

A.N.C.C.

Area Nine Cable Council c/o Wilton HS, 395 Danbury Rd, Wilton, CT 06897 www.westportct.net/ancc

TO: ANCC MEMBERS **April 1, 2009**
FROM:
RE: MINUTES OF MEETING (April 1, 2009)

ATTENDANCE:

Darien: David Dever, Jim Cameron
Easton: -----
Greenwich: Stu Reider, Paul Curtis,
New Canaan: Paul Sedlak
Norwalk: -----
Redding: Robert Moran
Stamford: -----
Weston: Harvey Bellin, Don Saltzman
Westport: Hal Levy, Judith Freedman
Wilton: Carole Young-Kleinfeld, John Repicky
Cablevision: -----

Public/Guests: John Toner and Christopher von Keyserling from Greenwich

Chairman Hal Levy called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm at the Darien Library, with 7 towns represented. He reported that there will be no representative from Cablevision, as Jennifer Young is in Washington DC. Leighton Jordan (Easton), Herb Grant (Norwalk), Marge Costa (Norwalk), Geza Ziegler (Stamford) and Jeff Stollenwerck (Westport) were excused. PC introduced Christopher von Keyserling who is in the process of being appointed as a Greenwich representative to ANCC.

Opening comments from Chairman Hal Levy: Thanked Jim Cameron and Dave Dever for hosting the meeting.

1. **Minutes** of the February 11 meeting approved.
2. **Treasurer's report:** JR distributed spreadsheets with current balances.
 - ANCC Operating Account: Balance - \$10,883.07. HL reported that Cablevision paid \$2000 for 2009 support of the council's operations.
 - ANCC Access Escrow Account: Closing Balance - \$4,476.15. HL reported that Cablevision's support for community access (E/G) in the amount of \$100,000 has just been received. See below.
3. **Old Business:**
 - **ANCC Operating Funds and E/G Grant Funding:** The ANCC has received 2009 funding from Cablevision: \$2000 for Council operating funds and \$100,000 of funding for town-specific E/G channels. Cablevision has also indicated that it will provide a supplemental grant of equipment to the towns, provided that the towns can work together to agree on items to request.

-Info on QAM Tuners— At the last meeting, some people asked what digital channels can be viewed with a TV set that has a QAM tuner, without a Cablevision converter box. HL referred ANCC members to an email that Paul Curtis sent all of us last October. He has been able to tune in PEG channels with a QAM tuner and perhaps can answer your questions. Contact Paul at pfc@terrapin.com

HL also refers members to the following website: <http://www.silicondust.com/hdhomeerun/channels> where you can plug in your ZIP code and see thumbnail images of what can be pulled in on what channels. This information is also posted on the ANCC Website www.westportct.net/ancc

-Status of ACM Petition to FCC . CYK reviewed the status and purpose of the Alliance for Community Media's petition to urge the FCC to protect the quality of community access (PEG) and to require PEG programming on the analog tier. Several people from the PEG community in CT have filed comments or Replies to Comments, including ANCC member Paul Curtis from Greenwich, CT.

-Status of ANCC role: For the benefit on new ANCC members, HL again reviewed the unclear status of the ANCC, since the law establishing Certificate of Video Franchise Authority (CVFA) calls for a state-wide---not regional---council for CVFAs. Cablevision holds a CVFA but has expressed interest in keeping the relationship with the ANCC status quo, continuing to support operating expenses and the PEG grant program. CV is not supportive of any legislative action by the ANCC to clarify its status.

4. **Structure of 2009 ANCC Community Access Grant Program**—Members discussed various scenarios of structuring this year's cash grants—from the \$100,000 community access funding for 2009 from Cablevision-- and Cablevision's offer of supplemental equipment grants to the 10 towns. The Council discussed the differing needs of E-channels vs. G-channels in the region and agreed to provide \$60,000 to the E-channels and to provide \$40,000 plus supplemental equipment to the G-channels.

HL suggested developing a committee to:

- gather information from the 10 towns regarding interest and need for acquiring large ticket equipment items (more than \$4000) by April 22, 2009
- determine an equitable allocation of grant funds and grants of equipment among the 10-towns, given that some towns may not request large ticket equipment items, but instead may need less expensive equipment items from the cash grants.

HL, PC, and JR volunteered to serve on this committee.

JR reported that Redding and Weston still must file past-due expenditure reports.

5. **Cablevision's Withdrawal of Expanded Basic Analog Channels**-CV is pulling several channels off analog on May 5th. These channels are currently duplicated on both analog & digital. Therefore CV is not moving them to digital, but is eliminating their analog transmissions. After this year, Cablevision will continue its analog extended basic (Family) service only for customers who already have it. On the list for removal from extended basic service are ABC Family, AMC, BET, CNN Headline News, History, Lifetime, MSNBC, MTV, MTV2, Spike TV, TV Land, VH1, WE, and Fuse.

JF expressed concern that this change will affect seniors adversely. HL noted that many households have additional TVs without converter boxes that will be eventually left with few channels, perhaps, other than "must carry" channels. Members noted that competing video providers are doing the same thing with their basic service tiers. JC asked for clarification of whether the cable council has any recourse in opposing this decision. JF suggested surveying the senior community about their programming preferences. HL reminded the group that programming/marketing decisions are, by federal law, not subject to state regulation. HL also reminded the group that, if subscribers make a change/upgrade in their service, they'll lose the free PEG converter box and will be charged a rental fee each month for the box.

6. **Annual Meeting**— Tentative date is June 3. Will be confirmed (changed to June 4 after the meeting). Please suggest ideas for speakers and location to HL.

7. **Pending Legislation--** HL reviewed several bills that have been proposed--HB 6128, HB5051, HB 5988 SB 590, HB 6604 and HB 6102.

CYK gave an update on:

HB6102 (*AN ACT PROMOTING COMPETITION AMONG COMMUNITY ACCESS PROVIDERS*) would allow “any community-based nonprofit organization” to petition the DPUC to open a contested case to decide who should be the community access provider in that area. Read it at: <http://www.cga.ct.gov/2009/TOB/H/2009HB-06102-R02-HB.htm> Passed favorably by Commerce Committee and is now referred to E/T Committee. (ANCC did not take any position on this bill, but questioned the implications for Area Nine if it were to pass. In the Commerce Committee public hearing, there was no support and no opposition to this bill.)

HB 6604 (*AN ACT CONCERNING PUBLIC ACCESS TELEVISION CHANNELS*) Purpose is to protect and improve PEG Access in CT. Several members of the ANCC wrote a letter of support for HB6604 which is moving through the process. Read it at <http://www.cga.ct.gov/2009/TOB/H/2009HB-06604-R00-HB.htm>

8. **Other Business**

- JR urges towns to make use of the I-Net for sharing programs of regional interest—post programs on the I-Net, alert the other towns. Towns can record them or, for a live broadcast, request CV to switch it to Channel 79 throughout the system.
- Darien will record a April 17 Housing Summit sponsored by SW Regional Planning Association (SWRPA) featuring Congressman Jim Himes as the keynote speaker. Will offer it to other towns, either on DVDs or I-Net to be announced.
- Municipal appointments to the ANCC must be done in June. Please alert your superintendents and municipal CEOs.
- PC noted that G programming is subject to FOI requests if produced with municipal equipment but not subject to record retention regs. Contact him for more information.
- JC announced that 2 years of Darien G-channel programming is available archived on the Darien Website.
- JC and JR raised issue of original programming on the 10 E and 10 G channels in Area Nine. Group discussed ways to use the grant program and the final reporting requirements to encourage getting more local government meetings onto the channels.

-Future meetings: 6/3--Annual Mtg (Note:Date changed to 6/4 following the meeting) Location TBD.

Adjourned at 8:25 pm for tour of the Darien Library.

Carole Young-Kleinfeld, Secretary, ANCC