

**Town of Ayer**  
**Cable Advisory Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes for November 29, 2022**

**Attendance:** Scott Kurland (Chair); Jannice Livingston (Vice Chair); Janet Providakes; Julie Murray; Chief Brian Gill (arrives at 9:10am)

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

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 8:30am on Zoom by S. Kurland.

S. Kurland 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 October 31, 2022, and November 16, 2022:**

The Committee reviewed both sets of minutes and there were no changes.

**Motion:** A motion was made by J. Livingston and seconded by J. Providakes to approve the October 31, 2022 meeting minutes. **Motion passed (4-0) by Roll Call Vote:** S. Kurland, Y; J. Livingston, Y; J. Providakes, Y; J. Murray, Y.

**Motion:** A motion was made by J. Livingston and seconded by J. Providakes to approve the November 16, 2022 meeting minutes. **Motion passed (4-0) by Roll Call Vote:** S. Kurland, Y; J. Livingston, Y; J. Providakes, Y; J. Murray, Y.

**Review and Discussion of Proposed APAC Budget:**

S. Kurland provided an overview of the APAC Budget. He stated that APAC currently receives about \$32,000 a quarter from Comcast and there is approximately \$16,996 left from the FY 2021 Budget. The biggest issues is that there is not enough funding for a full-time Public Access Manager and most stations have this full-time position as well as a full-time Education Coordinator.

J. Providakes clarified that the insurance line item does not include health insurance for any full-time employees.

S. Kurland stated that insurance is for the station. He does not get health insurance but does receive a stipend to offset that cost.

J. Livingston stated that the budget should clarify what types of "fines" this references within the budget.

Attorney Hewig stated that one could take out "fines" and put "filing fees" instead to clarify. Attorney Hewig continued that our main goal is to put forth a reasonable budget proposal to Comcast.

S. Kurland stated that there were approximately 2,300 subscribers last year and that we should ask for \$175,000 up front but could we get \$180,000?

Attorney Hewig recommended that the Committee at least ask.

S. Kurland stated that we should seek to ask for a total of \$300,000 to meet the needs the station in terms of a full-time public access coordinator and education coordinator position.

Attorney Hewig suggested that the Committee build a budget for \$250,000 in capital with an additional \$150,000 a year. We need to be practical and that is perhaps the extend you will receive. Remember Comcast will pass these cost increases on to subscribers and subscribers have to be willing to pay and the Select Board willing to support this proposal.

J. Livingston stated that \$300,000 seems too much as we currently have \$128,000 a year yet \$130,000 a year is only \$2,000 more.

J. Murray asked for clarification that we are negotiating with Comcast yet Comcast is not providing any of these funds including for any increases. These increases are paid by the subscribers.

Attorney Hewig stated that is correct. There is no match of funds from Comcast.

J. Livingston stated that we need to be able to explain to the people that the amount of their increase is going back to the Town to benefit APAC and the Town.

S. Kurland proposed that the Committee negotiate the Comcast hub at \$1500 a year for 10 years.

Attorney Hewig stated that has never been asked but we could and should.

S. Kurland asked about an increase from 4.56% to 5%.

Attorney Hewig advised that would be a reasonable proposal for negotiation.

[Chief Brian Gill joined the meeting at 9:10am]

Attorney Hewig continued that a .50 cent increase is reasonable for subscribers.

J. Livingston ask for confirmation that the Committee will be provided an update to the Select Board at their December 20, 2022 meeting.

S. Kurland stated yes.

J. Livingston stated that there should be one more meeting prior to the December 20 Select Board Meeting.

The Committee agreed to next meet on December 13, 2022, at 8:30am on Zoom.

[Julie Murray left the meeting at 9:20am]

**Scheduling of Ascertainment Public Hearing:**

Attorney Hewig recommended mid-January.

J. Livingston stated that we could meet either on Wednesday, January 18, 2023 at 6pm at the High School Auditorium or on Wednesday, January 25, 2023.

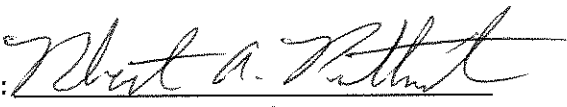
R. Pontbriand stated that he would confirm the availability of the high school auditorium for those two dates.

**Motion:** A motion was made by J. Livingston and seconded by J. Providakes to adjourn the meeting at 9:22am. **Motion passed 4-0 by Roll Call Vote:** S. Kurland, Y; J. Livingston, Y; J. Providakes, Y; B. Gill, Y.

The meeting adjourned at 9:22am.

Minutes recorded and submitted by R. Pontbriand

Minutes reviewed and approved by the Cable Advisory Committee on January 3, 2023.

Signed:   
Robert A. Pontbriand, Town Manager