

**Town of Ayer
Cable Advisory Committee**

Meeting Minutes for September 12, 2022, 8:00am on Zoom

Attendance: Scott Kurland (Chair); Jannice Livingston (Vice Chair); Janet Providakes; Julie Murray; Chief Brian Gill

Also in Attendance: Robert Pontbriand, Town Manager; Attorney William Hewig, Town Counsel; Charlie Comeau (Resident)

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 8:00am by S. Kurland on Zoom.

S. Kurland reads the following remote participation statement:

*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@ayer.ma.us or 978-772-8220 ext. 100 prior to the meeting*

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

The Committee reviewed the DRAFT meeting minutes from the August 30, 2022 meeting. There were some minor edits proposed.

Motion: A motion was made by J. Livingston and seconded by J. Providakes to approve the August 30, 2022 meeting minutes as amended. Roll Call Vote: S. Kurland, Y; J. Livingston, Y; J. Providakes, Y; J. Murray, Y; B. Gill, Y **Motion passed 5-0.**

Discussion and Plan for the Public Ascertainment Process Ascertainment Process:

S. Kurland proposed doing a series of public information "pop-up" sessions to get the word out to the public and to obtain information from the public.

J. Livingston stated that she is not opposed to the idea, but we need to approve the messaging as a Committee.

J. Providakes asked if the survey would cover this as well?

S. Kurland stated yes, and that it would be an opportunity for the public to take the survey in person at the "pop-up" sessions.

J. Providakes stated that in her experience CPC used Survey Monkey for the purposes of the survey on-line.

R. Pontbriand stated that he plans to have all the Town Department Heads provide written input for the Committee regarding their current experience and future needs with cable access. R. Pontbriand also stated that at the last meeting, the Committee discussed having the public ascertainment process take place during September, October, and November with concluding before the holiday season.

Attorney Hewig stated that in terms of the survey it is important to ask the question as to how much more people are willing to pay for the PEG services. Additionally, it is good to provide specific price ranges for this question. You would like the survey to show that people are willing to pay more for PEG services.

J. Livingston proposed that when the "pop-up" sessions are conducted that it is clearly stated when and where the survey is available.

J. Murray stated that she is all for educating the public and a powerful infographic could be developed to reach out to people, especially the people that are not aware. People generally have a short attention span, so a powerful informative graphic that could be used to get their attention would be beneficial. This infographic could also be used for our social media efforts.

S. Kurland stated that APAC could also do a two-minute public service announcement in addition to the info-graphic.

B. Gill stated that of the survey examples provided by Attorney Hewig, he liked the example from the Town of Southwick best as it is concise and gets to the key questions.

S. Kurland proposed that he will develop a DRAFT Survey for the Committee to review and approve at the next meeting. He will be using the Southwick survey as the template.

J. Providakes stated that she likes this approach and that we should have the survey both on-line and hard copies.

J. Livingston concurred and stated that for the next meeting we should review and approve the survey.

S. Kurland stated that he will work with R. Pontbriand to prepare the DRAFT survey for the Committee to review and approve at the next meeting.

J. Murray stated that she would be happy to assist as she has a background in surveys.

Attorney Hewig stated that the Committee is starting off on the right foot. He likes the idea of the "pop-up" sessions. He also stated that he likes the Town of Southwick survey.

New Business:

R. Pontbriand referenced the recent Department of Telecommunications notification the Town received reminding the Town that the current cable license with Comcast expires on March 31, 2023 and that the Town needs to provide a status report by September 20, 2022.

Attorney Hewig stated that this is standard procedure for the Department of Telecommunications to send these notices and reminders. The Town will probably receive several more in the months ahead. He will provide the response to R. Pontbriand to send to the Department of Telecommunications which will basically state that the Committee has formed and has commenced with its public ascertainment process and the Committee will be prepared to negotiate a new license with Comcast by the deadline.

R. Pontbriand stated that several members of the Committee have asked if the Committee's meetings should be in Executive Session when it gets to discussing contract strategy.

Attorney Hewig stated that the Committee cannot meet in Executive Session because there is no legal exemption to do so for the purposes of cable contract/license negotiations. There have been unsuccessful efforts in the past to get the State Legislature to consider adding cable contract/license negotiations to the exemptions to the Open Meeting Law but that has not happened. For better or for worse all these meetings will be in open session. He advised the Committee not to worry as Comcast is not watching and being in open session will not jeopardize the Committee's bargaining position.

Scheduling of Next Meeting:

The Committee scheduled the next meeting for Monday, September 26, 2022 at 8:30am on Zoom.

Adjournment:

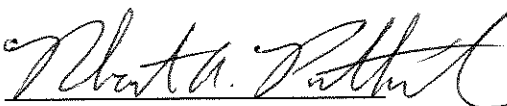
Motion: A motion was made by J. Livingston and seconded by J. Providakes to adjourn the meeting at 8:35am. Roll Call Vote: S. Kurland, Y; J. Livingston, Y; J. Providakes, Y; J. Murray, Y; B. Gill, Y

Motion passed 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35am.

Minutes recorded and submitted by R. Pontbriand, Town Manager

Minutes reviewed and approved by the Cable Advisory Committee on September 26, 2022.

Signed: 
Robert A. Pontbriand
Town Manager