

Ayer Cable Advisory Public Forum

Negotiating a new Comcast Contract for APAC

Ayer Cable Advisory January 18th, 2023

APAC is...

Ayer Public Access Corporation

- APAC is a 501-c3 community access television & media station.
- We film local Government meetings, town events, and provide video coverage/support to the Ayer-Shirley Regional School district.
- We offer town events like the APAC Movies in the Park over the summer and the APAC Digital Film Festival from October-December.
- Our mission is to provide Ayer with the knowledge and tools to create their own digital media; as well as delivering premium video content through our three Public, Education, and Government Channels online at ayerpublicaccess.org and Comcast Ch. 8,9, and 99.

What APAC Is Not...

The Answer to FAQs

- APAC is not the cable company. We are not Comcast, nor do we work for Comcast.
- Comcast has a contract with Ayer that gives money for a Community Access Station. A very small percentage of your cable bill comes to APAC to provide payment for staff and equipment.
- APAC is not a Government or School run organization. APAC works in tandem with the Town and Schools, but we are not Government by either department.
- Does APAC have an endless supply of funds from Comcast? No, APAC negotiates a Contract every ten years with Comcast for an equipment capital grant and a percentage from the cable bill.
- Can we get a new cable provider or service to work with the Town and APAC? Unfortunately, we've reached out and offered to other providers and no one has taken Ayer up on this offer.

WHAT APAC HAS BEEN DOING THE PAST 5 YEARS

- In previous years, APAC was a different organization. Here's what APAC has turned into since 2018.:
- APAC now has an Executive Director, Executive Administrator, Part-Time Public Access Coordinator, freelancers, interns from both ASRHS and Fitchburg State University.
- We deliver content on all three PEG channels, in addition to live-streaming those channels online and video on demand.
- APAC has created its own video player run by CASTUS. This system allows viewers to download a video directly to their computer or storage device.
- We hosts events like the APAC Digital Film Festival and two to three free movies in Pirone Park a year.
- We're working with organizations, groups, and departments of Ayer to either create content or offer educational training classes so people can use digital technology.
- We've increased our presence in the school system; this allows students to have access to the studio and create their own videos to go on air and be showcased within the school.
- We create recurring shows, as well as one off spotlights on local businesses and organizations. This helps keep the community informed with the day to day of Ayer.

FUTURE NEEDS OF APAC

- **The future of APAC depends on funding. We need more funding for these specific needs.:**
- **Additional staff to:**
 - **Cover more events.**
 - **Teach media production to the town, schools, and residents.**
 - **Offer more events for the community.**
- **Better equipment. Not limited to hardware, but software as well.**
- **Ability to get better training and certifications for staff.**

Negotiating The New Contract

- This Public Forum is to answer and hear your concerns about our relationship with Comcast.
- On March 31st, 2023, APAC's contract with Comcast is up and we are currently in the process of negotiating a new contract.
- We sent out a survey both online and in print. We tallied all the data provided by you the residents and will bring forward that information to Comcast.
- What we learned from the survey is that in addition to wanting more content, more public domain classic movies, and sports. We found out the residents are willing to pay a small monthly increase between ¢.50 and \$1.00+.
- This helped us come up with our asking amount for the next ten years.

Negotiating The New Contract

What are we asking for?

- For the last 10 years Comcast has been providing a \$150,000 capital equipment grant to Ayer, which is roughly \$15,000 a year. APAC also receives 4.56% of the monthly cable bill from subscribers. That amount is roughly \$127,000 a year to pay for staff and run the day to day.
- The Cable Advisory Committee will be asking for a new capital grant of \$240,000 for ten years (\$24,000 a year). We will also be asking for a percentage increase.
- As stated we receive 4.56%, that is about \$6.70 a month. We will be asking for a higher percentage between 5-10%. But what does this all mean and is it worth it?

What Does This All Mean?

- A higher percentage does not mean a large increase on your bill. It will roughly estimate an increase between ¢.50 - \$1.75. That amount is the amount Comcast will pass back to you.
- Is it worth it? Yes, this money will provide APAC with the needed funds to hire more staff, cover more events, and give back to Ayer with more community based events.

Estimated Cost Impact to Comcast Subscribers

Currently 2,300 Comcast Subscribers in Ayer

- If the Town through its negotiations with Comcast receives the \$240,000 Development Grant and an increase from the current 4.56% Subscriber Fee to 5.00% than the estimated cost passed through to the Comcast Subscriber would be approximately:
 - 0.96 cents a month for ten years

Questions

- At this time we will field any questions or concerns you may have.