

**CABLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**January 31, 2022**

Affiliations	Name	Present
Cable Director	Derek Frates	Yes
Committee Members	Barbara Acksen, Chairwoman	Yes
	Ronnie Medina	Yes
	Maria Carvalho	Yes
	Thomas McAfee	No
	John Methia	Yes
Select Board Representative	Stasia Powers	Yes
Recording Secretary	Stephanie Fidalgo	Yes

**Opening:**

Ms. Acksen opened the meeting at 5:34 PM and read the open meeting law for the record.

**Minutes:**

Ms. Acksen entertained a motion to approve the meeting minutes of the September 20, 2022, meeting minutes.

**Ms. Carvalho made the motion to approve the minutes of the September 20, 2022 meeting and was seconded by Mr. Medina. The motion passed unanimously via roll call vote.**

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

Mr. Frates presented the Fairhaven Cable Access Television Annual Report for 2022 to the committee. The full report is viewable online at <https://www.fairhaventv.com/> under the “2022 Annual Cable Report” header or can be read directly at [https://www.fairhaventv.com/files/ugd/52837c\\_a3faba96d6ae4f5c8cf444f42e44b1c6.pdf](https://www.fairhaventv.com/files/ugd/52837c_a3faba96d6ae4f5c8cf444f42e44b1c6.pdf)

The annual channel metrics are provided in a condensed form:

Channel 18 2022		Channel 95 2022	
Meetings Broadcast	302	Events/Shows Produced	39
Events/PSAs Produced	25	Shows Imported	136
Original Programming Hours	585	Affiliated Access Stations	126
Community Views	26,877	Community Views	7,254
Facebook Followers	1,972	Facebook Followers	1,972
Average Watch Time	00:19:44	YouTube Channel Views	14,239

Covering the events from the last meeting, Mr. Fates first discussed the Haunted Halloween Party held in the Town Hall on October 27, 2022. This was the first in-person event since the start of the COVID-19

Pandemic which resulted in the last two events being held virtually via Zoom. There were over 700 people in attendance, shattering the records for the 2018 and 2019 in-person events. Highlights were the Spooky Set, the Green Screen photos, the live show, costume contests, and the outside entertainment.

The Old Time Holiday event held on December 10, 2022, was also quite popular as a multi-organizational event held in the center of the Town, again being the first in-person held in two years. The department produced a highlight video of the event including the Town Hall festivities and the nighttime caroling sing-along. A similar video was also produced for the Benoit Square lighting ceremony.

For government-oriented events, the department broadcast the meetings of over 20 different boards and committees, making them available both on Channel 18 as well as on-demand at FairhavenTV.com's Government Meeting Videos archive - <https://www.fairhaventv.com/governmentmeetingvideos>. The Meet The Candidates night and live local election coverage also proved to be popular events. Scheduling for the next Meet the Candidates event will take place after the candidacy application process is completed on February 13, 2023.

Other events included the Memorial and Veteran's Day Parades and PSAs made for the BPW, specifically the Boil Water notice and the Water Meter updates. Mr. Frates encourages department heads to make use of the Cable Department's production skills and community outreach both on television and social media. As noted at the last meeting, Alyssa Botelho took over as the Social Media coordinator for the Town and has been working to improve the Town's presence on Facebook and Instagram.

Mr. Frates then switched to talk about Cable Access Channel 95. While there were fewer shows produced than last year, he has been supplementing the channel with relevant programming from Mass Access, such as programs about state-wide elections. Ms. Acksen watched a recent EPA meeting that included discussions on the Acushnet River and suggested including it in the channel rotation. She will be passing the information on to Mr. Frates.

Ms. Carvalho asked about the relatively recent addition of closed captioning on Government Meeting videos and Mr. Frates assured her that it would be a later topic of discussion.

Other local original shows include the Magazine which has reached 35 episodes in 3 years, the Hometown Hikes video series made in conjunction with the Buzzard's Bay Coalition, and the Getting Personal with Patti Interview series. Other local events included the Cherry Blossom Festival held by the Whitfield-Manjiro Friendship Society, the Millicent Library events, Homecoming events, and the elementary school's media camp day. Of special note is the Concerts Under the Stars series, which featured especially edited multi-camera shoots of the event.

For PSAs, the department has worked on Opioid Awareness and Recovery created in coordination with the Opioid Task Force, with plans to make drug education PSAs on both Opioids and Vaping aimed at teenagers and parents. There were also PSAs on CERT volunteer outreach as well as board and committee vacancies to help fill positions around Town. The Council on Aging Speaker series has been added to the YouTube channel with plans to be broadcast on Channel 95.

Coming back around to a previous question, the Commission on Disability requested to add in closed captioning to the meeting videos. Zoom provides auto-generated captioning services for live broadcast meetings and the cable department can add in the same captions during the post-editing process for

meetings recorded and then broadcast later. Mr. Frates showed off a few examples of meetings that featured the auto-captioning feature to the committee so they could observe the new video layout and the accuracy of the auto-generated captions. Unlike traditional captioning, which requires a transcriptionist and the associated fees, this service is already included with the Town’s Zoom subscription.

**Mass Creator Awards Update:**

Fairhaven Cable TV was nominated in four categories at the Mass Creator Awards, which is a juried awards ceremony dedicated to recognizing and honoring outstanding programming for Massachusetts Cable Access programming. The categories and results are as follows:

Category	Program	Result
Documentary	They Made It! Gary and Darla’s Ride Across the USA for Cystic Fibrosis	Nominated
Short Format	Santa’s Bell	Nominated
Promotional	Fairhaven TV’s Home for the Holidays Parody Promos	<b>Winner</b>
Production Value	Hometown Haunts: The Caretaker at Rogers School	<b>Winner</b>

The Best Production Value win is for the second year in a row, having also won for the first collection on Hometown Haunts. Mr. Frates then showed off photos of the event to the committee and brought the awards to the meeting. Fairhaven TV also has entries for the Alliance for Community Media Hometown Media Awards coming up later this year.

Ms. Carvalho suggested creating a PSA on the awards and Mr. Frates will be updating the FairhavenTV website’s current awards corner as well to feature the new winning productions.

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

Ms. Acksen provided her update on her communications with Cable Attorney William Solomon. Since the last meeting, he has drafted and sent a legal agreement to the Town Administrator, Ms. Ellison, and spoke to her over the phone. The terms of the agreement show that he would be offering his services for a meeting with the Town that would be done at no cost. The talk would be focused on the current license and what the committee could expect in the future but would not include any negotiations for a future license. The meeting would be either via Zoom or in person for up to three hours.

Ahead of the license renewal in 2028, Mr. Frates wished to reach out to other available attorneys to find a good fit for the Town. For now though, Ms. Acksen wishes to focus on how Mr. Solomon can assist the Town in the present. She is particularly interested in gaining an HD Channel for the Town which has become a standard part of more recent Comcast contracts. Ms. Powers asked if there would need to be any additional expenses or logistics required for adding an HD Channel, but Mr. Frates informed her that they already had the correct capabilities and that current Comcast SD channel broadcasts are derived from the original HD recordings.

**Brief Update on Broadband / Municipal Light Board:**

Mr. Sean Powers was asked to speak to the Committee about updates to the Broadband and Municipal Light Board projects. The Municipal Light Board has passed two Town Meeting votes to provide one

option for funding the project. The other option would be an opt-in Enterprise Fund, which the wording for that has been sent to the Legislature. They received a \$250,000 grant to upgrade the Housing Authority with broadband and wireless access. They had applied for and are now waiting to hear back about the grants they applied for from the Massachusetts Broadband Institute.

Mr. Frates also covered the work that Mr. Bob Espindola has put into arranging meetings between other local municipalities interested in broadband projects, with the first meeting having occurred in December of 2022. Representatives from around a dozen local communities attended, including Dartmouth, New Bedford, and Westport. There are plans for regular monthly meetings on the subject to help pool resources and share ideas. A number of the other communities are also working with EntryPoint which has been facilitating Fairhaven’s projects.

No vote has been taken on who would serve on the Municipal Light Board, with the Select Board being the default option but there would be the option for it to be a unique identity or included under the BPW in the future.

Mr. Methia wished to make sure that none of the funding for the Broadband projects fell under the Cable budget, and Mr. Frates confirmed that the two are entirely separate entities with their own budgets. Currently, the existing Broadband committee has the reigns on the project, and they are continuing to meet regularly. Once the Municipal Light Board is formed, it will take over the project.

Ms. Acksen requested further information on the latest information on the grant requests and Mr. Powers explained that the state was working to provide municipalities with both grant money and access to consultants to help with local broadband projects and sourcing further funding. The exact amount of the grant will be determined by the Massachusetts Broadband Institute with priority given to underserved municipalities, so Fairhaven will have to see where it falls on the scale.

Mr. Methia expressed his concerns about the broadband project and how it will compete with 5G and wireless services from existing providers. He wants to ensure that the project is self-sustaining and paid for only by citizens who wish to opt-in. Mr. Powers assured him that would be the case under the Enterprise Fund legislation.

**Other Business:**

Mr. Frates outlined the basics of the Cable Department’s funding via Comcast fees which are paid out quarterly along with some additional fees. The Town receives 56% of the budget and the remaining 44% goes to the education department. The main budget numbers for both the Town and education department are provided in a condensed version along with the total revenue by fiscal year, with a note that the FY23 numbers are approximations of the current running totals.

	FY23	FY22	FY21	FY20	FY19	FY18
<b>Town Revenue</b>	\$102,112.57 (Approx.)	\$193,418.14	\$198,789.28	\$205,350.08	\$194,260.60	\$176,144.68
<b>Education Revenue</b>	\$80,239.17 (Approx.)	\$149,081.64	\$151,615.05	\$158,224.63	\$150,225.11	\$135,966.42
<b>Comcast Total</b>	\$182,361.74 (Approx.)	\$342,499.78	\$350,404.33	\$363,574.71	\$344,485.71	\$312,111.10

Budget meetings have already started for 2023. As of the end of FY22 in July, the cable department has \$678,000 in retained earnings so there is money to fall back on if needed. The estimated earnings for the year are projected at \$199,000 to \$200,000, with an operating annual budget of \$230,000. Often, the department comes in under budget, and any funds left over are returned to the retained earnings.

Ms. Acksen inquired about the possibility of local news coverage with the shift from local papers to possibly cable access. While the channel has done some live programming such as covering elections, the committee members all commented on how more up to the minute news is much more difficult to facilitate, even at a weekly broadcast rate.

Overall, Mr. Frates is confident that the budget should work out, though adding an additional full-time employee could prove challenging to coordinate.

For the next meeting, Ms. Acksen hopes that Mr. Solomon will finally be able to come and speak to the committee on their contract questions. But as a backup, she will continue to reach out to other local cable access departments, specifically citing New Bedford and Rochester. Rochester in particular is of interest as they operate as a 501(c)(3) group and that is a model the committee would like further information on. She would also like to speak to Plymouth which worked hard to create a coalition with other local towns and boards to build up their programs.

Mr. Frates would also like to continue to do further PSAs alongside groups around town such as the Rotary Club and the Recreation Center. Ms. Carvalho put forth her suggestion for a documentary program about how elections are organized within the Town as a way to increase poll worker volunteers. Mr. Frates would reach out to Town Clerk Linda Fredette to see if she was interested in collaborating on such a project.

Mr. Methia requested information on the education program such as Blue Devil TV and any student awards and if there could be further connections between Fairhaven.TV's website and the school's website. He would also like to see the middle school program featured and increase access to sports and plays. Ms. Powers brought up how finding student volunteers is the major issue and that the cuts during the COVID pandemic also affected the program. Ms. Acksen followed up by bringing up how Rochester has a strong education broadcasting program and that is another reason why she would like to speak with them.

**Mr. Carvalho made a motion to adjourn at 6:49 PM and was seconded by Ms. Methia. The motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Stephanie A. Fidalgo  
Recording Secretary,  
Cable Advisory Committee