

Groton Cable Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes for: 1/8/26

In Attendance:

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Cable Committee Members: John Macleod, Russ Harris, and Janet Sheffield, Eric Fischer, Neil Colicchio

Other:

Program Director - Ashley Doucette

Called to Order At: 4:50 PM

Meeting Minutes:

The minutes of November 13th, 2025 were not voted upon at this meeting.

General Updates:

- One of the televisions used for channel monitoring stopped working. Utilizing the timing of Black Friday deals, Ashley was able to purchase two small TVs for a total of \$140 to replace both office monitors - moving the still functional older model into the server room to replace the CRTV that was being used as a preview monitor.
- Winter sports are in full swing - covering all basketball and hockey home games.
- Ashley is working with Kelly Cook at the High School to coordinate hosting her Videography class in the studio during Term 3. The class will run from January 22nd until April 1st.
- Noah and Ashley W. are beginning work on a new video that showcases The Groton Channel. The video will focus on who we are, what we do, what we have available for residents, how to find and utilize our content, volunteer opportunities, etc.

Discussion - Progress on Charter/Spectrum Franchise Renewal

Ashley has forwarded all notes, proposed changes, and other information onto Town Counsel for review and formatting. Ashley will provide an updated draft copy to the committee when it becomes available.

Discussion - Progress on Increased Meeting Coverage and Meeting Coverage Technology

Ashley followed up on a suggestion from Russ to look into ECAMM as a possibility for recording and processing more meetings. Upon further research, this ended up being more of a streaming and presentation tool that would not help with processing recordings. While some more boards and committees are beginning to utilize recordings for their meetings, there is still a lot of work and outreach that needs to be done.

Discussion - Update on Closed Caption Funding and Other Upcoming Accessibility Requirements

Ashley is currently waiting on a response back from MassAccess about the requirements for the grant funding we received. We are waiting to hear if we need to spend and start utilizing this funding now or if we can use it to start captioning on July 1st (Fiscal Year 27). It is believed that we can make the purchase of the caption credits whenever is needed but there is still a question as to whether or not we need to show implementation of these funds (actual captions and not just the purchase of credits) before July 1st.

Ashley will be attending the Commission on Accessibility meeting on January 21st to further discuss where we stand with accessibility projects and deadlines. There will be a focus at this meeting on implementing accessibility at the upcoming Spring Town Meeting - scheduled for May 2nd, 2026.

Ashley had followed up on a suggestion from John to look into JAWS (Job Access With Speech) as a possible option for our accessibility needs. Upon further research, it appears this program is more of a screenreader that will convert text and controls into speech and likely not something that can integrate into video for the purpose of audio descriptions.

Discussion - Update on FY27 Budget

Barring any potential changes requested by the Town, the Fiscal Year 2027 budget has been submitted.

There were increases to salaries and wages, general price increases to software and services, and the addition of closed captioning in the annual budget but costs were otherwise kept on par with years past. Minor Capital has also been removed from the budget for next year.

The budget breakdown is as follows:

- *Salaries: \$87,572*
- *Wages: \$73,469*
- *Expenses: \$18,750*
- *Minor Capital: \$0*

Discussion - 2026 Yearbook Advertisement

The high school's yearbook staff have asked if the channel would like to place another advertisement this year and, if so, which size.

In years past, the channel has paid for a half-page ad and one full-page ad.

The marketing budget for FY 26 was listed as \$500 and \$115 was already spent on a Grotonfest booth this past fall.

After deciding on a half-page ad, at a cost of \$260, it was asked if this could be paid for out-of-pocket by committee members.

This had been a discussion last year but had ultimately been purchased within the marketing budget.

Ashley agreed to reconnect with the accounting department and discuss the logistics of a payment made by committee members. If acceptable, Eric and Neil agreed to split the cost of the ad.

Ashley also alerted the committee to the current stock of promotional pens that we typically give away to guests and at events, stating that it may be of interest to save up some of the marketing budget to offset the cost of a new order if we would like to reorder. Pens were last purchased in 2022 so a batch of 500 will last for several years but the cost of \$1,367.98 is going to be tough to find in the budget.

Discussion - Annual Town Report

The Annual Town Report is due by February 9th.

We will update the report with new information on program counts, content creation, and more.

It was suggested that we reference the grant received for the purpose of closed captioning.

Ashley will draft up the new report for submission.

Purchase Request - MotionArray Annual Subscription

Ashley asked the committee to approve a request of \$239.88 to cover the cost of an annual subscription for MotionArray.

VOTE: Janet made a motion to approve \$239.88 for a MotionArray annual subscription. Neil seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Next Meeting is planned for Thursday, February 5th at 4:30 PM and is currently planned to be a hybrid meeting - taking place at the studio with the option to join via Zoom

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Meeting Adjourned at: 6:21 PM