

**Town of Ayer**  
**Cable Advisory Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes for January 24, 2023**

RECEIVED  
FEB 06 2023

TOWN OF AYER  
TOWN CLERK



**Attendance:** Jannice Livingston; Janet Providakes; Chief Brian Gill

**Absent:** Julie Murray

**Also in Attendance:** Robert Pontbriand, Town Manager; Attorney William Hewig, Town Counsel

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 8:34am on Zoom by J. Livingston.

J. Livingston read the following statement into the record:

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic, in accordance with Chapter 22 of the Acts of 2022, suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law {OML}, public bodies otherwise governed by the OML are temporarily relieved from the requirement that meetings be held in public places, open and physically accessible to the public, so long as measures are taken to ensure public access to the bodies' deliberations "through adequate, alternative means." This meeting will be live on Zoom. The public may participate remotely by joining Zoom {Meeting ID# 813 1850 5727} or by calling (646- 931-3860). For additional information about remote participation, please contact Carly Antonellis, Assistant Town Manager at atm@aver.ma.us or 978-772-8220 ext. 100 prior to the meeting.

**Review and Approval of the meeting minutes from December 13, 2022; January 3, 2023; and January 12, 2023:**

The Committee reviewed the minutes and there were no changes.

**Motion:** A motion was made by J. Providakes and seconded by B. Gill to approve the December 13, 2022; January 3, 2023; and January 12, 2023 meeting minutes. **Motion passed (3-0) by Roll Call**  
**Vote:** J. Livingston, Y; J. Providakes, Y; B. Gill, Y.

**Recap and Discussion of the January 18, 2023 Cable Public Hearing:**

The Committee reviewed and discussed the January 18, 2023 Cable Public Hearing. The consensus was that the Public Hearing was a success in conveying the Town's proposal as well as the importance of APAC and public cable access television.

Attorney Hewig advised that we will now need a budget and an equipment list for Comcast for the purposes of the negotiations.

J. Providakes stated that she would work with APAC to put together a budget document and official equipment list for the next meeting.

R. Pontbriand stated that if J. Providakes needed any assistance he would be happy to help.

J. Providakes stated that three of the major equipment areas are the castus system; green room/studio lighting; and equipment upgrades over the next 10 years.

**Initial Discussion with Comcast Regarding Negotiations of the Cable License:**

The Committee was joined by Gregory Franks from Comcast.

Attorney Hewig presented the initial proposal of the Town as follows:

Increase from 4.56% to 5%

\$150,000 to \$240,000 in Capital for future capital needs to include equipment over the next 10 years; castus system upgrade; green room/studio lighting; an additional full-time employee.

Attorney Hewig continued that the Town's proposal equates to a total pass through cost to the subscriber of 0.35 cents.

G. Franks asked what the status of the I-net was. He stated that if some of the points of origin on the I-net could be eliminated, we could get closer to \$240,000. He stated that he could agree to the 5%. He stated that with the Town's proposal, the total pass through costs to the subscriber would be \$1.33 which is already on the high side by Comcast standards.

B. Gill asked how many sites on the I-net would we need to eliminate to get to the \$240,000?

G. Franks stated it would depend on what specific sites you could eliminate.

Attorney Hewig stated that the Town will need to review the I-net and will get back to you for the next meeting with a list in writing of the capital/equipment needs.

G. Franks stated that we can probably meet in the middle on the Capital amount. He stated he would like to hold off on discussing channels until next time.

J. Providakes stated that at the Public Hearing we all heard the needs for more coverage; additional staff and the issue of high definition and what happens to subscribers that are analog in terms of costs.

G. Franks stated that high definition is going to happen and we could update you to digital from analog but I need to look into what happens with the analog users.

Attorney Hewig stated that we should meet in two weeks, Monday, February 6, 2023 at 8:30am on Zoom and we will discuss the capital needs list; the I-net and origination points; Greg will have more on high definition; and also the Senior and Veterans discount.

G. Franks stated that affordability of the internet came through from the hearing and that Comcast does offer a discount of \$30 per month if the subscriber is on public assistance.

[G. Franks left the Zoom meeting]

J. Providakes stated that she will get a cleaner version of the budget spreadsheet for the next meeting.

**Scheduling of Next Meeting:**

Monday, February 6, 2023, at 8:30am on Zoom.

**Motion:** A motion was made by J. Providakes and seconded by B. Gill to adjourn the meeting at 9:40am. **Motion passed 3-0 by Roll Call Vote:** J. Livingston, Y; J. Providakes, Y; B. Gill, Y.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40am.

Minutes recorded and submitted by R. Pontbriand

Minutes reviewed and approved by the Cable Advisory Committee on February 6, 2023.

Signed: 