

Groton Cable Advisory Committee
via Internet Conference

Meeting Minutes for: 1/11/24

In Attendance:

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Cable Committee Members: John Macleod, Eric Fischer, Janet Sheffield
& Neil Colicchio

Other:

Program Director - Ashley Doucette

Called to Order At: 4:34 PM

Meeting Minutes:

Janet made a motion to approve the minutes of 12/7/23. John seconded. It passed by a vote of 3-0 with Neil abstaining due to lack of attendance at that particular meeting.

General Updates:

- The Cable Access survey that was sent out with the census. Responses have begun to come in. A total of 9 responses have been received so far. Google Docs is graphing the information for us in realtime. With concern that the survey will be missed, as it shares a page with another important document, Ashley will post a reminder to our social media pages. Links to the survey were not provided publicly in order to assure that the responses come from within Groton but links can be provided to those that specifically request them. After the March 1st deadline, a conversation will be had about opening up a new survey to the greater community. In the meantime, it seems that the survey has led more people to the website homepage as well.
- Our senior work credit participant has started and would like to focus on collaborating with and target the senior population - making sure they know about the work we do and how to access it. A possible “Lunch & Learn” session in the Spring may be a good way to achieve this.
- There are a few more high school students getting involved with the studio/filming/editing. There are even talks about collaborating with an AP English class to create a new book-focused show.

- We are making a big push on Archive.org. There are now over 3.600 files available in our library with more being added every day. Select Board and Board of Health meetings are also now in a “maintenance” stage, where we are up to present date and being added as they occur.
- DigitalJuice, the database we have used for many years to access music, graphics, video templates, etc. is no longer in operation. We will need to research new options that will allow us access to a similar library of elements at a comparable price.
- Upon researching the broken Panasonic 170 camera, it was discovered that it was purchased in 2008. That complicated the cost of sending it out to the company for consultation and/or repair. Instead, it was brought over to our IT department so that it could be investigated in-house. A broken cable within the hinge was discovered. A bit of tape is currently keeping it functional and it could still be used in instances where no movement of the camera would be required (where it could be locked off and untouched). There is a replacement cable that we can purchase to try and correct the problem. Due to the age of the camera, we should still consider the possibility of purchasing a new camera to add to the fleet. A newer camera with WiFi streaming capability could be a really useful addition.

Discussion - Franchise License Renewal Updates

Verizon has sent through a draft agreement for us to read through.

The biggest differences from the previous agreement include a change in contract length from 15 years to 5 year, the right to get out after Year 3, and the addition of one HD channel.

A meeting with them will take place on January 17th.

There is still hope that this process can remain informal and keep legal costs to a minimum.

With the PEG fee pretty much set, the Equipment Grant is the only number that needs serious consideration. Our previous contract grant came in at \$112,500 and, after a conversation with the Town Manager, Ashley suggested that we ask for the same. Despite the contract length, the timeline in which the grant would be paid out does not change. Eric suggested that we consider looking at the cost of inflation and calculating off of that. The final suggested number to ask for was \$175,000, with a secondary suggestion of \$125,000, and a fallback to the previous grant amount of \$112,500.

We can also ask to add another encoder (the devices that help us send live signals back to the studio),

Negotiations with Charter are still slow but they do seem to be waiting on Verizon to provide a template before moving forward.

Discussion - Fiscal year 2024 Budget

The budget has now been submitted for review so there will be a budget review meeting taking place on Saturday, January 27th.

There is a potential that March 26th could be the new Town Meeting date, moving up the deadlines for warrant articles.

Purchase Request - Panasonic LCD Screen Display Shaft Rotating Flex Cable Ribbon
A replacement cable for the Panasonic 170 cable is needed to attempt an in-house repair. The cost of the cable is \$10.99 but does not display any kind of shipping & handling costs, therefore \$25 may be a safer number to insure that the purchase is covered.

VOTE: Janet made a motion to approve up to \$35 for the purchase of an LCD screen replacement cable. Eric seconded. It passed unanimously.

Purchase Request - 2024 Yearbook Ad

Letters for ads in the 2024 High School Yearbook went out. As we usually pay for an ad, Ashley suggested purchasing a business card sized ad this year instead of the usual half-page that we have done in years past due to costs.

Eric preferred to move forward with a full-page ad to support the school.

Neil thought the compromise would be a half-page ad.

John made a motion to purchase a half page yearbook ad for \$250. Neil seconded.

It failed to pass in a 2-2 split.

Eric then made a motion to purchase a full-page ad for \$500. Neil seconded. This passed by a vote of 3-1 with Janet opposed.

Next Meeting is planned for Thursday 2/8/24 at 4:30 PM on Zoom.

Meeting Adjourned at: 6:35 PM