



Committee Members:

<u>Keith Silvia</u>	2021	Selectmen Representative
John Methia	2021	
Ronnie Medina	2021	
Maria Carvalho	2021	
Vacancy One	2021	
Barbara Acksen	2021	Chairwoman

CABLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

March 16, 2021

Present: Barbara Acksen, Maria Carvalho, John Methia, Ronnie Medina

Absent: Keith Silvia

Cable Director, Derek Frates was also in attendance.

Minutes: Ms. Acksen opened the meeting and asked for a motion to accept November's minutes. Motion was made by Maria Carvalho to accept November's meeting minutes, John Methia seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Acksen asked for a motion to approve December minutes, she stated there were structural amendments made to the minutes, no amendments to the substance only to sentence structure. Motion was made by Ronnie Medina to accept the December minutes as amended, Ms. Acksen seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Cable Director's Report:

Mr. Frates stated the last meeting was before the Virtual Christmas event, the event went really well, Santa was there to zoom in with the kids, nice event overall for the holiday season. The Annual Report was finished and is now posted on the homepage. He shared screen and presented FairhavenTV.com. Mr. Frates reminded everyone whatever meeting is live that evening they put a tab with a direct link to watch the livestream. Currently the homepage is highlighting how to register for the COVID vaccine and how to get tested which is available almost every Saturday at the Fire Department. Sarah Dupont, interim Health Agent, did a few videos on this as well and they are on the homepage.

Ms. Acksen asked if the videos have been updated for recent changes to procedure from the state. Mr. Frates said he would speak with the new Health Agent, David Flaherty on this and on new content. Mr. Frates said a lot of the PSAs on the bulletin board are from the state's website.

Annual Report is posted at the bottom. The highlight for 2020 was that in a year of turmoil 260 meetings were recorded which broke the record of 234 from 2019. Mr. Frates commented that the team has always covered every committee or board that they can if the availability is there. You can see the list through the website and the on demand file as well.

Successful year considering what we had to deal with. Some PSA activity was down and some community programming was down too and that it has picked up again recently. Mr. Frates was very proud of our entry into the MassAccess Creator Awards and we WON Best Virtual Event in the state for the Halloween Special. Mr. Frates shared the clip of the event that was held as a virtual ceremony, he mentioned the team was all on the zoom for the presentation. The clip included his acceptance speech for the award. Mr. Frates mentioned this event was best thing we could win for and that the whole crew worked on the event, great to win as a team. Ms. Acksen added that the event was engaging and terrific show. Congratulations to the crew.

Mr. Frates mentioned membership in another group. In addition to MassAccess and Teleview Connect they are a member of the Alliance for Community Media, a National Public Access organization, he entered the Halloween Event, the Opioid Video series and the Henry Huttleston Rogers Virtual Walking Tour. Erik Sa and Alyssa Botelho worked with Chris Richard on the virtual tour, filmed him as he took them to different buildings in town, what he would take tourists through. Mr. Frates is hoping to win a national award this year.

Mr. Frates reviewed the third in a three part series in collaboration with the Opioid Taskforce was completed. The Opioid Taskforce is a town organization that also broadens into New Bedford, they meet monthly, it includes members of the Police Department and others as well. The videos are on the Fairhaven TV YouTube page, Beth Fernandes worked hard on the editing. Ms. Acksen asked the purpose of the videos. Mr. Frates explained it is a resource, filmed around town with confidentiality, people impacted sharing how you can get help, each video is about 3-4 minutes, idea is if affected in some way here is how you can get help and resources. Ms. Acksen suggested the BOH may also want to add it to their website. The videos are available on the community bulletin board, go to Fairhaven TV YouTube under the playlists to view.

Mr. Methia commented they are very well produced and where COVID has taken some of the focus away from the opioid crisis, great to stay on that and keep the message going. He also recognized Bethany for her work on the videos and asked if they were entered in for any awards. Mr. Frates said these videos were part of what he entered to the Alliance for Community Media and they are hopeful. Ms. Acksen pointed out that the opioid crisis has taken off more now compared to COVID in some areas like San Francisco. Ms. Carvalho also mentioned the impact COVID has had on people's emotions and taking off focus. Mr. Methia wished the team luck, honor to be nominated and hope for a win.

Mr. Frates showed a new monthly series of PSAs in collaboration with the Police Department. The first is on scams and came out due to scams on the elderly through phone calls. He played the PSA on scams which includes resources available. Next PSA will be Autism Awareness for April, the Police Department comes up with the content and they prepare to post for the community and share on the town websites

and social media in order to get viewership up and share important messages. Ms. Acksen asked what future themes are and would June be Elder Abuse month? Mr. Frates said they are working currently on April Autism Awareness, not sure at this time the future themes.

Next up was the community videos section. Hometown Hikes focuses on one of the trails in town, footage on the trail, to promote activity and getting out. Ms. Acksen pointed out the beautiful trails we have. Mr. Frates said Carvalho Farm was first then the New Boston Trail was released. Other series include David Fauteaux's The Magazine, a monthly feature with 8 episodes that also plays on Channel 95. The cooking shows will feature St. Patty's Day this week. Another recent video was Meet the Candidates night which was done virtually for the first time, it went well, many joined in, the opposed positions and the unopposed ones as well. It was broadcast live and the link is up today to the event with a breakdown of the times on the Facebook page for the different spots so that you can fast forward to them. The moderator reached out to the community for questions and narrowed it down to 3-4 for each position. Very successful event and it will run on channel 18 through the election so everyone can meet the candidates. West Island may have one for their later this year.

Mr. Frates mentioned the series with Community Nurses Healthcare started in 2020 with dementia then healthy living/healthy eating shows. They want to collaborate on a bingo night. A test run was done like a zoom webinar bingo using an app for a bingo card and sign in for digital bingo card, scheduled for April 16th, anyone can join in. Mr. Methia commented on the early days of cable, Whaling City cable in New Bedford, they did bingo nights and local businesses would donate prizes. Ms. Acksen asked if it was done by the cable channel or an organization. Mr. Methia said it was cable access in the early days of cable back in the late 70's and early 80's by Whaling City Cable and it did well.

Mr. Methia continued and said one of the positives from COVID is that pre-COVID we would have thought no way to get residents to learn zoom and how it works but the upside is just about every age group is familiar with how it works so he hopes to stay with zoom meetings, get more in person and keep the zoom option to get more people involved. Ms. Acksen pointed out some people just could not physically get there and if no babysitter, could still come. Mr. Methia mentioned some not comfortable speaking in public and might be more comfortable speaking via zoom call, the more voices the better. Mr. Frates said remote town meetings caught everyone up to speed, helped them participate and helped the learning curve. Ms. Carvalho spoke about those following the media route know to project and how to say words correctly so a person may be shy and hard to understand or a person walks into the room and interrupts, this is all new and a learning curve.

Mr. Frates wrapped up with showing the lists and links to other videos posted on the website like monthly reports with Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator, February's, stats on shows produced and affiliated stations, viewership and how many download the content that we upload to MassAccess, number of Facebook followers and interest in recent meetings we've had thousands of views within a day or two of these meetings. The committee all commented on the popularity of those meetings and number of views. 28 meetings were recorded in February, the followers and the number of views show we have become even more important than before the pandemic and how important cable access is.

Broadband Study Committee Update:

Mr. Frates gave an update on the Broadband Study Committee. They are starting the community engagement segment of the campaign with Entry Point, who is the broadband consultant. They hosted a

webinar last week in addition to the normal meetings and they decided to do a monthly webinar leading up to the Town Meeting. He showed the links to all the broadband info on the homepage called Connect Fairhaven (connectFairhaven.com). The most recent webinar was March 11th and it is under related information, they had about 30 people join live. A mailing list with about 600 people on it was created after the survey so this will keep people informed between the social media posts and email blasts and also basic community engagement through the town meeting. Ms. Acksen pointed out the next town meeting was moved to June 12th and on zoom, remote again.

FHS Sports Update:

Ms. Acksen moved to the next topic on FHS sports and whether they would be covering basketball. Mr. Frates said he spoke with Drew (Furtado) and had a few updates on what they are doing. He showed that Blue Devil TV, channel 9 on demand server, has them to watch after the fact and Drew had said they have a few cameras set up in the gym to film and to switch between the cameras to follow the action, it has been hard to get reliable volunteers to film. Also, not sure who can attend the games or not. Ms. Acksen said not sure but they could find out. Mr. Frates mentioned football would be coming up and not sure if the cameras could be moved outside from the gym for this. The first football game is the 26th at 4pm so it might be easier to stream and Drew was not sure if they would be able to or not. The School Committee might make a call on that and their next meeting is 3/24, two days before the game. Ms. Acksen said 3/22 the Governor will be coming out with the fourth phase so there may be more on attending outside events.

Mr. Methia asked about budget for camera operators. Mr. Frates said he was under the impression that it was due to finding reliable student volunteers and may be part of their budget. Mr. Frates suggested it might be best to ask or call into the School Committee for a true answer. Mr. Methia and Ms. Acksen asked if it was part of the curriculum and could students with interest be assigned; maybe there could be potential for a summer camp. Mr. Methia asked further about the program and current status of that group. Mr. Frates said that was under Drew as the director, not sure what they have or produce. In his experience with football the interest seemed to be for live coverage or Saturday morning and it could be the timing and turnaround for producing was the issue. Basketball was streamed live.

Ms. Acksen asked how it was taught at NB Voc? Mr. Methia said operating camera for those events would be similar and football or basketball would be good way to learn. Ms. Acksen mentioned again this was why the idea of a summer camp for exposure to this and get interest and have technology training could help generate more interest and involvement.

Review of impact of COVID on programming:

Mr. Frates explained that it can be difficult with multiple meetings on one night. This room (at Town Hall) is dedicated to a hybrid set up. If a board meets exclusively on zoom it is easy to join live, record it and stream live or record for playback later. Example, Conservation/Sustainability is exclusively on zoom. Another example, BPW is at their location so they film there. The difficulty is audio quality of zoom vs. hybrid vs. meetings not held in this room at Town Hall. Ms. Acksen asked if anything could be done to improve it. Mr. Frates mentioned it can take multiple people for each meeting too but they have been able to balance them all, they did cover 260 meetings last year. Mr. Methia asked a clarifying question about the process, when say "zoom" we still record and air on the channel. Mr. Frates explained that yes they record the zoom, edit and air on channel 18. Mr. Methia pointed out that

benefit to zoom, method to get more programming and meetings recorded and onto the channel. Ms. Acksen asked about basketball games, are those on live? Mr. Frates said on their channel not sure if live and could ask Drew.

Other Business:

Ms. Acksen opened with question about availability of things like Discovery+ and that it is not available from Comcast, can only get from Verizon. Mr. Frates said that there are some services that are stream only like HBO/Max and he was not sure about Discovery+. Ms. Acksen asked if he could look into that, because they are advertising it and if subscribers want to watch it and if only available through Verizon then we do not have it. Mr. Methia said that would be an Over The Top or OTT so a streaming service like Peacock and would stream like on an app. Mr. Methia said with certain box can stream things like YouTube and not sure if would be "pay." Ms. Acksen said that is part of the concern and may hear about it, it is pay and also they (Comcast) are moving Cartoon Channel to a higher level so people need to pay more and does not seem like a good time to do this with people having their kids at home. Also, the Discovery with shows like discovery, home and cooking being moved to streaming and you have to get an app and not sure if people can get this app.

Mr. Methia shared a tip, call Comcast there is a potential if you mention you are "thinking about cutting the cord" you may get a discount or a negotiation on fee/rate. Good chance before you go they will negotiate something with you. Ms. Carvalho said she would test it out. Mr. Frates suggested contacting the Comcast rep they have and start with him. Ms. Acksen suggested a letter or email be sent to him. Mr. Methia reminded of the quick changes to the difference in the way we receive content and watch TV and in next couple of years with the broadband thing a lot will go wireless and 5G and it will happen quickly so will see a lot of OTT and streaming services too. It's called "bundling" and you can bundle what you watch in a package and not have 1000 channels. Ms. Acksen said it seems unfortunate that channels people watch would be taken away and a streaming service only available to certain groups or towns or parts of towns. Mr. Methia went on to explain Verizon offers more because of their unlimited bandwidth, Comcast is limited to the amount of "upper tier" and HD channels they can provide. When the wireless and 5G comes in this will change. There were talks with Fios in the past and it didn't happen. Emerging technology may make certain things obsolete.

Mr. Methia asked for an update on the "muting" concern from previous meetings. Mr. Frates explained, they use a zoom platform for all meetings, they do use webinar for Town Meetings and School Committee and Candidates Night since it is more controlled but takes more effort for people to speak. Due to open meeting law and recent controversies, everyone that enters the zoom can unmute themselves directly and Derek leaves it to the discretion of the Chair to deal with it just as if people were in the room and wanted to speak, who's to stop someone from interrupting so the Chair might stop and say "you're out of order." Gets a little crazy because they would tell him to mute or whoever is running the zoom to mute the person, Mr. Frates would rather it come from the Chair than blocking everyone from the start. Mr. Methia asked if they could develop a procedure for the Chair to mute, maybe 2 warnings- gavel down, told out of order once, told out of order twice then muted so they have fair warning. Akin to throwing someone out of live meeting, at what point do you do that so there should be a process. Mr. Frates said he liked that idea of a standard set of rules and a process concern about how to get people to abide by it. Mr. Methia would like to see Chairs of Boards and Committees keep an eye on that and see if it is being used to silence or following rules for muting. Ms. Acksen said seemed like

mute cuts someone off vs. being next to them and asking them to be quiet and they still respond, does MassAccess have anything that can be viewed or does the state have anything?

Mr. Frates also pointed out if agenda item states it's a "public hearing" item that people have to be allowed to comment, other agenda items are at the discretion of the Chair but if the item states the item is for "public hearing" then people have to have the ability to comment. Mr. Methia reiterated need for the process with warnings before muting, should have a protocol. Mr. Frates asked who this should come from. Mr. Methia suggested maybe start off with a message about it at the start. Mr. Frates said School Committee starts with "public comment" portion where people can comment then they move to where there would not be public comments. Ms. Acksen said it sounds like a good idea to have a period for people to comment and then move on without any. Mr. Methia asked Mr. Frates to reach out to Dartmouth and ask what they follow and for suggestions. Mr. Frates will reach out to New Bedford and Dartmouth to ask about their processes and experiences. He pointed out that they were trying to recreate the experience of being at a live meeting. Mr. Methia said that there does need to be decorum and you should be recognized before speaking. Ms. Acksen summed it up as a need for an etiquette book.

Ms. Acksen asked if anyone had other business to discuss.

Mr. Frates stated that there is still a vacancy on the committee, if interest in the opening on the Cable Advisory Committee people can contact him, the Town Clerk, Ms. Acksen or through CAC on the town website.

Ms. Carvalho made a motion to adjourn, Mr. Methia seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully,

Amy Almeida
Recording Secretary