

CABLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

September 20, 2022

Affiliations	Name	Present
Cable Director	Derek Frates	Yes
Committee Members	Barbara Acksen, Chairwoman	Yes
	Ronnie Medina	Yes
	Maria Carvalho	Yes
	Thomas McAfee	Yes
	John Methia	Yes
Select Board Representative	Stasia Powers	Yes
Recording Secretary	Stephanie Fidalgo	Yes

Opening:

Ms. Acksen opened the meeting at 5:05 PM and read the open meeting law for the record. She noted that the agenda items would be slightly rearranged to accommodate the meeting with Mr. Chasse.

Meeting via Zoom with Peter Chasse, Director of Dartmouth Community TV (DCTV)

Mr. Chasse began with the history of Dartmouth Community TV (DCTV). It formed in 1995 in the high school as part of the high school media program under Ms. Cyndi Marland before becoming a town department. Mr. Chasse took over for Ms. Marland last year. DCTV covers government, education, and public access broadcasting. All employees are full town employees with access to pensions and covered by unions and DCTV is funded via town meeting, though they are a separate enterprise fund. DCTV began using enterprise funds before they became widely adopted across the state.

For government access, they facilitate Zoom meetings and record the majority of the meetings. For educational programming, they cover school sports and concerts. The high school does still have its own internal program for smaller features and morning announcements. As they did not offer public access from the start, there hasn't been a good deal of community participation, though they do offer classes and allow residents to borrow cameras and editing space.

Mr. Frates explained that Fairhaven used Dartmouth's enterprise funds as a model for the two currently used – one for government and one for education. At Ms. Acksen's request for information about DCTV's staffing, Mr. Chasse outlined that DCTV employs four full time staff members, four to six part-time workers. It also takes in two to three students from U Mass Dartmouth as a part of the work-study program and has just started to bring in high school interns. For the full-time staff, they work up to six days a week, up to 40 hours, with a very flexible schedule. Sporting events will have an entire crew of six to seven staffers, covering two to three matches per week during the seasons. They do cover events on the weekend, though Sundays are considered to be overtime for full-time staff members so events on that day are often covered by part-time workers.

Mr. Methia inquired about DCTV's educational coverage and if they fund any teacher positions. Mr. Chasse explained that they do not fund teacher positions, as the high school media program is fully funded through the schools. Rather than using percentage-based allocations to education or government coverage, instead DCTV works with their internal schedule and funding to cover both as

best as they can. DCTV does occasionally gift used equipment to the schools and has purchased plaques for the students though.

After praising DCTV's robust game production, Mr. Methia then turned the conversation towards recording school plays and events, with a particular focus on rights and clearance issues with the use of the student images on access. Dartmouth Schools put out a request at the start of the year for parents to sign off on allowing their children to be recorded and the majority of parents do allow it – Mr. Chasse citing around 95% acceptance. Concerts can be broadcast as those rights are included along with the performing rights. As for plays and musicals, those are recorded for school use only upon request, but are not broadcast due to the cost. In terms of other education events, they work to record PTO meetings, updates from the principals, field days, graduations, feature nights, talent shows, and award nights.

When Ms. Acksen asked for more information about rights for showing plays and musicals by local writers, specifically citing New Bedford's Culture*Park, Mr. Chasse replied that they were able to show a musical by the high school drama teacher. As most agreements allow for cast and crew recording, DCTV works to record the shows and then the high school media program handles selling the DVDs to the cast as a small fundraiser.

Mr. Frates then turned the discussion towards the recent revenue trends with Comcast. For Dartmouth, there was a 2-4% decrease over the last few years but the last two quarters have been trending upward. Subscriber numbers have remained steady at approximately 11,000. Currently, they only have a contract with Comcast though they did also reach out to Verizon and RCN several years ago. They are in the last year of their contract with Comcast and will begin negotiations in October for the new one. He does have concerns about the differences between his projection for the budget versus the projection of expected revenue.

As to whether DCTV had more viewers on cable or live streaming, with the changes since the pandemic, they commonly see 250 viewers of their live streamed football games on YouTube with their highest concurrent viewer count being 350-400 viewers during a hockey game. However, the older audience does continue to favor the cable channels. They are planning to launch OTT services for Apple TV and other smart TVs via Tighrope Media's Cablecast system. Mr. Methia noted Fairhaven's caution towards broadcasting via OTT and social media in case of breaching the terms of Comcast's contract, which Mr. Chasse agreed with. However, he noted that the town has plans for a possible change to tax funding or charging the schools and university for their services if they lost Comcast's funding. The pandemic has made government access all the more vital, with Mr. Chasse specially noting the success of Dartmouth's virtual town meetings and school sports broadcasts.

When bringing up other sources of funding, DCTV has worked with some of the local non-profit organizations, though often free of charge. However, they considering creating a rate card to allow for renting out studio space, trucks, or services, but that might require hiring more staff. There is also the possibility of regionalization and working with Westport. All of those are longer-term options as they are currently sufficiently funded for the next two to three years. They are also anticipating receiving another ten-year contract from Comcast – while occasionally towns receive five-year contracts, ten remains the expected standard.

When asked to describe the studio space, Mr. Chasse explained that 10-12 years prior they moved into their current building, the Old Town Hall at 247 Russells Mills Rd. It contains a 20' x 25' studio space, an editing room with two to three computers, a conference room, a break room/cooking show set, and some storage space. The building was built between 1910-1915 and while they renovated the interior, the exterior still retains its original character.

As for their cable lawyer, DCTV is currently working with Mr. Bill August who assisted with their contracts in 1994 and 2004. In 2013, they worked with Mr. William Solomon, but have decided to return to working with Mr. August. There were no follow-up questions after that and Mr. Chasse was thanked for his time.

Afterward, the committee discussed reaching out to Mr. James C. Marshall, the station manager for New Bedford cable access as they had recently acquired a new 10-year contract with Comcast. Mr. Frates also would like to reach out to Comcast before the time for contract renewal to see about acquiring an HD Channel as that is now standard with their more recent contracts.

In terms of encouraging the education side, Mr. Mike Fernadaes was granted some equipment. He would like a stipend to cover at least a single camera recording of events. There are also the complications of editing a game over the weekend. They also discussed the games broadcast on nfhsnetwork.com which uses a very simple tracking camera and has no audio, scores, or commentary. The subscription service costs \$100 a year or \$11.99 a month, and several schools in the area have begun working with them. However, games have been seen on the cable channel, albeit delayed from the original broadcast date.

Minutes:

As the May 31, 2022 meeting with Mr. Mike Heyden from The Raynham Channel was purely informational, the minutes from the April 26, 2022 meeting had yet to be approved.

Mr. McAfee made the motion to approve the minutes of the April 26, 2022 meeting and was seconded by Mr. Medina. The motion passed unanimously.

Cable Director’s Report: Update on the Public, Educational, and Governmental (PEG) Access (Channels 18 & 95):

The three-month reports presented by Mr. Frates are recorded here in a condensed format:

Channel 18 June – August		Channel 95 June – August	
Meetings Broadcast	58	Event/Shows Produced	13
Events/PSA’s Produced	7	Shows Imported	39
Original Programming Hours	101	Affiliated Access Stations	114
Community Views	5,476	Community Views	2,332
Facebook Followers	1,899	Facebook Followers	1,899
Average Watch Time	00:25:50		

When noting the increase in Facebook followers from the last report, Mr. Frates noted that he will be working with Ms. Alyssa Botelho on reconfiguring and improving the town’s social media presence. He then outlined the productions since the last meeting:

- Fairhaven's Memorial Day 2022
- Pirates and Privateers 2022 Season Trailer
- Cherry Blossom Friendship Festival 2022

- Fairhaven Health Department Sunscreen Stations PSA
- Adopt-A-Pet: June 2022
 - This has been the last Adopt-A-Pet segment as pet adoptions are currently up.
- Huttleston Marketplace 2022 Season
- Fitness in the Park 2022 Season
- When Disaster Strikes...Will You Be Ready? | Fairhaven CERT PSA
- Bistro Mac and Cheese Bar | The Family Table
- The Magazine: Cross Country Bikers Gary Valerio & Darla Donovan | Episode 28
- Fairhaven's 4th of July 2022 (Full Parade & Ceremony as well as Highlights)
- Fairhaven's Homecoming Fair 2022
- Cachupa and Jagacida | The Family Table
- The Magazine: Bill Straus & Gerry Rooney (Whitfield-Manjiro Friendship Soc), Ken Pottel (Pickleball)
- Celebrating Lagoa's 500th Anniversary (Both the Full Event and Highlights)
- They Made It! Gary and Darla's Ride Across the USA for Cystic Fibrosis
- Champions News Network
 - This was done in conjunction with the Champions Camp
- Concerts Under the Stars: Blues Train
 - All the 2022 summer concerts were recorded and will be edited for broadcast
- Fairhaven Health Dept: Rodent Awareness PSA
- The Magazine: Martha & Patrick Worley (Worleybeds Factory Outlet) | Episode 30
- Gnome Surf | Get Personal with Pattie | Episode 11
- Unjudge Someone | Get Personal with Pattie | Episode 12
- Fairhaven TV's Haunted Halloween Party is BACK!

To be added to the channels will be International Overdose Day PSA and the local art-focused show made in conjunction with Mark Badway from the Fine Arts Commission.

For upcoming events, they will be present at Kidsfest in October and will have a booth present. They have also received a video from the mayor of Lagoa, Portugal which they will be translating and making

available. They will also be assisting with the presentation of The Finest Hours on September 26, 2022. On September 27, 2022, they will be a part of Celebrating Recovery Month at the Rec Center with the Opioid Task Force and on October 9, 2022, they will be at the Fire Department Open House.

Mr. Frates also covered the total cable revenue for the past few fiscal years, shown here in a condensed form:

FY22	FY21	FY20	FY19	FY18
\$193,418.14	\$198,789.28	\$205,350.08	\$194,260.60	\$176,144.68

There was a discussion over whether or not the access fee still applies in the case of residents who have cut out cable TV but continue to receive high-speed internet as that would explain how the revenue numbers have remained consistent over the past few years.

CAC Participation in Cable Access Halloween Event (10/27/22)

The next major event will be the Haunted Halloween Party on Thursday, October 27, 2022, at the Town Hall from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM. This is the first event in person since the COVID-19 Pandemic. There will be movies, including the premiere of new Home Town Haunts, as well as live entertainment by Magician Todd Migliacci, and a costume contest. Emails have been sent out to several local organizations to participate in the event but community organizations are also encouraged to apply for tables via email: FairhavenTV@gmail.com. Full information can be found at fairhaventv.com/hauntedhalloweenparty

Update on Outreach to Attorney William Solomon Re: Cable License:

Mr. Solomon has drafted a legal agreement to send to the new Town Administrator confirming that he will provide information to the cable advisory committee for free either via Zoom or two times in person for free. However, the agreement needs to be approved by Ms. Ellison first before any meetings can be scheduled. Even though Fairhaven is not currently up for license renewal, it is possible to ask Comcast for an HD channel as those are now becoming a standard part of new contracts, as mentioned earlier. Until a meeting can be arranged with Mr. Solomon, the committee will continue to reach out to other towns for further information about their own cable models.

Broadband Study Committee Update:

Mr. McAfee covered the move of the Broadband Study Committee to a Municipal Light Board which will have responsibility over the project going forward. Mr. Frates informed the committee that Fairhaven received \$250,000 for the Community Compact Cabinet Municipal Fiber Grant. There will also be grants from the Massachusetts Broadband Institute as well as the possibility of federal grants. These grants will cover the upcoming the trial program as well as community education about the broadband program. Their next meeting will be September 22, 2022. Information about the program can be found at <https://www.connectfairhaven.com/>

Other Business:

There are currently no plans for an October meeting given the timing of Halloween event. There is a hope to meet with Mr. Solomon before the end of the year, however arranging the special Town Meeting on November 15, 2022 is also a scheduling concern.

Mr. McAfee made a motion to adjourn at 6:22 PM and was seconded by Ms. Carvalho. The motion passed unanimously.