

PEG Access Advisory Committee

January 14, 2021

Virtual Meeting, 9:30 AM

Pursuant to notice duly filed with the Town Clerk, the PEG Access Advisory Committee convened in a virtual meeting on January 14, 2021 at 9:30 AM.

Present were: Karlen Reed, Chr; Court Booth, Vincent Carlson, Scott Hopkinson, Ruth Lauer  
Also present were: Matt Johnson, Select Board Liaison; Jeremy Romanul, Select Board Administrative Assistant; Tim Goddard, Carlisle Town Administrator; Phil Lupsiewicz, Station Manager; Frank Breen, Carol Cushing COA Observer, Nancy Pierce, David Allen

**CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Reed called the meeting to order with a quorum present and announced that it was being recorded. Ms. Reed noted the presence of Carol Cushing who will observe the committee on behalf of the Council on Aging.

**MEETINGS AND MINUTES**

Meetings are scheduled, virtually, for the remainder of 2020-2021 season on February 11, March 11, April 8, and May 6. The Enterprise Fund Hearing will be on May 11 and Annual Town Meeting will convene on June 13.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was UNANIMOUSLY

**VOTED:** to approve the December 10, 2020 minutes.

Court Booth	aye
Vince Carlson	aye
Scott Hopkinson	aye
Ruth Lauer	aye
Karlen Reed	aye

**MMN UPDATE**

Station Manager Phil Lupsiewicz reported that the past 28 days were relatively quiet with 13,000 views of 41 municipal meetings, a sporting event, and holiday music videos. There has been no change regarding the addition of the Educational Coordinator position. However, there is interest in creating a COVID station at the high school and MMN is interested in documenting that. Ms. Reed noted the great response since September to *You Lift Me Up*. Mr. Lupsiewicz stated that this was due to a collaboration with a parent in the industry and his own production team. Isabella Germino provided camera and editing skills. MMN intends to create a second video.

Matt Johnson asked what Mr. Lupsiewicz foresees in a look ahead. Will there be more programming like *You Lift Me Up*, is it likely that the same amount of government meetings can continue to be covered, could MMN create a digest of current productions to note key happenings without the need to watch every meeting? He asked about creating a program of

Call to Order

Meeting/Minutes

MMN Update

*Concord Days* as an historical record. The Agriculture Committee is working with the National Park Service on such a series with Friends of NPS. Mr. Johnson stated that Concord has a unique understanding to many events, such as the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our nation's founding. We have time to compile the resources to document that.

Mr. Lupsiewicz stated that both Massachusetts and the federal level have commissioned the planning for the anniversary in 2026. The Town is interested in a purely local celebration in 2025 that would focus on historic events at the Bridge and along Battle Road. He reported that he has experience working with NPS and could be a resource.

### **CARLISLE/CONCORD FRANCHISE RENEWAL PROCESS**

Carlisle Town Administrator Tim Goddard shared the timeline that Carlisle is using for the renewal process for the cable franchise agreement that expires in October 2021. This is being undertaken by the Carlisle Select Board, not an advisory committee. The Board has hired a consultant from California who has MA experience to take the lead on preparations. At the kick-off meeting it was learned that the strong interest in the community was in internet matters. The franchise agreement, however, only covers television. The Board will meet with Greg Franks of Comcast next week with a stakeholder meeting in April. Mr. Goddard stated that he anticipates that a one-year extension will be sought. He suggested that with Concord's franchise agreement expiring in 2024, it is not too soon to start to think and plan for the needs and issues to be considered.

Ms. Reed thanked Mr. Goddard and noted how much activity must be accomplished by the Select Board, staff, and consultant. It seems that after step 7 in the timeline the negotiations can begin. Therefore, this is a 2-year process. In response to a question, Mr. Goddard stated that actual negotiations will be done by Carlisle Town Counsel and the Attorney Buske consultant role focused on the ascertainment phase. Mr. Goddard stated that not everyone in Carlisle can get cable and that line extensions are expensive. Carlisle is interested in a line extension policy and HD channel. Court Booth stated that in the past, CCTV has used both models of negotiations – counsel and consultant. Most recently no outside resources were used. He also noted that a ten-year contract is the longest permissible by law and preferred by Comcast for reducing costs and the risks of out-year issues. Mr. Lupsiewicz stated that some towns that share a headend have shared an HD channel so both towns may benefit.

Frank Breen stated that Concord has no FIOS and he assumed that it the same in Carlisle. Why isn't that negotiated? Mr. Goddard replied that FIOS is a Verizon product and the company is not interested in areas such as ours with low density residences. In response to a question regarding whether Concord Broadband could be offered to Carlisle residents as some other services are shared between the towns, it was stated that this is not possible in the current business plan and won't be considered until CMLB can address all the Concord needs for broadband.

## 2020-2021 PAAC GOALS and Charge REVISIONS

Ms. Reed shared a screen shot of the PAAC goals memo as well as an annotated memo from Vince Carlson for discussion. Under the goal statements are activities in support of the goal and many are fulfilled for this year. The aim at this meeting is to review the goals and move to approve or amend them. Mr. Johnson stated that perhaps review of the committee charge and consideration of seeking an amendment from the Select Board should come first.

Ms. Reed stated that PAAC is an advisory committee to the Select Board with responsibility to study, develop plans, and recommend to the Select Board. Without authority, we cannot DO anything. Ruth Lauer concurred, noting the frustration and ranting she has engaged in when the information needed to make a recommendation is not provided in time for the committee to take positions on matters such as the budget. Mr. Johnson stated that committees cannot get everything they want and need but can only influence the issues under considered by the Select Board.

Vince Carlson referred to his memo and stated that perhaps we should consider merging PAAC functions and updating the Charge. There could be a PEG Enterprise fund similar to the Beede Center and the goal would be to make community media more accessible. Print media is in decline. Could PEG be reimagined as MMN a Town department for communications and information services.

In response to Ms. Reed's question regarding whether the committee should focus on Broadband services as well as cable service, there was robust discussion: Ruth Lauer stated her preference for a cable only focus that fills the three stations with as much content as possible and encourage the Select Board to appoint a new committee to struggle with the myriad issues in broadband. Court Booth indicated he would agree that our focus should be content. Vince Carlson stated that cell services have saturated the market and Verizon is now adding a focus in certain cities on fixed wireless from a box that will replace the cable modem. It is not clear when this technology will come to small towns such as ours. In his opinion, our job is to create a competitive marketplace where Comcast now has a monopoly. Residents will benefit from expanded offerings. Karlen Reed stated that in the next few years PAAC should focus on the franchise renewal; it can also do more. She would support a switch to a Town Department with new staff and programming in the short term. The Town must decide whether it wants informed citizen advice on internet access and broadband.

Court Booth suggested one amendment to the 12/30 draft of the goals under the heading *promote public awareness and use of PEG access*. Rather than help MMN create a community development plan, he proposed that should be a community communications plan

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

**VOTED:** to approve the amended Goals statement as discussed.  
 Court Booth aye  
 Vince Carlson aye

Scott Hopkinson aye  
Ruth Lauer aye  
Karlen Reed aye

**LIAISON REPORT AND PUBLIC COMMENT**

Liaison report &  
public comment

Court Booth stated that the School Committee is examining the education plan, including curriculum needs for the new middle school. This will be sent to School Building Committee who will translate the needs into a site plan of spaces, sizes needed, and layout. World language classrooms will each have a stage and green screen. This concept creates the potential for studio capacity in the new building. Should the committee wish to opine, public comment will be accepted until January 26. Discussion included: can we get more information; would the funding come from PAAC or the FFE portion of the building budget; there are much broader educational needs both large and small, how can they be supported; the Umbrella remodel has also created “maker” spaces that could be used for editing and the auditorium could be used as a studio; the Library remodel could also include green screen.

David Allen of Heath’s Bridge Rd. stated that PAAC should not try to compete with CMLB regarding broadband. The issues have the possibility of becoming complicated turf.

Carol Cushing of Anson Rd. asked for more information regarding the cooking show offered for seniors so that she could advertise it. It is offered by Mass Access and only one episode was recorded recently. The intention is to produce 15-30-minute episodes monthly.

Frank Breen of Philip Farm Rd stated that cable financing is entirely by subscription. Those receiving broadband can also receive cable without that fee. How can the rest of us get broadband?

**ADJOURN**

Adjourn

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was

**VOTED:** to adjourn the meeting and conclude business at 11 AM.

Court Booth aye  
Vince Carlson aye  
Scott Hopkinson aye  
Ruth Lauer aye  
Karlen Reed aye

Respectfully Submitted,

Ruth C. Lauer, Clerk

Approved: February 11, 2021