

Fairhaven Cable Advisory Committee
April 11, 2019 – 7:00p.m.

Present: Chairperson, Barbara Acksen, Michael Merolla, Ron Medina, Kenneth Souza, MJ Carvalho and Robert Espindola

Absent: John Methia

Cable Access Director, Derek Frates was also present.

Meeting opened at 7:15p.m.

Minutes:

March 19, 2019 – Kenneth Souza made a motion to approve and was seconded by Ron Medina. The motion passed unanimously.

Cable Director's Report:

Mr. Frates started that we covered the Candidate's night both at the High School as well as West Island; and then the staff put together a great PSA for Election Day. The Election night was also covered and this year trivia questions was read through the down time of waiting for the votes. It was a successful night and Mr. Frates got comments on it afterward.

Mr. Frates has been doing PSA's with the Health Department and most recently videotaped the Opioid Task Force that was recently held at the NB Whaling Museum.

He has the FCC Regulation PSA up on the website and on Facebook – asking members to sign the petition to stop the FCC from interrupting Cable Access.

Town Meeting is May 4th, and he has staff covering it and it will be live on Channel 18 and live stream.

Mr. Frates said there is new programming on channel 95, some senior programming, exercise shows, hour worth of cooking shows. He's also found state house education programs. He will be videotaping the Cherry Blossom festival as well as the Senior Talent Show.

Mr. Frates has talked to Beth David from the Neighborhood News about advertising the weekly schedule.

Bob Espindola suggested doing a 'spotlight' on the Recreation Center with Warren Resenhausen, maybe Kool Kids Camp and other departments in Town for other PSA's for the channel.

Mr. Frates states he advises the Department Head meeting every month to inform him of things they are doing so he can be available to videotape to air.

Update – Municipal Fiber Committee

Mr. Espindola reported that ComTech (who is currently putting in the Town fiber) came to the MFC last meeting to discuss the project, the avenue possibilities of reaching out to the residence through the fiber build-out and gave an approximate 60 page presentation. Definitely a lot of information but it invoked lots of discussion and questions.

Mr. Espindola has also recently spoken to Taunton Municipal Light Company on a conference call and learned about their services.

At their last SRPEDD meeting, SRPEDD discussed hosting a workshop at their facility with panelists, consultants etc. who could speak about fiber/internet to residence and other regional opportunities. Mr. Espindola stated there is no date as of yet, but he is working with them to create this workshop.

Update on RFP for Cable Competition:

Mr. Espindola stated it's not really called an "RFP", but for argument sake, that is what they will refer to it as. He said he reached out to Attorney Solomon and he was to provide him with the steps/information to move forward on this. Mr. Espindola did receive the information and forwarded it to Mr. Rees (who will be on vacation, and then Town Meeting); so Mr. Espindola hoped by the next meeting he would have more information on moving forward.

Discussion RE: MOU Update & Cable Enterprise Funds:

At the last meeting, the committee discussed they would like one enterprise fund for all funds, but Mr. Espindola stated he spoke with Mr. Rees and Attorney Solomon regarding the enterprise funds. He said that at the Town Meeting, there would be a series of articles, for an Enterprise Funds for the School Department (Education Access) and a fund for the Public and Government Access. He said it was very important that the articles pass, and if this didn't happen before July 1st, then all funds would go into the general fund per the State. Mr. Espindola stated for now the % split would remain the same.

Mr. Espindola stated that the MOU hasn't been confirmed as of yet. He met with Dr. Baldwin and Mr. Rees who felt that perhaps a MOU wasn't necessary, but Mr. Espindola shared that he still felt going forward a MOU should be written to be very clear and concise what the expectation are going forward.

Mr. Espindola would like to see a five year plan projected for funds by both sides.

Ms. Acksen stated that she feels it is the Committee's responsibility to project standards for the Town as a whole on behalf of the community.

Mr. Espindola agreed and suggested perhaps a survey to the subscribers on what they'd like to see – more or less of programming. Mr. Espindola also stated that they were still discussing models/and the possibility of becoming a non-profit.

Mr. Souza asked why they would have two enterprise funds and who would be in control of the accounts.

Mr. Espindola stated that it would be identical to how it is happening right now. The fees come in and the same % would be divided, controlled by same entities. The difference is 4.25% has gone to 5%.

Ms. Acksen stated that if the monies co-mingled she thought it would be difficult to split/oversee.

Mr. Espindola stated that the Selectboard has total control of who and the % split, however the previous contract advised how the split was done.

Mr. Espindola stated that this Committee should request from the School Department an update if not monthly perhaps quarterly to share what's happening at the School level.

Mr. Espindola made a motion endorsing two separate Enterprise Funds; Education and Public Access and Government with the intent of continued process of a model for both and was seconded by MJ Carvalho. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion/Review Questions for appointment with Superintendent, Bob Baldwin:

MJ Carvalho stated that she wanted to know how they were choosing to show what programs on the channel. She said she watches it sometimes and it's very on/off.

Members of the School Committee and Dr. Baldwin arrived at 8:19pm. Present were: Dr. Baldwin, Tara Kohler, Drew Furtado, and Pamela Kuechler.

Mr. Espindola began with a summary of what the Committee had been discussing. He stated the MOU was in a "status quo", the enterprise funds (2-one for Education, one for public/government) and that would need to be voted favorably at Town Meeting. Mr. Espindola stated to the members that he felt the MOU was still needed as an accountability piece and the Cable Advisory Committee unanimously agreed.

Dr. Baldwin first gave a shout out to Mr. Furtado and Mr. Frates for their initiatives and collaboration of working together.

Mr. Espindola stated that the integration of equipment and programming talents together is great and that ultimately the subscribers are getting there monies worth and that's what important.

Ms. Acksen stated that John Methia could not be here tonight, but she read his comments to the School Committee, which stated that the funds provided by subscribers was for programming and not intended to pay for teaching.

Dr. Baldwin recollected many of the school programs that are being channeled and the number of students involved.

Ms. Acksen stated they have begun to look at different models across the region to see what might best fit for Fairhaven.

School Committee chairperson, Brian Monroe arrived to the discussion at 8:29p.m.

Mr. Espindola thought the MOU would address concerns entirely, and identify a certain standard, specific concerns. He said he's not ready or the advisory committee is not ready to identify what is wrong/right.

Mr. Merolla asked why some of the Christmas Concerts and elementary school programs were not being shown on the Education Channel. His concerns and some of the committee's concerns were that the "Education" channel was not just for the high school.

Dr. Baldwin stated that in 2003, the School Committee enacted a policy that a child/family could sign off to be not photographed or videotaped per their request. He said that to date there are 69 families who

have signed they do not want their child videotaped or photographed so they have to protect those families.

Ms. Kohler stated she understood the advisory committee's concerns however the School Department has an obligation to clear expectations to the students and their families, to the community. She said there are many students who desire to get into the communication field and they are happy to offer the program to get them working in that field.

Discussion ensued regarding the videotaping and pictures taken by parents. The School Committee made it clear if the parents take the picture and/or videotape the students then it is their liability not the School department.

Dr. Baldwin went on to say that the 'model' being used in the School is currently programming and the kids being involved with that and enhancing their knowledge and creativity to learn the trade; many of the students who graduate from Fairhaven High School go on to work in this field; as well as some of them are currently working for the Town in the Cable Access Department. He said their model is enhancing and educating, teaching the high school students who want to be in this field on how to be successful in it. He also said that there are other schools looking to FHS for their model to copy it at other schools and he was not about to change the model.

Dr. Baldwin said that they have heard some concerns about starting younger in this field, and that's why they were putting a studio at the Middle School and moving forward with that project.

Mr. Furtado handed out a flyer that broke down the Educational Access Usage Report for April 2019 that included 826 Completed Projects for April 2019, 121 students in the Media Production Class, and 5 classes. (See attached flyer).

Mr. Espindola stated that Mr. Frates was with us for less than a year and has expanded coverage, and done quite a bit to get Public Access moving in a positive direction. He said he would like to see both sides project their budgets into the future (5 years or so), so they can figure out what the split may look like. Mr. Espindola suggested that perhaps the School Department shares monthly or quarterly what programming looks like on their end.

Mr. Monroe said he wasn't going to ask Mr. Furtado to attend yet another meeting, and was slightly offended that this is the first he has heard from the advisory board on their concerns.

Mr. Espindola stated he wasn't talking about physically meeting with the advisory committee, but perhaps sending reports in monthly or quarterly, so transparently the information from both committee's should be available to the community.

Mr. Souza explained his role with ORRCTV and stated his concern was that the Education piece of PEG Access was not a "Fairhaven High School Channel."

Mr. Espindola stated that both committee's should work together to move forward, and that's where a MOU would come into place. He said both needs a balanced plan.

Mr. Monroe stated he would like to have concerns documented for their review.

More discussion on cable advisory concerns that included more summer programming, sports programming, getting into the lower grades for educational access.

Mr. Furtado did explain that he has remote access during the summer months and there is summer programming of bulletin boards, junior programs, senior graduation, etc.

Dr. Merolla shared what feedback he has gotten back from the community and Ms. Acksen reiterated that is what their job as the advisory committee is, to identify and explore what the community's concerns are and share it.

Brief discussion on staffing of sports games and even Mr. Frates said you really need a whole crew and the schools and his department are not staffed to cover those types of broadcasting. The other problems is kids now a days are instant gratification, they enjoy watching the sports games on an application called, "huddle"; or through a drone.

Dr. Baldwin stated that they both need to trust the relationship, trust the communication and trust the staff (Mr. Frates and Mr. Furtado), who are the expertise in their field. He said allow them to do their job, working together and collaborating on the budget and the programming going forward. He believes that they should be the ones to build and grow the budget for the future.

The School Committee left the meeting at approximately 9:42p.m.

As it was a late time of the evening, the Committee decided to discuss more at a future meeting.

Ron Medina made a motion to adjourn and was seconded by Bob Espindola. The motion passed unanimously. Meeting ended at 9:45p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Patricia A. Pacella
Recording Secretary