the studio for tours and discussion of how they might utilize the Channel's resources. While Bob originally proposed the date of October 1 for this event, he decided it made sense to wait until the studio update is completed before scheduling it.

PURCHASE REQUESTS

Bob requested a Spinning Prize Wheel for use at the Channel's Grotonfest booth, for a cost of \$110, and Coaxial Cable Spool for \$350. Neil made a motion to approve \$460 for the purchase of these two items, Janet seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

SETS

The Committee has been discussing the need for a new generic set for Jane's Around Town, which can easily be modified for other programs. Members of the Committee will research

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Trade Show booths that could serve this purpose, and will talk with set builders. Jane will choose some new photos for her Around Town set.

NEW BUSINESS

Field Cameras - Neil asked Bob about the possibility of purchasing higher quality, more adaptable field cameras with a greater depth of field. Bob responded that they would cost more money and that he doesn't feel we have the need for more technically-sophisticated cameras at this point.

High School Videography program – The committee has been concerned about the possible loss of the Videography courses at Groton-Dunstable Regional High School, and that program not only supplies the Channel with student volunteers and interns, but also provides a source of new programming. Dave has therefore had discussions with principal Mike Mastrullo and the State Ethics Commission about the possibility of the Cable Committee paying a salary (.33 position) for Dave or another experienced Video teacher to teach a spring course as a Special Municipal Employee. Janet suggested this proposal will likely have to go before the School Committee. Dave will be exploring this proposal further and reporting back to the Committee.

NEXT MEETING/ADJOURNMENT

In order to approve a bid for the Studio Upgrade by the 30-day deadline, a special meeting will be scheduled for Thursday, September 4, at 6:30 p.m. to focus on reviewing bids and making a decision on whether to move ahead with a purchase. The next regular meeting is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, September 13, at 9:30. Neil made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Janet seconded the motion, and the meeting was officially adjourned at 12:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Janet Sheffield
