

A.9.C.C.

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

www.a9cc.org

TO: A9CC MEMBERS **December 15, 2016**
FROM: Hal Levy for Judith Freedman, Secretary
RE: MINUTES OF DECEMBER 14, 2016 MEETING IN GREENWICH

ATTENDANCE:

Darien:

Easton: Andy Anderson, Doug Dempsey

Greenwich: Chris von Keyserling, Stu Reider, Paul Curtis, Susan Morris

New Canaan:

Norwalk:

Redding: Robert Moran

Stamford:

Weston: Don Saltzman

Westport: Hal Levy

Wilton: Phil Sharlach

Altice: Jennifer Young

Ed Committee:

Guests:

Excused: Dave Dever, Jim Cameron (Darien); Paul Sedlak (New Canaan); Jennifer Cirino, Stan Witkow, Judi Freedman (Westport); Gary Battaglia (Wilton); Harvey Bellin (Weston)

Chairman Hal Levy called the meeting to order at 6:03pm with six towns represented.

1. **Minutes** of October 26, 2016 meeting were approved as amended.
2. **Financial Report** from the Treasurer was distributed, discussed and approved. There were 2 outstanding approved grant obligations for which payment vouchers were not submitted by the deadline. 1 for Greenwich G (this grant is being withdrawn by Greenwich) and 1 for Wilton E. One last reminder will be given to Wilton before the grant is voided.
3. **Updates on old business:**
 - 2015 I-Net reports not received from the following: Educ: Easton, Norwalk, Redding, Stamford, and Weston. Gov: Stamford. Access channel operators are reminded to submit their 2016 I-Net reports to Altice by the end of January.
 - Member appointments: No appointments made for E-> Easton/Redding, New Canaan, Norwalk, Stamford; G-> Stamford, Norwalk.
 - There was further discussion on removing inactive members from the council roles.
4. **Update on future access funding:** Hal & Don met with Jennifer on 11/18 to discuss the access funding budget. Altice will submit a plan to remedy a 2-year shortfall of \$110K in access funding to PURA. There are currently 3 options being considered. (1) Distribute the funds to the Council for E&G grants. (2) Spend the funds on an upgrade of the Public Access Studio in Norwalk. (3) Petition PURA to reduce the \$5.82 support cost per subscriber because fewer P.A. producers are using the studio and produce their videos at home. There was discussion on these options with suggestions for option 2, such as using PEG funds to create the ability for producers to electronically distribute videos to the headend instead of hand carrying tapes. It was suggested that option 3 would be difficult to accomplish. The Council will send Altice an invoice for \$100K in January for 2017 E&G funding.

5. **Review rate hikes announced by Altice:** In October Altice retired grandfathered TV packages and directed customers to new packages at a savings or increase between \$2.05 & \$5 per month. In December Altice is hiking the monthly rate for its Optimum "basic tier" residential television package to \$17.95 a month in lower Fairfield County, An increase of \$2.39 or 15%. Set-top boxes increase from current \$8.65 monthly charge to \$10 with the remote control. Also Customers with Optimum Value or a higher video tier will see a \$2.98 increase in the Sports & Broadcast TV fee, which will be split into a \$3.99 fee for "Broadcast TV" (also applicable to Optimum Economy customers) and a \$4.97 fee for "Sports TV." These fees are levied by Altice to offset increasing carriage charges by the broadcast networks for their entertainment and sports content. These costs, which used to be funded entirely by the advertisers have partially shifted to Cable subscribers in the form of carriage fees over the past several years.

6. **AMC Network carriage dispute with Altice:** AMC's current deal with Cablevision expires on Dec. 31. AMC ownership was retained by the Dolan family. Jennifer stated that they were confident that an agreement will be reached by the end of the month as the two sides are very close.

7. **Other Matters**

Before our next meeting 2/15/17, we will be submitting A9CC's 2016 Annual report to PURA. Jennifer confirmed that a detailed access funding report to Cablevision is not required as the cash flow for access funding is included in the Annual Report.

Don brought up the current promotion of Optimum's DVR Plus service. He was told that there is an offer for free service for a year after which there would be a permanent charge of \$16.95 per month. Subscribers must swap any of their Scientific Atlantic STB's for Samsung Boxes in order to receive Multi-Room DVR Plus service.

There was more discussion on abandoning or exchanging access equipment which a town or school no longer needs. There is a downloadable form at <http://a9cc.org/forms.htm> which should be submitted whenever access equipment is disposed of. Paul Curtis will take on the task of creating an equipment exchange on the A9CC web site.

Meeting adjourned at 7:14

Future meetings: 2/15/2017 at Darien Library; 4/5/2017 in New Canaan; 5/31/2017 TBD