

**CHESHIRE, MERIDEN, SOUTHTON CABLE ADVISORY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MARCH 18, 2015
COX COMMUNICATIONS IN CHESHIRE**

Members Present: Rosalie Fountain, Henry Chase, Adam Grippo, Karen Roesler, Susan Moore, Beth Hosmer

Members Absent: Karen Kritz, Dave Cooley, Mike Solimine, and Andy Jay,

Cox Cable: None

Others Present: Kathy Doherty, Recording Secretary

Chairman Rosalie Fountain called the meeting to order at 6:42 P.M. and read the charge of the Council.

SECRETARY'S REPORT – Kathy Doherty

Kathy called the roll and there was a quorum in attendance.

MOTION: To accept the minutes of the January 2015 meeting.

Moved by Adam Grippo, seconded by Beth Hosmer, motion was passed unanimously by the Council members present.

TREASURER'S REPORT – MIKE SOLIMINE

Mike was not in attendance, so we have no treasurer's report.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

COMMUNICATIONS BY MAIL

Rosalie had received a payment from someone dated in December but it was postmarked well into January.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – ROSALIE FOUNTAIN

Mr. Andy DePaolo attended the last meeting complaining about the new mini digital boxes. Rosalie contacted Peter and he was going to get in touch with Mr. DePaolo. Rosalie had given Mr. DePaolo her phone number in case he was not satisfied with the response from Cox. Rosalie did not hear from him so she assumes his problem was addressed.

Henry stated that he has both the old style Cox box and the new style. He does have his VCR connected into the box, you can do it. The trouble you run into is that the signals are going to be digital. It will provide an analog conversion to go into the sets. It will work but you can't watch a different channel. You have to record the channel that it is set for. You can solve it by having two boxes, one for recording and one for viewing. You can go with an HDMI into your digital set.

Henry is concerned that, on the analog tier, you have digital channels (wide screen / 16:9) integrated into that thing. If they shut down the analog distribution, that is going to disappear. What are they going to do with it? Are they going to put it on the Cox box or what? That is the problem. He is sure that Cox has a box that will give you 16:9 high definition pictures but that is going to be another tier and another problem. Henry is assuming that HD channels will be extra.

Henry stated that you have to watch out for the word "HD" because HD can mean a 720 line 3:4 aspect line system or HD Deluxe can be a 1080 line which is a 16:9 ratio. That's the difference. When they say they are going to convert to digital and everyone has to have a Cox box, what they mean is they are going to give you a 3:4 aspect (like the old style) and it's not going to be super high definition but a 720 line.

Henry said that it annoys him that when you are looking at analog, you don't see the edges, people are cut off or titles drag all over the place and that's the big problem with it. Also, when you are looking at an analog picture often you will see black at the top and black at the bottom if you want to get the whole picture. That is a problem they are going to have to clear it up with the public because we are going to get flack on it.

Rosalie read a letter regarding the Cox transition to digital programming from Murtha Cullina giving update #5, addressed to Mr. Neeley. References are made to the letters dated September 23rd, December 22nd, January 16th and January 29th advising the public utilities regulatory authority about the plans and progress of Cox Communication to transition its' video services in Connecticut to an all digital network.

Cox will be transitioning the vast majority of its cable programming services currently available via analog signals to be only delivered in a digital format on or about March 3. On or about April 28, 2015 the company will begin to phase out the analog transmission for the remaining programming services that are currently offered in both analog and digital formats. The vast majority of the companies customers will be unaffected by the change.

Customers who are currently receiving Cox TV Starter on any TV set without equipment will need to acquire digital equipment from Cox for each TV in order to receive the channels. Options include a cable card for \$1.99 / month, a mini box for \$1.99 / month or an advance TV receiver for \$8.50 /month. Promotional pricing will go up to 2 years for various equipment options. Cox has been in contact with customers about these changes.

Henry stated that the way they are going about it is causing a lot of confusion to the public. Henry stated that Cox is also going to be facing another crisis. He has hooked up Amazon Prime and HULU and those services are nice. You won't even need a recorder and it is great. Some of the programs don't even have commercial interruptions.

Because the Cox signal is digital coming through the line, they also provide internet service. You can take a notebook computer and you can pick up a lot of free programs like on HULU which is NBC shows. And then there is Amazon Prime which Amazon has that feed too. And they put their own programs like HBO programs on there and you can watch the whole series. While many of them are free, there is a cost to some of them.

You can just hook the HDMI cable to the back of your TV and you can watch them on your TV. You can't watch live shows like the Academy Awards or the Superbowl but you can get those off an antenna. You can also get the shows from the library. The libraries get Hoopla and pay for the subscriptions and you can watch them with a library card. They are generally older programming. On HULU you can even watch the day afterwards.

Henry said that the cable companies are already feeling that pinch. The biggest complaint is "Why do I have to buy channels I don't want or watch?"

Rosalie said that Peter told her that once they go digital there will be more bands available. Rosalie is hoping that we could get more networks like ABC, NBC and CBS because we can't get that.

Adam felt that they will probably just use the band width for more speed. Considering they have all just been regulated to a utility two weeks ago, the FCC turned all the cable companies into a utility. Netflix was paying extra to have a faster pipeline so that their stream would not be buffered. So now the government says that is illegal so everyone will be at the same speed.

Henry stated that you can buy a plug in thing from Amazon, Amazon Fire, and he has been using it and it works pretty good.

Rosalie wished that Peter had come to this meeting. He is required to attend two meetings each year and he was at the September meeting. Peter was not at the dinner meeting last May, so he will have to be at this May meeting.

Rosalie noted that we changed our dinner meeting to May from June because there were so many conflicts with graduations, etc. That is why the meetings are now September, October, and November instead of June.

Rosalie was going to ask Mike if we got our Stipend for 2015, she will send him a note tomorrow.

OLD BUSINESS

Kathy noted that there was something that came up in the September meeting about the quorum issue. We had discussed having at least one member from each Town present and we have not been able to get that for several months. Peter had suggested that we do like the other Towns which be 2/3 or two of the three Towns in attendance to have a quorum.

Rosalie had indicated that we would bring it up at the next meeting to see if anyone was interested but there wasn't an October quorum and there wasn't a November meeting and it was forgotten at the January meeting.

The way we have it now you would have to have a representative from each Town to have a quorum. If we go with the way Peter suggested, we could have a quorum as long as there is someone present from two of the Towns but that there would have to be a minimum of four people in attendance.

Kathy stated that we cannot change the fact that we are required to have six meetings a year. Peter is required to attend two of those meetings. We did check to see if there was a possibility of having our meetings via Skype but it would not be legal, nor would the person(s) watching via Skype be allowed to vote.

We did cancel one of our meetings because we knew that we would not have a quorum. We didn't even bother for November because we knew we would not have a quorum coming. We did have the September and October meetings but we did not have a quorum.

The current by-laws read that we can have a quorum as long as there is one person in attendance from each Town. We just made that change last year. Peter suggested that we have one person from two of the Towns but that we have a minimum of four people.

Rosalie asked Kathy to find out when Rosalie first joined the Council. Many meetings in the past were very volatile, a lot of fighting, including Rosalie's first meeting.

Kathy stated that we used to alternate the locations of the meetings to be in each of the Towns and we would get a lot of people in attendance at the meetings and we would pack the Board of Ed building in Meriden. We used to tape the meetings and run them on the public access channel. The meetings used to go on for so long that we changed the by-laws to limit the meetings to two hours. There were many times that we were there for four – five hours at a time. This was mostly over the issue of getting NESN so they could have the Red Sox games.

Then we got the Yankees first and they had protests. It was not Cox's fault, NESN refused to negotiate. We finally got NESN because they carried hockey and when the NHL went on strike they didn't have a season. Because they didn't have the season, Cox made them reimburse them or give them the Red Sox.

Kathy noted that at that time the Council used to have some authority over what happened but now we have none.

Rosalie stated that we stopped rotating the meeting locations when we had such a difficult time booking the locations in all the Towns, especially in Southington. Peter offered the Cox studio as a central location and meetings have been there ever since.

Henry noted that HBO is going to go independent and to get it all you will have to do is just go on the internet. That may be the wave of the future.

Kathy stated that we currently have ten members on the Council but we are still short members. We only have two members from Southington and we need four. Cheshire is the only Town that is all set. Meriden still needs another person and it was noted that the Library rep has not officially been appointed although she is attending the meetings. Members do have to be appointed so we will work on getting more members (and getting our library rep appointed officially). We do need help with Southington.

Kathy noted that our meetings used to be posted in the newspapers but that has kind of fallen by the wayside since there is really not much going on. Cheshire does keep all the minutes and notices in a book available to the public. Southington does also keep up to date on the minutes but she is not sure what, if anything, Meriden is doing with the minutes. It is the responsibility of the Town Clerks to keep the minutes on the record.

Henry suggested that maybe once a year we pick a bigger location and post an ad to see if we can get anyone to attend.

Kathy stated that both Cheshire and Southington require that the minutes be submitted and that a notice be submitted if a meeting is cancelled. Kathy was told a while ago that it was not necessary to send them to Meriden because the Council members get them and the Clerk was not doing anything with them. Kathy did not remember who told her that but she was told not to bother because they were not interested. Kathy used to send copies to the Town Clerk and the Mayor of Meriden both. Kathy can email them to the Town Clerk if she can get the email address.

Henry stated that next time he sees Peter he will propose that we have one annual meeting where the public is invited.

Kathy stated that the Council used to be able to act as advocates for the subscribers but now we really don't. Peter used to be at every meeting and we used to be able to get information but now because of proprietary information, Cox does not have to tell us anything. We used to get a heads up of what things were upcoming, things they were working on, and things that were coming down the pike. They are not required to share anything with us anymore.

Rosalie noted that when Dimension first started, Cheshire was the last area to get service. They did Meriden and then they did Southington. Cheshire had the least amount. But, Dimension was required to service every single road in each of the Towns, whether there was one house or twelve houses. AT&T did not have to do that. They could pick and choose what they wanted to do.

Rosalie stated that once that came to light, Cox called a “time-out” and protested the fact that they had to follow separate rules so franchises came to an end.

If the Council wants to change the by-laws, it will have to be done at the May meeting when there are more members in attendance. The by-laws were never actually updated and the only way they are currently available is in a typed copy.

Kathy said that she would be willing to retype the by-laws into a word document and email them out to the members. Beth suggested that the document could be uploaded to Google Docs and shared with the Council members and they can make their suggested changes. Beth said that she would be willing to show Kathy how Google Docs works.

A question came up as to whether the Council would be required to reschedule the November meeting that was cancelled since we are required to have six meetings. Rosalie will get clarification from Peter.

NEW BUSINESS

Elections will be held at the May meeting. For the elections, the Council needs a nominating chair that will be responsible for putting together a slate of officers to be elected.

Kathy noted that they had also changed the by-laws to eliminate the position of secretary since there was really not anything to be done by the secretary and they did not have anyone willing to take on the position.

The Vice-Chairman and Treasure position were combined because the only real duty of the Vice-Chair is to run the meeting in the absence of the Chair and Mike Solimine agreed that he could do both with no problem.

MOTION: To appoint Adam as nominating chair for the elections.

Moved by Karen Roesler, seconded by Beth Hosmer, motion was passed unanimously by the Council members present.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 20, 2015 at 6:00 P.M. at The Watch Factory Restaurant, 122 Elm Street, in Cheshire.

REMINDER

Rosalie has requested that anyone who is unable to attend the meetings, that they please contact either Kathy or herself.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting.

Moved by Adam Grippo, seconded by Karen Roesler, motion was passed unanimously by the Council members present.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Doherty

**Kathy Doherty
Recording Secretary**