

**VERNON AREA CABLE ADVISORY COUNCIL
Minutes of Meeting dated November 14, 2012**

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**Community Voice Channel Conference Room
105 Notch Road
Bolton, Connecticut**

Attending Members: Paul Batterson, Tolland Representative; Larry Perosino, Tolland; Adam Sher, Tolland; Justin Waine, Ellington; Elaine Buchardt, Andover

Attending Guests: John Bairos, Comcast; Helen Chatel, Community Voice Channel Station Manager; Marie Burbank, CVC Board Vice President

1. Call to Order. Welcome new recorder, Annie Gentile: Paul Batterson called the meeting to order at 7:10PM. He informed the Council that their previous recorder, Brenda has resigned and welcomed new recorder, Annie Gentile.
2. CVC Report – Helen Chatel reported that CVC lost power for about 12 hours during hurricane Sandy, but had no problems during the subsequent blizzard. She said Hebron is about to go live with their local government meetings and Tolland is back to live feed.
3. Carl Slicer's complaint about abridgement of CVC hours – Helen Chatel provided a handout showing Saturday usage and the number of users after a specified time of night for 2006 to 2009. She said economically it does not make a lot of sense for the CVC to stay open late. Paul Batterson asked how often Carl Slicer has come in to the CVC. Helen said he came in about once a month usually on a Tuesday until 9:00pm in January, February, March, April, May and June. She said the CVC posted the impending change of hours in April of this year. She said staff is at the CVC until 9:30pm and warns anyone still there about 9:15pm that they will be closing shortly. She said last year they kept the same hours, but starting this year in June, they began closing at 8:30pm on Mondays and Fridays because the CVC is less heavily used on those days and there are no meetings. She added that trainings are done from 6:00pm to 8:00pm. She said they stopped being open on Saturdays in 2009 as the facility was not being utilized that much.

Marie Burbank noted that the new hours were approved with the contingency that they would regularly review the usage at CVC. She said the new hours also take into consideration their staff's safety when staying late and traveling home during the winter months. Helen agreed saying they are generally willing to accommodate people who need to finish their editing. She added that they are willing to open special on an occasional Saturday if there is communication from a user; however, they are finding that more often than not people will do their editing at home.

Paul Batterson noted that it is remarkable that the CVC is open 58 hours a week with only four staff, two of whom are part time. Larry Perosino said he feels the hours they are open is sufficient.

Larry Perosino made a motion finding that after reviewing the hours and usage of the facility to keep the hours as is at this time. The motion was seconded by Elaine Buchardt. A vote was taken and all were in favor. Motion passed.

4. Audio Visual quality of government access – Larry Perosino said he has noticed that the audio and visual quality of Town and Board of Education meetings are not of as good quality as other programming, asking if CVC can do anything to advise towns how they might improve. Helen Chatel said the quality of the programming has a lot to do with how and where the program is running. She said Tolland had been running their government access programming off-site. She said in Vernon they have their own IT department and staff runs the camera shots so the quality depends on what the staff chooses to take. She said they advise people to speak into their microphones rather than turning their heads to address people beside them, as doing so improves audio.

Helen turned on the government access channel so they could observe the Tolland Board of Education meeting. The quality of the picture was very good as meetings have returned to Council Chambers. However, it was noted that the student representatives, who did not have a microphone, could not be heard. Larry said he will send a note to the contact at the Town of Tolland that people need to be mic'd.

Paul Batterson asked how the flyer posting for training has been going. Helen Chatel said it has been going well and she has heard from Mr. Guzman in Tolland that he wants to start doing a Superintendent's report. Larry Perosino asked who runs the equipment for the Tolland meetings. Adam Sher said he understands Tolland students will be running the equipment under the direction of a new THS teacher, Betsy Dillard. Helen said it helps when students are required to do a certain amount of community service for graduation requirements, because it results students volunteering to get equipment training.

Helen Chatel said Melanie has been contacted by the Marlborough principal to do a video workshop. Adam Sher provided details about how THS is formatted for programming. Helen also reported that last year they trained 149 volunteers, but they had a little less this year. She said their goal for 2013 is to train 160 volunteers. Paul asked how many training hours are required. Helen said it varies depending on the type of training.

Marie Burbank reported on the arrest of former CVC Board President Deb Hilton. The story was reported in the Journal Inquirer today, and copies of the article were distributed to the Council. Marie said the arrest happened on Tuesday and they can now move forward. She said they have brought a lawsuit against the Hiltons, but the Hiltons have filed for bankruptcy, so this may be problematic. She said a brief has been filed with the court not to dissolve the CVC bill. She said bills that result from larceny or embezzlement cannot legally be dissolved in bankruptcy court. As for now, they have to wait for the court's decision.

Elaine Buchardt asked Marie about filing an insurance claim. Marie Burbank said an insurance claim has been filed, but Hal Cummings will need to speak to the Council on this. She said the next court date is December 14 at 10:00am. Elaine asked if a new Chairman of the Board has been elected. Marie said not as of yet. She added that their attorney and legal staff working for them have been generous and CVC's money situation is improving.

5. Comcast Report – John Bairos provided flyers for their 2013 – 2014 Leaders and Achievers Scholarship Program to make communities aware of potential \$1,000 scholarships for students.
6. MSG – Network Programming – The Council received an inquiry from a subscriber in Hebron who is a Knicks fan and would like to be able to watch the games. However, Comcast does not presently offer MSG in the Vernon area. John Bairos said that in the past they can occasionally override channels and they are trying to negotiate a waiver with MSG but that has not been achieved yet.

Paul Batterson asked if Comcast can notify the local news outlets when a game that normally cannot be seen, will be broadcast. John Bairos said they can do this. He noted that Leakpass packages are also available for fans.

Justin Waine asked why MSG cannot be obtained in the Vernon area. John Bairos said he is not sure of the contractual reason, but often these things are territorial. Paul Batterson said it might be worthwhile for Comcast to pursue this more heavily as fans are known to switch from their satellite dish service if they know they can get the programming they want.

John Bairos reported that Community Access recently issued their quarterly payment to CVC and the subscriber base has increased.

7. Comcast Website and channel guide – Paul Batterson asked John Bairos if he has a schedule of available channels. He noted that the HD channels for many stations have changed and that the last time he checked the new guide was not yet posted on the web. John Bairos said the web has been updated as of today. He said he will bring the actual line-up cards to the next meeting. John reviewed the upcoming changes to the lineup, including losses, new launches, and package changes.
8. Litchfield Cable Advisory Channel's Chairmen addresses service monopolies – Elaine Buchardt said she read that Cox Communications has been approved to service all of Connecticut and asked what this is about. Larry Perosino provided copies of a November 11, 2012 article in the Republican American, where Stephen Simonin, chairman of the Cable Television Advisory Council in Litchfield, is calling for requiring cable TV operators in Connecticut to share their cables with competitors from adjacent communities in exchange for receiving an access fee. John Bairos said the existing franchise structure has never precluded any service provider from going into other areas, but it is a cost issue and cable providers would need to negotiate space on their lines with Connecticut Light and Power.

9. Other Business – Larry Perosino said he received a letter from Comcast recommending he order a new modem and he asked John Bairos what this is about. John Bairos said Comcast has increased their internet speeds and in order to take advantage of that, some modem models need a software upgrade. He said Larry must have gotten this letter because he has the older model. Justin Waine said people can also purchase their own modems at retail stores if they don't want to rent the Comcast modem.

There was consensus to set the next meeting for Wednesday, January 23 at 7:00pm at the CVC. Marie Burbank will look into reserving the conference room for the Council.

Larry Perosino made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:20pm. The motion was seconded by Elaine Buchardt. All were in favor. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,
Annie Gentile
Recording Secretary