

Metuchen TV/Technology Committee Minutes  
Monday, March 24 2014

Beatrice Moskowitz – Chairperson      Mike Guarino - Secretary      Ron Grayzel –Council Liaison  
Dave Lanton      Ira Grubman      Frank Weichmann      Special Guest, Don Viapree, Cablevision

Administrative

-The meeting was called to order by Mike at 7:33, who noted he had previously circulated the February Minutes for approval;

On-going/New Matters

Cablevision/Refranchise Issues:

-Beatrice open the meeting and thanked Don Viapree for responding to our request to meet to initiate informal negotiations regarding the Franchise renewal. The discussion focused on the following issues the Committee had raised as key concerns for any future franchise:

-several members noted the weak WiFi signal in Borough Hall and the overall need to increase the bandwidth throughout the various municipal buildings and public spaces. Don agreed to review current capabilities. It was noted that we should have 8-10MB to have the appropriate level of service. Frank also mentioned that encoders were needed downtown on Main St. to enhance transmission capabilities;

-Mike noted that another important concern was the future equipment needs for our local PEG channel, METV, which includes a switcher, new monitor interface equipment and a new character generator in order to make METV HD capable (total estimate \$45K). Don noted that such needs were usually addressed based on Cablevision's capital contribution under any franchise agreement. While he indicated that it could be approximately twice the prior \$20K grant, under the newer refranchise agreements Cablevision pays it over the course of the franchise, rather than one lump payment as done previously. Don also advised that it could be more under a 15 year rather than the prior 10 franchise term;

-Dave and Ira addressed concerns relating to the need for equipment to expand the ability to broadcast live events from the various schools. Don noted a concern regarding the expense for such a setup, which would be a return line in each school, which would cost \$10K each;

- Ron also mentioned the importance of ensuring a 10% senior citizen discount on some Cablevision fees, which Don advised was in the current franchise and likely in the future, but is limited to those on fixed incomes;

-Mike also suggested that it would be beneficial for local businesses to better understand the *Optimum Business* services offered by Cablevision and perhaps they could make a presentation at a Chamber of Commerce meeting. Don agreed and will contact one of their representatives to schedule it. In that context, Ron also mentioned that there were several new downtown development projects in the near future, that may warrant discussions between Cablevision and the developers to see what services could be made available for both businesses and residential users;

-In summarizing, Don advised that he will provide a summary response of the points discussed and will followup with Cablevision personnel on the indicated needs. Once finalized he would prepare a draft Ordinance outlining the provisions of any proposed ReFranchise Agreement to ultimately be adopted by the Council if approved.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00pm.

M. Guarino 4/20/14