

**TO: A9CC MEMBERS** **April 2, 2020**  
**FROM: Hal Levy**  
**RE: MINUTES OF APRIL 1, 2020 MEETING VIA EMAIL & ZOOM**

**ATTENDANCE:**

Darien: \*Jim Cameron, \*Dave Dever, Joan McGettigan  
Easton: \*Doug Dempsey, \*Andy Anderson  
Greenwich: \*Horst Tebbe, \*Craig Jones, Barbara Heins  
New Canaan: \*Roman Cebulski, \*Paul Sedlak  
Norwalk: \*Irene Dixon, \*Mark Minnock, Kyle Seaburg  
Redding: \*Bob Moran  
Stamford: \*Bob Lion, \*Paula Ward  
Weston: \*Harvey Bellin  
Westport: \*Hal Levy, \*Judi Freedman, \*Stan Witkow, Natalie Carrignan  
Wilton: \*Jeffrey Boehme, \*Fran Kompar, Gary Battaglia  
Region 9: \*Mike D'Agostino  
Altice: \*Esme Lombard  
Ed Committee:  
Guests:

*\*Participated in Zoom meeting on April 1*

On March 18, 2020, by email vote the Council members approved to meet virtually. As a result, agenda items 1, 2 & 4 were addressed by email and the remaining items were addressed via a Zoom teleconferencing meeting, which was recorded.

Chairman Hal Levy called the Zoom meeting to order at 4:07pm with ten towns represented.

1. **Minutes** of the December 11 meeting was approved as written by email vote on 3/24/20. (The scheduled January 29 meeting was cancelled).
2. **Financial Report** was approved by email vote on 3/24/20.
3. **Old Business:**
  - All member appointments for current term have been made.
  - Annual Report to PURA was filed on 1/7 and copied to all A9CC members, Ed Committee, tech reps, Area 9 Mayors & 1st Selectmen & Schools Superintendents.
  - \$2K council operations & \$125K E&G access funding invoices were submitted to Esme and paid. Awaiting action on pass-along of U-Verse funding - typically >\$20K.
  - 2019 I-Net logs: All Government sites were submitted. Education sites not submitted by Greenwich, Norwalk, Weston and Wilton.
  - A9CC P.O. Box: Pending
4. **Create 2020 Round 1 grant program:** We have received a total of \$125,000 in 2020 grant funding to distribute to Area 9 towns & schools. The following was approved by email vote on 3/28/20:
  - \$62,500 each to E & G
  - 10 grants of \$6,250 on the Government side
  - Breakdown of the Educational portion to be determined by the Ed Committee
  - A maximum of \$2,500 for each grant could be allocated to operations
  - The deadline for submitting grants from the towns & schools is 2 weeks before the September meeting (TBD). However, grant applications may be voted on at any time prior, while the Council is operating under the "Virtual Meeting" model.

- Any funds not encumbered in Round 1 will be retained separately in E&G funds for Round 2 grants
- Eligibility requirements as outlined in the Grant Procedures <http://a9cc.org/GrantProcedures.pdf> shall apply to these grants

Applications for operations grants are preapproved if the applicant is eligible (See “owed tab” in <http://www.a9cc.org/Report Checklist.xls>). Submit grant application along with voucher for operations request.

As some equipment grant requests may be time critical, such as for remote control devices, it was affirmed to allow these applications to be acted on virtually by either email or Zoom meeting. Submit applications to Hal and he will pass them on to members for review and subsequent votes for approval.

- 5. Optimum February Rate Increases:** Altice filed new rates with PURA on 12/26/19 but A9CC was not copied as in the past. Esme said she would email members the filing after the meeting (which she did). We received subscriber complaints via email & letters including some from Area 2 subs (A9CC listed as advisory council in Area 2 bills), which were forwarded to Esme. She escalated these complaints. The February rate increase was substantial, but existing customers receive a “special credit” to cap their increase to \$14/mo. New customers do not benefit from this. Hal presented an analysis of his bill, which went up 4.82%. Members reported that Altice is actively doing retention deals for customers who telephone complaints to Customer Service.
- 6. Annual Meeting:** Tentatively scheduled for 5/27, we will defer decision on venue and guest speaker until procedures related to the current Covid-19 crisis becomes clearer. Roman reported that the Education Committee will be meeting virtually to determine the fate of this year’s EAAA awards, but his sense is that they will be cancelled. Judi Freedman and Bob Moran were voted to the nominating committee for the election of officers to be held at the Annual Meeting.
- 7. Other Matters**
  - Esme reported that Consistent with the *Keep America Connected* pledge, Altice has pledged not to terminate broadband and voice service to any residential or small business customers because of their inability to pay their bills due to the disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic. Once they learn that a customer is unable to pay their bill due to the Coronavirus, they cancel the disconnection. A customer can call 866-200-9522. Other steps include free internet service for 60 days for families with K-12 students and the opening of access to Optimum WiFi hot spots.
  - There was discussion on the role of the Town Channels during the Covid-19 crisis. Several members discussed how their towns were holding virtual town meetings via video conferencing, such as Zoom and simulcasting them on their access channels. Access channels have become an important vehicle for disseminating information related to the crisis. Remote control of the channels, such as through TeamViewer, is being pursued for safety & facility access reasons. There was a call for members to share ideas on how to achieve these objectives.

Future meetings: 5/27/2020 TBD

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm