

A.9.C.C.

Area 9 Cable Council

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TO: A9CC MEMBERS
FROM: Hal Levy
RE: MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 16, 2020 MEETING VIA ZOOM

September 17, 2020

ATTENDANCE:

Darien: Jim Cameron, Dave Dever, Joan McGettigan
Easton: Doug Dempsey, Andy Anderson
Greenwich: Horst Tebbe, Craig Jones
New Canaan: Paul Sedlak, Bob Doran, Roman Cebulski
Norwalk: Mark Minnock, Irene Dixon
Redding: Bob Moran
Stamford:
Weston: Harvey Bellin, Don Saltzman
Westport: Hal Levy, Stan Witkow, Natalie Carrignan
Wilton: Fran Kompar
Region 9: Mike D'Agostino
Altice: Esme Lombard
Ed Committee:
Guests: Roland Poirier (Weston), Eileen Zhang (Westport)

Excused: Barbara Heins (Greenwich); Bob Lion (Stamford)

Chairman Hal Levy called the Zoom meeting to order at 5:03pm with ten towns represented. Bob Doran, a new government member from New Canaan was welcomed to the Council.

1. **Minutes** of the May 27 meeting was approved as written.
2. **Financial Report** was approved.
3. **Old Business:**
 - 2019 I-Net logs: All Government sites were submitted. Education sites not submitted by Weston.
 - DVR PEG channels: Esme reported that this a programming issue due to the origination of programming on Town-Specific channels on cloud based DVR service and not a legal issue as previously explained. She will submit the findings in writing.
4. **2020 Round 1 grant applications:**

Town/School	Amount	Ops	Notes/Status
New Canaan G	\$3,521.39	0	Approved
Darien G	\$3,750.00	0	Approved
Westport G	\$6,189.15	\$2,500.00	Approved

Delinquent Grant Reports

Town/School	Amount	Date Paid	Date Due	Notes/Status
New Canaan E	\$7,500.38	11/4/2019	1/3/2020	Extended to next meeting
New Canaan E	\$3,071.24	12/23/2019	2/21/2020	Extended to next meeting
Westport E	\$6,250.00	10/17/2019	12/16/2019	Extended to next meeting
CSH E	\$7,551.92	12/23/2019	2/21/2020	Extended to next meeting
Greenwich G	\$2,000.00	12/31/2019	6/28/2020	Extended to next meeting
Norwalk G	\$1,795.53	12/23/2019	6/20/2020	Extended to next meeting
Norwalk G	\$2,000.00	12/23/2019	6/20/2020	Extended to next meeting
Stamford G	\$6,200.00	12/7/2018	2/7/2019	Will request refund
Weston G	\$6,250.00	4/16/2020	6/15/2020	Extended to next meeting

5. **Action on remaining 2020 access grant funding:** Due to COVID-19, Educational representatives were impeded in getting access to their facilities and asked for an extension of Round 1 grants. The Council extended the deadline for submitting Round 1 E & G grant requests to October 19, whereby those new applications will be acted on at the October 28 meeting. We will subsequently plan for Round 2 grants from the remaining funds.
6. **Review Optimum response to Tropical Storm Isaiah:** On August 5th Tropical Storm Isaiah took out power and cable service to a large portion of customers in Area 9. Service was not restored to many customers for many days and in some cases more than a week. There were many complaints about Optimum's response to the outages and particularly the inability to reach Customer Care (support). Esme responded that the storm also took out Altice's phone & data lines, thereby initially shutting down Customer Care during the event. Besides fallen trees taking out cables, much of the loss of cable service was attributed to loss of commercial power to the cable nodes and long delays in restoring the power exasperated restoration of Cable. Esme reported that pre-storm warning emails were sent to all customers and during the crisis, updates were emailed twice a day to town CEO's & EOC's, PURA and others. However, several A9CC members spoke of bad experiences with the company and felt that Altice was unprepared for the emergency. Optimum has been issuing automatic refunds to subscribers for service interruption, but some members have stated that those refunds insufficiently reflected the duration of their service outage. Also, it was reported that there were many instances of refunds not being issued at all and that subscribers need to call Optimum Customer Care to get them.

7. **Other Matters**

- Esme reported that the Keep American Connected pledge expired on June 30th but that Altice has been working with the State and Norwalk School District to provide free service to households in need.
- Jim reported that subscribers using TiVo boxes instead of Optimum set top boxes lost ability to receive Cable TV channels due to Optimum's unannounced change from Cable Cards to switched Video, which requires a tuning adaptor for TiVo boxes. Optimum does not have these in stock and are on back order. Updated status will be forthcoming.
- The issue of Hi-Def PEG channels was brought up by Bob Doran. Inquiries about this have been made by A9CC over the years. The technical constraint is that the I-Net, which delivers E&G programs to the headend is analog. Bob Moran suggested that there are solutions to this. The Council passed a resolution to study the issue and make a proposal to Altice for modifying the signal origination system with the objective of Hi-Def PEG channels. Hal will solicit members to serve on a committee to pursue this.
- Eileen Z inquired when fiber to the home for gigabit data will be rolled out locally. Esme will look into this and respond.
- Bob M, Bob D & Jim have been collaborating on sharing content of common interest for all the town-specific access channels. Bob will send everyone a link of such programming he has produced.
- Esme asked members to email her regarding any locations with diminished data throughput.
- Esme reported that detailed accounts of how subscriber complaints are now being provided to the Council on complaints we refer to her, that have been escalated.

Future meetings: 10/28/20, 12/16/20, 2/3/21, 3/24/21, 5/26/21. All 5:00pm via Zoom.

Meeting adjourned at 6:38 pm