



Meeting Minutes for February 26, 2004  
**North Branford Town Hall**

**Present:**

Branford	Marvin Zimmerman, John Elliott, Patricia McGlashan
East Haven	Marie Saddig, Lou Pacelli, Rob Becker
Guilford	Pete Garafolo, Jeff Lincoln, <del>Dennis Destert</del>
Madison	Abigail White
North Haven	Pat Schiller, Iris David
North Branford	Nancy Lappie
Wallingford	Susan Huizenga, Russ Styles
Library	Ken Donadio
COMCAST	John Simeone, Hank Lindsey
<b>Regrets:</b>	Billye Bradley, Steve Fuest, Kristen Roberts

Guests: Curt Huizenga

\*\*\* note taping of the complete proceedings was incomplete due to technical failure \*\*\*  
\*\*\* Committee Reports were extracted from discussion of Chairman's Report. \*\*\*

**I. Call to order:** After roll call the Company Representatives introduced themselves. Hank Lindsey, Tech Operations Manager Branford and John Simeone Tech Ops Manager Berlin Facility. The indicated they had a report to relay from K. Roberts.

Chairman Huizenga confirmed that meeting materials were distributed: Annotated Agenda, Jan Minutes & Chairman's Report.

Chairman Huizenga called the meeting to order at 7:15.

**II. Minutes Action:** Chairman Huizenga asked that the distributed January Minutes (revised since distribution via e-mail) be reviewed for further correction, discussion, or adoption. In discussion reviewed purpose of red text is to identify action items for the following month. Revisions captured for attendance, East Haven (M. Saddig), Madison (A. White). A. White Motioned that Minutes of the January as corrected be accepted. Seconded: J. Elliott. Motion Carried unanimously.

**III. Public Comments:** New and re-appointed advisors introduced themselves. The advisors from Town of East Haven: M. Saddig, Lou Pacelli & Rob Becker terms were confirmed as through June 2006 and Patricia McGlashan Town of Branford as filling Art Scharf vacancy as through June 2004. [Confirmed that EH Advisor Appointment duration was not defined in correspondence to CACSCC but was on the Member's confirmation letters. Motion to accept appointments made by M. Zimmermann. Seconded by J. Elliott. Carried unanimously.

Chairman Huizenga asked for a motion to amend the agenda to give customer issues & company report priority. Motion to revise agenda to hear Company Report followed by Officers Reports made by M. Zimmermann. Seconded by J. Elliott. Carried unanimously.

**IV. Town Reports.** (in brief at end of meeting)

Branford. (R 1) M. Zimmerman. Relocation Progressing.

Complaint regarding Sponsorships & Underwriting will be addressed with the Producer as it was not in compliance with current BCTV policy.

East Haven. (R4) Marie Saddig. DPUC & Inventory done

Guilford.(R 5) J. Lincoln. DPUC & Inventory done

Madison.(R 2) A. White reported. DPUC & Inventory done. Customer concern related to charge for downgrade in response to rate increases. Questions regarding Station production support for programs that raise money for featured organizations.

North Branford.(R 7) N. Lappie reporting. DPUC & Inventory done

North Haven.(R 6) Iris David. Unknown status on DPUC report.

Wallingford.(R 3) R. Styles DPUC & Inventory in process. Condo activity in town to review installation of satellite dishes. Condo activity to enable DISH installations occurring in Wallingford.

**V. Officers' Reports.**

Chairman: See attached February Chair Report. Additional action discussion reported herein.

Side Agreement: Confirmed with Advisors that DMX-like converter is an expected to be a component of every cablecast return-line installation. Therefore each 'in progress' survey & installations needs to include the Music converter capability. Music Choice is valid option.

Router & Satellite: Confirmed that the primary purpose of this side-agreement was to address the elimination of Channel 21 as a regional cablecast opportunity for producers and that the intent of the router was not expected to be limited to Educational Access but that the Satellite link was identified as planned use of such an installation meeting the other identified need related to summer schedule for Channel 19. Clarification to be noted to K. Roberts by the Chairman.

**COMCAST Related**

Customer Care – it was agreed that Customer Service should advise customers that the Advisory Council is an avenue of appeal for when they are unsatisfied with service. It is in written literature and should be recourse for all complaints. Advisors shared concerns about the answers to rate increases being related to the upgrade that took too many years to complete and then was achieved on an escalated schedule to enable high-end products. The message does not match the advertising. When we go to Berlin facility we are interested in overview of Customer Service Training.

Discussion on how public we should be as persons vs. entity: Yielded consensus that after exhausting internal levels of review or upon request customers should be advised “You always have an option to call DPUC or Cable Advisory”. How to reach us was to remain via PO Box or e-mail address.

It was also discussed that we have no authority to take action, but as advisors we have authority to seek further clarification, make recommendations and represent customers before the DPUC especially if we begin to get complaints after the company fails to resolve concerns vs. concerns coming to us first as is sometimes the case.

Rates Discussion: Different than in the past due to at least 2 factors:

- 1) ‘economies of scale’ rationale for merger
  - 2) escalated timeline for upgrade
- as well as discussion of downgrade practices & fair & uniform implementation of discounts. (See Senior Discounts)

Senior Discount: Chair to reconfirm in writing to COMCAST that the literature is unclear and that we will be having a hearing to see if concerns surfacing via complaints are more prevalent.

Motion made by \_\_\_\_ to hold a public hearing some time in early April on the Senior Discount aspect of Comcast Branford Cable Rates. Seconded by:

Vote: 14 to 1 in favor. Voting against was new advisor who felt we should work issue with company. It was noted that efforts to work with the company have been ongoing. Request for adoption statistics – denied. Clarification on value of discount required several e-mails. Request for review of language required that advisors make go to Customer Service to pick-up the literature to validate concerns. And that the language is no longer the issue – it is the fair application as well.

Discussion: There is more than a need to clarify the company's policy. In fact a review of the policy & procedures and reasonable needs of the community may prevail; such that we may get a more customer oriented policy established and a retroactive application of the modified policy will be requested.

We are going forward as advocates for review & change of rates available to Seniors because we have confirmed that the Company's customer documents about the discount are:

- 1) drafted in a way that is open to interpretation as to whether all or a limited population of seniors are eligible for a discount and that disabled persons are also eligible for a discount
- 2) in effect for able body seniors
- 3) offered more generously in other franchises
- 4) excluding seniors in convalescent or nursing homes

Our goal in holding Public Hearing(s) is

- 1) to confirm with substantial numbers that the discount has not been administered based on the very limited interpretation,
- 2) to establish that 'economies of scale' associated with the merger approval include best practices that are more easily administered and
- that 3) the extensive amount of activity at the time of refranchise

clouded the relative importance of the issue of senior discounts that has been a lingering issue with several cable company mergers.

The hearings will also entertain testimony on 'service charges for downgrades' for the period immediately following rate increases, commercial access to a BASIC only Cable package and other rate administration concerns identified from complaint activity.

**Alliance for Community Action:** Membership status reviewed and acknowledged to proceed as recommended. No further action required.

Vice Chair: None

Treasurer: See Attached Financial Report. Banking issue with returned check. Signature filing and State of CT Fee/biannual report identified for follow-up. P. Garafolo & Russ Styles to follow-up. Check for website endorsed.

Secretary: Correspondence logging meeting to be scheduled.

## **VI. Committee Reports.**

Insurance Committee: Reports provided to J. Lincoln. Pending report due from Wallingford & North Haven. Committee to proceed with Insurance representative.

Education Committee: Cable in the Classroom & Tech installation. 'Cable in the Classroom' mailing listed re-requested. 'Cable in the Classroom' was not discontinued as previously reported it was changed to " "

PEG Committee: No report due to time constraints.

Outreach Committee: Website launch in process. Should have site available at 7TownTV.org domain this week.

## **VII. COMCAST Report.**

BCTV – site survey underway. Company intends to participate in upcoming BCTV meetings. (Date confirmed as March 2<sup>nd</sup> by J. Elliott)

Madison – Audio issues: Channel 18/20 DMX box and Channel 12 Style Network will be looked into further by company. Some adjustments made. Discussion ongoing with Head End Technician (Walt).

Reported as Educational Access: K. Roberts is researching potential Satellite Distribution sources and reviewing technical logistics of feeds for Ed Access.

CPI Increases: Awaiting DPUC closure on increase process. Effective date unclear.

Scott Hanley item for WGTV to be handled with in 60 days with a technical change referred to as "quam". Related to interference from channel 21 placement of HDTV for ESPN.

Customer Letters: New Customer Care employee for 'escalated' Customer issues. Rachel Lane. Correspondence follow-up in process. Continue with current procedure for forwarding complaints with e-mail to NE\_customer care until further notice. Hardcopy complaints to company reps to bring to Customer Care.

New Channels on Digital Tier: CTN, CPTV-2 March 8<sup>th</sup>, WTIC – HD Fox March 16<sup>th</sup>, On-Demand launch on March 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Iris confirmed she was one of the customers with the 'Analog' converter box change that was in process. Hank reviewed the change as documented in last month's correspondence from the Company.

Question on Biography Channel: What changed & why? Not available as before. Ed Access Broadcast Quality issue reported by P. Schiller Technical follow required.

Advisors advised company reps that Direct TV is marketing very heavy and the NFL package is part of the sales edge. Company confirmed that this edge is through 2006.

**XI. Adjournment.** Abigail made a motion to adjourn this evenings meeting. The motion was seconded by Nancy and unanimously carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:02 p.m.