

## Town of Wilbraham

### Cable TV Advisory Committee

#### Minutes from September 7, 2016 Meeting

Meeting called to order at 11:05 am

Present: Committee members – Dan Kelley, Chair; Tom Magill, Vice Chair; George Reich, Secretary. Town Staff - Anthony Aube, WPA Executive Director; Nick Breault, Town Administrator. Other - Bill August – Counsel; Tom Cohan – Charter Communications

1. Dan Kelley, Chairman, Opened meeting and made introductions.
2. Reviewed April 29, 2016 minutes. T Magill moved to accept minutes; G Reich Seconded; Minutes approved, unanimously.
3. Charter submitted a Form 100 License Renewal Application to the Town on March 14, 2016, along with a proposed contract. However, Charter has withdrawn that application. Tom Cohan explained that Charter is working on a “model” Franchise Agreement and is targeting the end of September for availability. Bill August and George Reich objected to the delay. Bill August explained that if Wilbraham chooses “formal” negotiations, the time table is getting tight. Bill asked the Committee to notify him ASAP if Wilbraham chooses the “formal” process. Tom Cohan did indicate that Charter was committed to using this new “model” agreement and would get us a copy as soon as possible.
4. Tom Cohan presented a Charter update to the Committee. The merger (acquisition) of Time Warner was completed on May 18, 2016. With that merger, Charter now has 68 towns and 260k customers in Massachusetts. By statute, Charter pays to Wilbraham \$0.50 per customer per year; and \$0.80 to Massachusetts. Fees collected by Charter, for pass through to public access TV (PEG) are limited to 5% of Cable TV revenue. Capital funding fees are in excess of the 5% cap. In the last year, \$149k was collected by Charter in PEG fees. This represented about 3% of the total Wilbraham CATV revenue of approximately \$5 million. Charter claims that this \$5 million revenue number is relatively flat over the past few years and expects it to continue at this level for the foreseeable future. None of the Committee members believed this forecast. Tom Cohan noted that for Wilbraham, customers pay a flat fee for PEG regardless of their Cable TV bill. Most towns charge a percentage of the total TV bill. The Committee will vote on its recommendation at the next meeting. Charter can do either method.

5. Antony Aube presented a 10 year budget and a 10 year capital plan. Both plans were approved by the Board of Selectmen. The Committee discussed whether it had approved these budgets. There is no vote indicated in the past minutes. The Committee will vote at its next meeting. Tom Cohen will review both plans with his “business” associates and get back to the Committee. There was a discussion on the method of amortizing Capital funding over the life of the contract.
6. Committee discussed an i-net buyout and the need for a fiber connection from WPA to Town Hall. Dan Kelly will submit a written proposal to Tom Cohen for Charter’s review.
7. Dan Kelly reviewed three complaints from Wilbraham customers.
8. The Committee, Anthony Aube, Tom Cohen and Bill August agreed to meet again on September 23, 2016 at 2:30.
9. T Magill moved to adjourn; G Reich seconded; Adjourned at 12:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

George Reich