

A.9.C.C.

Area 9 Cable Council, 17 Crawford Road, Westport, CT 06880

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TO: A9CC MEMBERS **February 25, 2016**
FROM: Hal Levy for Judith Freedman, Secretary
RE: MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 24, 2016 MEETING IN NEW CANANN

ATTENDANCE:

Darien: Jim Cameron, Dave Dever
Easton:
Greenwich:
New Canaan: Paul Sedlak, Roman Cebulski
Norwalk:
Redding: Robert Moran
Stamford:
Weston:
Westport: Hal Levy, Jennifer Cirino
Wilton: Phil Sharlach, Gary Battaglia
Cablevision: Jennifer Young
Guests:

Excused: Doug Dempsey (Easton); Paul Curtis (Greenwich); Art Scialabba (Norwalk); Don Saltzman (Weston); Stan Witkow, Judi Freedman (Westport); Mat Hepfer (Wilton)

Chairman Hal Levy called the meeting to order at 6:06pm with five towns represented. He announced that Norwalk member Erin Herring has resigned from the Council.

1. **Minutes** of December 9, 2015 meeting were approved as written.
2. **Financial report** from the Treasurer was distributed, discussed and approved.
3. **Updates on old business:**
 - Invoices for \$2,000 statutory annual support for the Council and \$100,000 for 2016 access support of the town-specific channels were sent to CV in early January. Jennifer Young submitted checks for these as well as \$1,500 to pay for trophies for the 2016 Educational Access Awareness Awards.
 - 2015 Access Report sent to CV on 1/18; 2015 Annual Report filed with PURA on 1/29 and sent to members, Town CEO's and school superintendents
 - 2015 I-Net reports not received from the following: E: Darien, Easton, Norwalk, Redding, Stamford, Weston; G: Stamford
 - Member appointments: No appointments made for E->Darien, Easton/Redding, New Canaan, Norwalk, Stamford; G-> Stamford. Roman stated that the Ed Committee has followed up and appointments for Darien and Norwalk are imminent
4. **Status of infrastructure upgrade of town-specific access channels:**

New digital encoders / decoders and accessory equipment have been installed in all Govt. sites except Redding and in Darien & Weston Educ. sites. CV will continue to work with site contacts to complete the buildout. CV has not been supplying the 20" monitors using the direct equipment grants because they do not get any price advantage when purchasing this equipment. Jennifer was asked to

have this reconsidered because it provides for utilizing the direct equipment grants and continuity in installing the entire package by CV.

5. Discussion on potential effect for subscribers and access from the sale of Cablevision to Altice:

The CT legislature will not introduce any legislation that would force Altice to continue direct E&G funding of \$100K cash + \$25K equipment. Altice wants \$900 Million savings out of salaries, customer service, etc. for its \$17.7 Billion acquisition, which is targeted to close May of 2016. Altice has historically used overseas call centers, web based support and performance driven employee compensation.

PURA had a technical meeting with CV to discuss the effects of the sale, although PURA does not have any jurisdiction on approval of the sale.

Since CT passed the video certificate in lieu of Cable franchises years ago, PURA has no authority over the automatic passing of the license from CV to Altice. However, traditional local Cable franchises still exist in CV's service areas in NY & NJ. Jennifer said that the sale was approved by 67 of the 72 local franchises in NY & NJ but NYC has not yet been approved. Jennifer shared the proceedings of the NYS Public Service Commission hearings testimony. NYS PSC Case No. 15-M-0647 can be followed at:

<http://documents.dps.ny.gov/public/MatterManagement/CaseMaster.aspx?MatterCaseNo=15-M-0647&submit=Search+by+Case+Number>

6. 2016 Access Grant Program:

The funding pool is approximately \$45.5K in leftover funds + \$100K in 2016 CV funds + \$44.5K in 2016 U-Verse funds. The Council approved a motion to make \$190,000 available for E&G access grants with \$95,000 each going to Govt. grants and Educ. grants whereby the Educ. Committee will determine how to award Educ. funds with final approval by the entire Council no later than the 6/1 meeting.

It was further moved and approved to create ten \$9,500 Govt. grants with a maximum of \$3,500 for operations with an application deadline of April 4.

7. Other Matters

- CTN – The legislature is considering expansion of CTN with 10 live web streams to be funded with \$5/Yr fee to be paid by Cable subscribers. The Cable companies oppose this move as it burdens only Cable customers for services that are delivered by means other than Cable channels.
- Set Top Boxes – The FCC is considering forcing Cable companies to make available STB credentials so that other manufacturers can market STB's to Cable customers. Some programming providers object as they feel this will compromise the security of their content. Jennifer said that in fact CV is looking to eliminate STB's in the future and this proposal lags behind technology.

Meeting adjourned at 7:25pm

Next meeting is 4/6/2016 in Easton. Future meetings are: 6/1/2016 TBD