

A.9.C.C.

Area 9 Cable Council, 6 Lazy Brook Ln, Westport, CT 06880

www.a9cc.org

TO: A9CC MEMBERS **January 31, 2019**
FROM: Hal Levy
RE: MINUTES OF JANUARY 30, 2019 MEETING AT ALTICE NORWALK

ATTENDANCE:

Darien: Jim Cameron, Dave Dever
Easton:
Greenwich:
New Canaan: Paul Sedlak, Roman Cebulski
Norwalk:
Redding:
Stamford:
Weston:
Westport: Hal Levy, Stan Witkow, Natalie Carrignan
Wilton:
Region 9:
Altice: Laura Jordan
Ed Committee:
Guests:

Excused: Doug Dempsey (Easton); Barbara Heins, Stu Reider (Greenwich); Irene Dixon (Norwalk); Bob Moran (Redding); Bob Lion (Stamford); Harvey Bellin, Don Saltzman (Weston); Gary Battaglia, Jeffrey Boehme (Wilton); Mike D'Agostino (R9)

Chairman Hal Levy called the meeting to order at 6:17 pm with three towns represented. He thanked those members who braved the inclement weather to attend. Since a quorum of five towns was not present, no votes were taken at the meeting as dictated by the by-laws.

Hal thanked Vice Chairman Jim Cameron for conducting the December 12th meeting.

Adam Schoenbart has been appointed as the Darien Education rep.

1. **Minutes** of December 12 meeting were presented. They will be voted on at the April meeting.
2. **Financial Report** was distributed and discussed. It will be voted on at the April meeting. Invoices were sent to Altice for 2019 operations and access funding. Laura said that payment was approved and \$2,000 for council operations, \$100,000 for Altice E&G funding grant and TBD amount for U-verse funding. The checks will be sent shortly.
3. **Old Business:**
 - Access channel info for Jim still owed by Darien E, Easton G, Greenwich E, New Canaan E, Norwalk E, Weston E, Region 9 E. The form is on the A9CC website.
 - The 2019 Annual Report was filed with PURA on January 16th and sent to A9CC members, town CEO's and schools Superintendents
 - 2018 I-Net logs are owed by Edu: Greenwich, Norwalk, Region 9, Weston and Wilton; Gov: Easton, Redding, Stamford and Wilton. Roman will send a copy of New Canaan's logs to Hal. Altice needs these logs immediately. Towns & schools will not qualify for grant funding until delinquent logs are submitted. Send logs to Laura and copy Hal.
 - FCC Docket No. 05-311 to allow Cable companies to apply in-kind community expenses against franchise fees. Many comments nationwide were submitted to the FCC on this docket, including several from Area 9 entities. Altice submitted comments in favor of limiting its franchise fees in

the form of State gross receipts taxes to 5% from its current 5.25% however it favors the company's current level of funding PEG access. It is somewhat difficult to interpret the docket which applies to the entire country since many references are made to local franchising authorities (LFAs), of which there are none in CT. We could not find a docket calendar that includes a decision date. Jim will check with the Alliance for Community Media.

4. 2019 Access funding:

It is anticipated that there will be approximately \$133,000 available shortly for 2019 access grants. Since the lack of a voting quorum prevented the Council from creating the grants, it will be deferred until the April meeting. Laura will check if a supplemental \$25,000 payment from Altice will also be made as it did last year. Paul Sedlak suggested that some portion of the funding be held in a reserve fund to address possible equipment failures that potentially might take E&G channels down. Applicants are reminded to file all past grant reports as well as I-Net logs in order to participate in the 2019 grant program.

5. Optimum TV rate increases on February 1:

(1) Music channels being changed from Music Choice to Stingray Music with no significant impact to subscribers. (2) Broadcast Basic customers currently paying \$14.95 or \$19.99 will be raised to \$24.99. (3) Set-top box rentals increase from \$10 to \$11. (4) Sports Surcharge increases from \$7.97 to 8.97. (5) Broadcast Surcharge increases from \$4.99 to \$5.99. Altice filing states *"To limit the impact of the revised pricing, some customers who are impacted by several of these changes will see a special credit on their bill to cap their increase at a lower rate"*. Laura will find out how much the cap is. There was discussion regarding the effect on subscribers and increased churn rates. As rental rates for Altice One equipment was not increased, that equipment appears to become more economically viable.

6. Dolan Family Lawsuit against Altice re News 12:

In September, former Cablevision owners in the Dolan family sued Altice claiming that it violated terms of the sale of the Company providing for the preservation of its commitment to News 12. Charles Dolan has recently reached out to over 300 municipalities in the service area asking if they have seen deterioration in News 12. Altice claims that it has maintained News 12 standards, only shifting the structure of the framework in some cases. Altice also maintains that the Dolan family has no standing in bringing the lawsuit.

7. Other Matters

- Laura stated that there have been bug fixes made to Altice One equipment.
- A problem which took down Greenwich E & G channels for several days has been resolved.

Future meetings: 4/3/2019 - 6PM at Altice & 5/29/2019 at location TBD

Meeting adjourned at 7:10 pm