



Meeting Minutes for August 28, 2003

## **Branford Community Television**

Present:

Branford	Marvin Zimmerman, Art Scharf, John Elliott
East Haven	N/A
Guilford	Pete Garafolo, Jeff Lincoln
Madison	Steve Fuest, Abigail White
North Haven	Pat Schiller, Iris David
North Branford	N/A
Wallingford	Susan Huizenga, Russ Styles
Library	Ken Donadio
COMCAST	Kristen Roberts:
Guests:	Curt Huizenga, Walter Mann, Matt Gailey, Ali Abulugma, Skip Ferry, Richard Schrieber, Friskie Wheeler, and Rhoda Loeb.

**I. Call to order.** Chairman Huizenga called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. She thanked the Board at Branford Community Television for hosting the evening's meeting.

**II. Minutes Action:** Chairman Huizenga asked that the Minutes of the July meeting be reviewed for acceptance and called the motion to accept.. The motion carried. Pete Garafolo made a motion to accept the minutes, seconded by Marvin Zimmerman, which passed unanimously.

**III. Public Comments** Ali Abulugma, President of BCTV, welcomed the Advisory Council Members to the BCTV facility. The members and staff of BCTV introduced themselves.

Later, during a report by Comcast's Kristen Roberts, Mr. Gravino from Branford, attending his first meeting as a member of PEG, asked for clarification of the role of the assembled group. He was particularly interested, based on comments on certain new services mentioned by Ms. Roberts, in determining whether the group was considered "a marketing arm for Comcast." The chair attempted to clarify that some of the assembled group consisted of representatives from the Cable Advisory Council (CAC), as opposed to others who were members of various Public Education and Government Access Channels or PEGs. Though both groups are regulated by the DPUC and must report annual to that body, the CAC has oversight responsibility for the PEGs., and no more than 25% of the board of CAC can consist of PEG members. The other 75 % of CAC members are appointed by their local towns. The chair further explained that the CAC board had the responsibility of learning of these latest changes and services of Comcast because it had to act as ombudsmen and liaison between the public and Comcast. Any complaints from the public about services and changes not satisfactorily handled by Comcast's customer service department (1-800-COMCAST), are referred to CAC. These conditions are all legislatively determined and regulated.

#### **IV. Town Reports.**

Branford.(R 1) M. Zimmerman reporting. CUSTOMER ISSUES: None reported. PEG ACTIVITIES: There had been no Board meetings for the last two months. Branford has been going through the paperwork at the facility and working on the DPUC Report. They are also looking for a full time Program Manager. BOE UPDATES: None reported.

East Haven.(R 3) CUSTOMER ISSUES: None reported. PEG ACTIVITIES: Aavellin System is going to be ordered to help with fundraising and improve the look of ETV's Bulletin Board. ETV is going to host an Open House September 23, at 6 p.m. at the studio. BOE UPDATES: None reported.

Guilford. (R 2) J Lincoln reporting. CUSTOMER ISSUES: None reported. PEG ACTIVITIES: GCTV has rolled over the equipment budget and is looking to spend about \$20,000 on beginning to get digital equipment. BOE UPDATES: None reported.

Madison. (R 4) A. White reporting. CUSTOMER ISSUES: When white noise was reported on channels 18 and 20, a technician from Comcast, Dave Melicki, was sent out and reported that Madison has bad transmitters that may take 4 or 5 months to resolve. PEG ACTIVITIES: The intern is leaving MCTV to attend college, so they are looking for new staff. BOE UPDATES: None reported.

North Haven. (R 5) P. Schiller reporting. CUSTOMER ISSUES: None reported. PEG ACTIVITIES: NHTV will be covering the Columbus Day Parade on October 12, and NHTV is now airing a Bi-Lingual program- Reggaeton Connection. BOE UPDATE: The Superintendent of Schools taped their first show.

Wallingford.(R 6) S. Huizenga reporting. CUSTOMER ISSUES: The upgrade has been going on. Comcast is looking into getting the History Channel back for Wallingford residents. PEG ACTIVITIES: The local newspaper has written articles on WPAA and Comcast's upgrade in town. WPAA has a new board member, Dave Burkhart from Channel 19. BOE UPDATE: The issues at Sheehan High School regarding the upgrades have been resolved. (Comcast worked with the school regarding the asbestos cleanup.)

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#### **V. Officers' Reports.**

Chairman: Susan Huizinga submitted a copy of the Annual Report. (See attached.)

Vice Chairman: Abigail White asked the Council if the seven town groups want to share programming among their respective groups, and to incorporate this into the By-Laws. This will be researched by the PEG Committee.

Secretary: No report

Treasurer: Peter Garafolo presented the Council with a proposal to open a Certificate of Deposit (CD) for a seven-month term. He stated that this would yield a much higher interest rate. Steve Fuest made a motion to open the CD; Marvin seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

#### **VI. Committee Reports.**

Insurance Committee: This committee is still trying to get in touch with Mr. Bishop from The Hartford., so that the seven town groups can discuss insurance options. Mr. Bishop will need to review the Annual Reports and an updated inventory from each of the seven towns.

Education Committee: No report

PEG Committee: No report

Outreach Committee: Press releases have been sent out regarding the new officers and appointees for the CACSCC, as well as the schedule for the upcoming meeting locations.

**VII. COMCAST Reports:** Kristen Roberts introduced herself; she will now be covering the franchise area. Dave Judy is still with the company, as a Manager. Ms. Roberts reported that North Branford and Wallingford should have Broadband by November. She will look into the accuracy of the website and the automated telephone messages related to Broadband Internet's availability. Richard Shriber mentioned some unresolved issues related to the Franchise Renewal; he will contact Ms. Roberts to discuss the issues in greater detail. Ms Roberts will also be looking into the channel line up in North Haven and Wallingford: the History channel is listed on the COMCAST Channel Line-Up as being on Channel 78, but it is found on Channel 99. COMCAST will be offering HDTV to its customers; for \$2.00 a month customers can rent a converter box and watch 5 channels in HDTV; these stations include PBS, NBC, ABC, HBO, and Showtime. COMCAST is also starting a new offering, In Demand. This would allow Digital Customers to utilize the digital box much like a VCR; the customer can store programs on the converter box and then watch them later, all by utilizing the remote control. Ms. Roberts also announced that the Berlin Call Center is now up and running, and COMCAST will be sponsoring Cycle for Sarah at Hammonasset State. Park and will also be hosting a Breakfast at the Watersedge, Tony Speller will be present.

**VIII. Correspondence:** Numerous E-Mails regarding Broadband internet availability and The History Channel; Guilford Savings Bank- July Statements; COMCAST- Final Check Off check \$1,013.00 (to be dispersed at next months meeting); Robinson & Cole- regarding Channel Changes; a letter regarding a deceased person's bill, asking the company to stop charging the account

**IX. Old Business-** Check Off has come to an end. Filing cabinets were moved from ETV's studio to WPAA. Kristen Roberts will look into the side agreement from the franchise renewal.

**X. New Business: Planning Discussion:** Three new committees were set up at tonight's meeting. 1. Education Committee- Chair: Pat Schiller. Also on the committee are Abigail White and Ken Donadio. 2. Customer Care Committee- Chair: Art Scharff, with Pete Garafolo. 3. PEG Committee- Chair: Jeff Lincoln. Walter Mann and Marvin Zimmermann will also be on this committee. Susan Huizenga also recapped the existing Committees: Finance- Chair Pete Garafolo; Outreach- Chair: Lou Pacelli, along with Iris David and Susan Huizenga.

Walter Mann submitted a CT Docket No. 02-11-16, regarding the Bloomfield Access Television denying a church service to have a 13 week time slot. The DPUC stated that "...the Department concludes that BATV's training Policy is consistent with state law, that the petitioner is eligible for training at BATV's facility as the representative of a Bloomfield non-profit organization, and that the petitioner's programming is eligible to be scheduled in thirteen week blocks as prescribed by law. The department encourages BATV to revise the Language of their policies and procedures to be content neutral"

**XI. Adjournment.** Abigail White made a motion to adjourn this evenings meeting. The motion was seconded by Steve Fuest and unanimously carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Kerry Saddig