 **TOWN OF WESTPORT**

**CABLE ADVISORY BOARD**

**WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 21, 2024**

**5:30 p.m.   Town Hall Annex**

 **MINUTES**

**Members Present:** Josh Brum, Irene Buck, Gloria Cabral, Robert Daylor *(left at 6:00 pm.)*, Rene Kochman, Donald Krudys, Steven Ouellette *(arrived at 5:38, left at 6:06 pm.)*

**Also Present:** Valerie Bain Public Access Coordinator *(left at 6:00 pm.),* John Rezendes WCTV Director

**Call To Order/Pledge of Allegiance**

Chair Irene Buck called the WCAB meeting to order at 5:30 pm. with a quorum of the members present, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

The meeting for this month was an in-person meeting. A video recording and meeting minutes will be made available.

**Approval of Minutes of Wednesday, November 8, 2023**

 A motion was made to approve the WCAB minutes for November 8, 2023.

 Motion by Gloria Cabral seconded by Donald Krudys all were in favor, motion passed

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Status of Charter Contract - and next steps to completion** - Chair Buck reported that Attorney Hewig continues to try and communicate with Charter’s John Maher and a finalized contract has still not been signed. Attorney Hewig suggested to hold a public meeting and let the world know what the status is. Chair Buck determined this would not be in the best interests to make a big fuss by having an open meeting. The goal is to maintain quality community TV for the Town and continue to broadcast meetings so everyone knows all about the happenings in the town**.**

Attorney Hewig mentioned the idea of communicating with a person with more authority than Mr. Maher. Chair Buck has shared a letter with Jim Hartnett.

Discussion took place on the issue of payment from Charter. This comes in April and the last one received was in April 2023. There was a concern that there may be an issue if they don’t sign a new contract.

Chair Buck asked the committee how they feel on this issue and asked for comments on how to move this issue forward?

*(Mr. Ouellette arrived here at 5:38 pm.)*

Rene Kochman suggested to try reaching out to John Maher directly out of courtesy asking about where we stand and to give a status update.

Chair Buck mentioned talks are still happening with Mr. Hartnett and Attorney Hewig.

Robert Daylor suggested to reach out and don’t sit on this. Exchanging emails in the past has not achieved any results. We should not tolerate this. Once you reached an agreement it should not take an extensive time to finalize it.

Rene Kochman used the term “ghosting us”. We negotiated in good faith and have communicated through the attorney and now we should follow up.

Chair Buck asked the committee, “How strongly do we need to tell the world?”

Rene Kochman will reach out to Mr. Maher and report back to the committee.

Chair Buck asked if the Board of Selectmen should be involved? Mr. Ouellette suggested to continue to try and get answers and he will let the Selectmen know the status. Mr. Ouellette expressed that the committee is doing a good job. If needed the Selectmen can send another stronger letter to stay on top of it.

**Director's Report and Discussion -**

Mr. John Rezendes reported the new server has been installed for about 1 month. The 2 town meeting rooms (Town Hall and Town Hall Annex) are now capable of live streaming. In order to view live programs, search:

**YouTube**

**“Westport Government TV” - for Government Meetings**

**“Westport Community TV” - for School Events**

Mr. Rezendes reported they continue to live stream both the boys’ and girls’ basketball games, school committee meetings and other school events.

Switchover to the new building, the origination point for cable channels has not been completed to date. Jim Hartnett and the Select Board sent a letter to Spectrum and they apologized for the delay. The old server has died which means broadcasting can’t be done on channels 190 and 191. Cable rebroadcasts are seen on channel 192. The cutover needs to happen to get these 2 channels back up and running, possibly our town technicians can do it.

Rene Kochman suggested to initiate a service call and state the 2 channels are black, we have a new server and need to switch over. Meetings are not being aired because 2 channels are not serviceable. A service call may remedy this.

Discussion took place on possible reimbursement since we are paying for this service.

**FY 25 Budget and Staffing** - Over time Mr. Rezendes has listened to the committee about adding more content and programming to the present Cable TV programming.

Mr. Rezendes presented an FY2025 Proposal to begin July 1, 2024. Mr. Rezendes has requested to have another person/teacher take over the teaching aspect of his position. This would mean to hire someone to teach one class, 1 hour for a total of 180 hours for the year at the high school level. At $33.00 per hour this would cost about $6,000 out of the budget. This would allow Mr. Rezendes to spend more time with the channel for programming content to offer the town. Basically, this would be an AV communications role in the town in which Mr. Hartnett has expressed interest in having. Ms. Bain can still continue in her role and this won’t affect her job. Mr. Rezendes would continue to stay in the high school TV Room and do everything except the teaching aspect.

Mr. Rezendes requested to hire another body with reporting and writing skills to do programs, attend meetings at night when either Mr. Rezendes or Ms. Bain can’t attend. Another adult committed to this is needed. This position could be 19 ½ hours with no benefits.

Mr. Rezendes requested feedback from the committee on his 2 ideas.

Ms. Cabral suggested for Mr. Rezendes to provide the committee with a job description for the teaching requirements and any changes to his job description. In addition, list any costs involved.

**Discussion - Cable Advisory Board Membership and schedule for election of officers**

Chair Buck reminded the committee that everyone is appointed for 1 year. The term is coming up in June. Chair Buck also mentioned it is time for a new chair.

*(Mr. Daylor and Ms. Bain left here at 6:00 p.m.)*

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Chair Buck mentioned the idea of expanded programming and would like to find volunteer producers to work with John in his efforts to do outreach to the town departments. Mr. Rezendes has contacted some in town and they have not responded. Time gets tied up in waiting for responses.

Mr. Ouellette mentioned they can look at other avenues for example the Attorney General or the FCC. First a friendly phone call needs to be made in order for them to give an opportunity to answer why the contact has not been completed to date.

Mr. Krudys asked if the DTC Department of Telecommunications and Cable that controls the contracts has been contacted? Chair Buck does not know.

Chair Buck will do a follow up after contacts are done and will report in March.

*(Mr. Ouellette left here at 6:06 p.m.)*

Ms. Cabral asked what students do in class? Mr. Rezendes explained students work on news stories around school, do interviews and write them up, produce news broadcasts 1-2 per year. All topics are pre-approved by him. In addition, he does a Bootcamp about the equipment.

Ms. Cabral made suggestions for example highlight a student per month or people in the neighborhood.

Mr. Krudys suggested to highlight families and people in town, for example the dairy farm.

Chair Buck asked if anyone else wants to add anything?

Mr. Kochman shared his value and support for Mr. Rezendes’ proposals. He offered to assist with any job descriptions. Mr. Kochman suggested to have a letter drafted to Superintendent Aubin, Town Administrator Hartnett, and Selectboard.

Mr. Kochman added to use social media as a good way to promote positive messages.

Ms. Cabral added to create a form and put it out there for somebody or a business to get involved and do good for the community. Ms. Cabral offered to create a mock form.

Ms. Cabral suggested to contact Bristol Community College and provided a contact person. They may have students come in and work on a project.

Chair Buck shared some of the benefits of having a local TV studio could be to produce interviews and stories, sharing what the future is all about.

Discussion was held on the use of the TV Studio inside the school. There could be scheduling problems or CORI checks involved for in-school use.

**Next Meeting Dates** - Wednesday March 20 or Wednesday March 27 at 5:30 p.m.

Ms. Pinho will email Mr. Daylor and Mr. Ouellette to check on their availability and report back.

**Adjourn** - A motion was made to adjourn.

Motion by Gloria Cabral seconded by Donald Krudys all were in favor, motion passed

 The Westport Cable Advisory Board Meeting ended at 6:30 pm.