

A.9.C.C.

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

www.a9cc.org

TO: A9CC MEMBERS **February 9, 2018**
FROM: Hal Levy for Judith Freedman, Secretary
RE: MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 8, 2018 MEETING AT ALTICE NORWALK

ATTENDANCE:

Darien: Dave Dever
Easton:
Greenwich: Craig Jones, Barbara Heins
New Canaan: Roman Cebulski
Norwalk: Irene Dixon, Kyle Seaburg
Redding: Bob Moran
Stamford:
Weston: Harvey Bellin, Don Saltzman
Westport: Hal Levy, Judi Freedman
Wilton: Gary Battaglia, Fran Kompar
Altice: Jennifer Young
Ed Committee:
Guests: Roland Poirier (Weston)

Excused: Jim Cameron (Darien); Doug Dempsey (Easton); Stuart Reider (Greenwich); Paul Sedlak (New Canaan); Stan Witkow (Westport); Jeffrey Boehme (Wilton)

Chairman Hal Levy called the meeting to order at 6:09 pm with eight towns represented.

1. **Welcome new members:** New Government members Craig Jones, Barbara Heins and Irene Dixon were introduced.
2. **Minutes** of December 13, 2017 meeting were approved as written.
3. **Financial Report** from the Treasurer was distributed, discussed and approved.
4. **Updates on old business:**
 - **2017 I-Net reports** requested by 2/1/18 have not received from the following: Edu: Easton/Redding, Weston, Wilton. Gov: Easton. These can still make the deadline for PURA if sent to Jennifer before 2/15. Can still submit logs in order to qualify for grants.
 - **Member appointments:** Appointment letters for the current term ending 6/30/2019 were sent out to Town CEO's & Schools Superintendents on 6/15. No appointments received for Edu: Greenwich, Easton/Redding, Norwalk, Stamford; Govt: Stamford.
 - Annual report was filed with PURA and sent to all A9CC members, CEO's & Superintendents. The report can be downloaded from the "Links" page of a9cc.org.
5. **2018 access grant program:** \$100,000 funding from Altice has been received. It is anticipated that U-Verse funds of \$24,875.70 will be added shortly. The Council approved a motion to make \$124,000 available for E&G access grants with \$62,000 each going to Government grants and Education grants. Individual grant requests may include funds for operations up to \$2,500. Any funds not encumbered in Round 1 will be retained separately in E&G funds for Round 2 grants. All towns and schools must be current with grant reports and I-Net logs to be eligible for these grants. As of now E>Greenwich, Westport; G>Greenwich, Stamford, Weston are eligible.

The Education Committee will determine how to award Education funds with final approval by the entire council at the April meeting. Round 1 Education Grant applications must be submitted to Hal no later than the Monday before the 4/4 meeting.

It was further moved and approved to create ten \$6,200 Government grants with a maximum of \$2,500 for operations with an application deadline of the Monday before the 5/30 Meeting.

In addition to cash grants, Altice can make available direct equipment grants. A9CC will examine this on 2 fronts. (1) Evaluate the Round 1 grant requests to see if some of the equipment can be purchased directly by Altice. (2) Determine what equipment could be purchased for the headend at Altice to provide 16:9 aspect ratio transmissions of the access channels. Roman will contact Paul Curtis to initiate an investigation into this.

6. **Removal of Starz & Encore from Optimum channel lineup:** Starz went dark on Jan 1 due to the failure to reach an agreement on increased fees to carry Starz on Optimum. Altice stated that subscribers could subscribe to Starz “Over the Top” streaming for less than they would be charged in the Cable package. Some Optimum subscribers have questioned value of what they are paying for. Optimum has added Hallmark Drama, Sony Movies, MGM HD, HD Net Movies, Flix, and the Cowboy Channel in place of Starz. Altice also provided pro-rated refunds for subscribers who downgraded their service because they could no longer get Starz/Encore.

There was further discussion regarding the “Sports Surcharge” on some tiers. Jennifer explained that the “Sports & Entertainment Surcharges” resulted from the increased fees some sports networks and broadcast networks were paying and charging for these programs.

7. **Other Matters**

- “Altice One” boxes and mini boxes are now available to all Optimum subscribers. The Altice One box at \$20/mo combines the cable box, cloud DVR, cable modem & router into a single gateway device. The mini boxes at \$10/mo each provide video content on additional TV’s as well as function as WiFi extenders. The system can also stream Netflix & Youtube. Since the Altice One box eliminates the need to rent a cable modem at \$5/Mo, the entire system will typically result in a \$5/mo net total increase in equipment rental fees for subscribers who elect to swap out their existing equipment.
- Altice is currently building out fiber-to-the-home in Greenwich, Norwalk & Westport, which will be capable of gigabit data throughput. There was no estimate of a roll-out date for the service.

Meeting adjourned at 7:16

Future meetings: 4/4/2018, 5/30/2018 - all at 6PM at Altice Norwalk