



# Vernon Area Cable Advisory Council

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VERNON AREA CABLE ADVISORY COUNCIL  
Minutes of Meeting dated March 23, 2016

Community Voice Channel Conference Room  
105 Notch Road  
Bolton, Connecticut

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VERNON TOLLAND CLERK  
16 MAR 29 AM 10:55

Attending Members: Paul Batterson, Tolland Representative; Justin Waine, Ellington; Larry Perosino, Tolland; Ed Meincke, Hebron

Attending Guests: John Bairos, Comcast; Nick Lavigne, CVC Executive Director

1. **Call to Order/Approval of Minutes.** Paul Batterson, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. in the CVC Conference Room. Larry Perosino made a motion, seconded by Ed Meincke to approve the minutes of the December 2, 2015 meeting. Motion was unanimously approved.
2. **Comcast Report** – John Bairos, Comcast Manager of Government and Community Relations, said that in its commitment to improve customer service, Comcast will be hiring 200 new employees in the coming year, including customer service representatives for the Enfield office as well as technicians and other personnel. The CSRs in Enfield will take primarily Connecticut calls, but also some regional calls. Additionally, beginning March 7, Comcast started streamlining their bill charges and installations listing them as one line item. This will provide a cleaner bill right from the start.

Paul Batterson asked what the installation charges are now for a new customer. John Bairos said costs start at \$79.99.

John Bairos reviewed a list of program name changes. He said Comcast also added WCCT Comet, which is a Sci-Fi station, as well as Grit-TV.

Larry Perosino asked if with the additional 200 employees, if it will make it quicker for someone calling in to get a live person. John Bairos said that is part of the goal. However, with new technologies, there are a number of avenues for self-help as well, so a customer will not always need to speak to a representative, and this should also reduce call volume.

Justin Waine noted that he recently renewed his contract and talked to a woman in customer service. She took care of the details, but a few days later, he got a follow-up email asking him to confirm his contract. The email asked for his account number and the date, and he didn't "confirm" as he wasn't entirely sure this wasn't a phishing type of email. John Bairos asked him to forward that email request to him and he will check it out.

Nick Lavigne asked if a customer purchased internet services from Comcast with a 2-year contract and he determines he wants a faster speed before his 2-year deal is up, can he upgrade his service. John Bairos said he could. He said you can't cancel your contract without a fee, but you can upgrade to a new contract.

Larry Perosino noted that there is some pending legislation that is "iffy" at the moment, but that the Council should be aware of. The Connecticut Television Network (CTN) has proposed adding a 40 cent subscriber fee on cable bills to pay for the network, instead of funding it through the state's gross receipts tax.

3. **YES Network.** John Bairos reported that Comcast has dropped the YES Network from their programming, which airs NY Yankees and Brooklyn Nets games. Paul Batterson said he could not believe how much the network costs. John Bairos said it is one of the most expensive regional sports networks, and they could not reach an agreement on the fees, so they lost the rights to the network last November. While they would have liked to continue providing the network, John Bairos said of the 130 baseball games YES aired last year, over 90 percent of their customers did not watch even a quarter of them. YES was provided as part of the Expanded Basic package, and the increase in fees to their customers to keep the network would have been untenable.

Larry Perosino said he still doesn't understand why they don't have HD for BEIN sports, which is the European soccer channel, noting they have SD but not HD. John Bairos said they have not launched that channel.

4. **CVC Report.** Nick Lavigne said they started the year trying to do some fundraising to build a new HD studio and control room. The goal is to do it in phases, as a new studio would cost about \$150,000. They have been looking for grant opportunities and hosting some events. They have also been trying to get an HD channel.

Their big accomplishment this year to date is getting their programming on the programming guide. Nick Lavigne said that with John Bairos' help, they have been able to work with Rovi and get their programming listed. They were able to split the list to one hour programming blocks, which will be good for DVRing shows. They did this for all three of their channels: CVC-P, CVC-E, and CVC-G. Rovi has asked for their logo to include on the guide. They went completely live on March 2, 2016.

Nick Lavigne said they held an Easter event last Saturday, much like the Christmas event. Families could bring their children to have a free picture taken with the Easter Bunny. The event intended to raise donations and generally bring an awareness of what the CVC is and what it does in the community. Sixty-six families with 102 kids attended the event, which was advertised in local papers and on Facebook.

Nick Lavigne said they also held an end-of-the-year event where they asked volunteers what types of equipment they would like to have, and from that they generated a list and purchased boom poles, a steady cam, and wireless mics. They are also looking to get more HD cameras.

Justin Waine asked Nick if they can broadcast in HD. Nick Lavigne said they can't do that yet, which is disappointing to some of their volunteers. However, some do like that they have that lateral quality so that they can archive their work in HD. He said the CVC requires that people do at least three shows in SD before they can learn how to use the HD cameras.

Paul Batterson asked Nick Lavigne what their fiscal year went by. He'd like to get a budget from the CVC. Nick Lavigne said they follow the calendar year. He said he could send them their Budget vs. Actual statement. Paul Batterson said he will send Nick Lavigne the emails for everyone on the VACAC so that he can get them out to everyone. Nick Lavigne said they could also look at the docket he just filed on the PURA website.

Larry Perosino asked if everything was going smoothly with Tolland. Nick Lavigne said he does have to get back out to the schools because they found out what was causing a problem with their live feed. They must have either dirty electricity or two amps. Also, the school principal is required to sign off on any shows they do, so this slows down the process of putting out shows.

Nick Lavigne reported that the next CVC Board meeting is tomorrow at 11:00 a.m. Ed Meincke said he will plan to attend this meeting.

- 5. Financial Report.** Paul Batterson distributed copies of the updated financial report. There is presently \$3,235.26 in their account. The VACAC reviewed the fees for Computer Rescue which hosts their website. Paul Batterson noted that when he first came on board, a number of complaints about service would come through the website, but they don't get anymore. Ed Meincke suggested adopting a more proactive style to bring formal complaints to meetings.

Paul Batterson asked if the Press Release which describes what the VACAC is and does and its need for new members was published in the newspaper. Annie Gentile, Recording Secretary, said she sent it in, but wasn't sure if it was published. She will resend it this month.

- 6. Scheduling of Next Meeting/Adjournment.** The next meeting was set for 7:00 p.m. on June 8 in the Community Voice Channel Conference Room. *Note: A scheduling problem was discovered after the meeting and a new date, TBD, will need to be established. The likely date will be June 22.* Larry Perosino made a motion, seconded by Paul Batterson to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m. Motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Annie Gentile  
Recording Secretary