

**PEG Access Advisory Committee DRAFT Minutes**  
**January 16, 2019, 9AM, Select Board Room, Monument Sq., Concord**

**Present:** Karlen Reed, Chr; Court Booth, (School Committee Representative), Frank Breen, Peggy Wargelin, Ruth Lauer, Christine Lear (Carlisle ex officio Representative) **Absent:** Jill Colpak, Scott Hopkinson

**Also present:** Jane Hotchkiss, Select Board Liaison; Erin Stevens, Public Information Communications Officer/Staff Liaison

David Allen attended and recorded on his own equipment.

Upon a quorum being present, Chair Karlen Reed called the meeting to order at 9:07AM.

**Updates**

Ms. Reed noted that three complaints had been received about the sound being inaudible during MMN broadcast of the January 7<sup>th</sup> Select Board meeting, and that one of the citizens would probably attend to discuss this.

Ms. Reed reported she had contacted the FinCom to ask what, if any, information our committee could provide to help them prepare for Town Meeting. She was told any information would be needed by 3/11/19 in order to be in time to be helpful, and that they would like data. Since that was before the next PAAC meeting, Ms. Reed said we would need to cover budget information during this meeting in order to be in time.

Select Board Member Jane Hotchkiss then explained that the Select Board created this committee to act as an interface between our new town department, MMN, and the residents it serves, via the Select Board. She said that the Select Board would like the PAAC to give all feedback to the Town Manager's office, not directly to the FinCom. (Our discussions are also always captured in the minutes of PAAC meetings, so are available to citizens or other committees.) The Town Manager will report on the sentiment of the PAAC when discussing the article, when he presents at Town Meeting. The budget for MMN is part of the Town Manager's budget, much as the Rec Commission is; it is also its own account, and therefore not a part of the General Fund. The funding comes from Comcast cable TV subscribers and it is under the purview of the Town Manager. Formerly it was simply contracted out to CCTV and CCTV had the responsibility for accounting to the town for the way in which money was spent. Now MMN (the town) is reporting to itself (the town), which she suspects is why there is so much confusion.

There was further discussion among PAAC members about communications between meetings. All agreed that any formal communication must have been presented to the PAAC at a meeting, and approved with a vote, in advance. Ms. Reed clarified that her discussion with the FinCom had been as an individual (seeking to

avoid duplication or contradiction of effort), not an occasion of speaking for the PAAC officially.

### **Minuteman Network Update**

The PAAC congratulated Erin on her recent promotion. She reported that the position of MMN Station Manager has been listed. MMN has also implemented a reservation form on the website where people can enter all the information needed to decide if MMN will film an event/program. They are trying to encourage people to use this form before talking with MMN, since it improves staff efficiency. The procedure is for MMN staff to call the person back after the form is completed anyway. If the form has been filled out ahead of time, the process will be more efficient because the person calling back from MMN will already have all information needed to let the citizen know what will happen next. If a citizen doesn't have computer access or is having trouble with the form, they are welcome to contact MMN directly.

There was some discussion about whether there is a written policy available about the types of programming MMN is available to film, to help manage citizen expectations. Erin said there is some information about the types of programming MMN will film on the web site, and clarified that this form helps make the decision about whether MMN resources will be used to film/process a program, e.g., they will not have MMN staff film a private birthday party. If citizens film their own program they are always able to have it broadcast; no decisions are made that might be considered censorship. One member suggested it might be helpful to change the title of the request form to mention "Filming" instead of "Programming" to avoid confusion. Erin explained that the form is also intended to solicit ideas for future programs, and she would think about a good way to clarify.

The committee wondered if our members can be useful Beta testers for MMN staff, before modifications to the web site are made. Erin agreed that if we can give feedback between our meetings, as individuals and within a limited time frame, it would be helpful.

Carlisle has approved a PEG agreement with Concord. They will be charged \$50/hour of staff time spent on work for Carlisle and its residents. Now the Regional School Committee can proceed to sign a deal for MMN to use the studio at the High School.

Ruth moved to accept December 19, 2018 minutes as amended, Christine seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

### **PAAC/Comcast Survey Draft Review**

Because Peggy had to leave the meeting early, this item was taken out of order. This survey will go out to all households in Concord. It will almost certainly be held to one page to keep costs reasonable and make it easy to fill out. Peggy provided more questions for consideration than we need and asked the committee to provide

feedback on what we want the focus to be of the survey. It was agreed that the members will consider the draft questions and submit comments before the next meeting, where she will present a final, formatted draft survey.

Four questions arising from the results from the two PEG questions on the previous Concord citizen survey were discussed. Erin is aware of the fact that many citizens are either unaware of PEG programming (younger citizens) or cannot find what they want (older citizens). She is working on both publicity and making the schedule easier to use. MMN has renewed with the current service that sends programs out on the PEG channels for one year to give them time to decide what services are available and what is needed. The current company is known for being a bit more expensive than some alternates, but on the other hand they are a “one stop shop” for all services. MMN is investigating what services this company provides - including generating schedules – compared with other companies to see if they are worth the price in future years.

**Guest Kate Hodges**

Deputy Town Manager Kate Hodges arrived at about 9:30am.

The committee congratulated her on her promotion and on the excellent article in the Concord Journal. Ms. Hodges explained the allocation of the amount in the town warrant article for PEG:

Operations: \$306,675 (~\$20,000 less than under CCTV)

Capital: Requesting ~\$268,000, of which a maximum of \$255,000 could go toward converting 105 Everett St. into an editing/training facility for citizens for PEG program editing. ~\$150,000 of money from the Concord General Fund is planned to be used in renovating the building itself, and money from PEG would be used for cabling, computers, etc. This project is to ensure good citizen access to PEG facilities and respond to citizen requests for access to editing facilities with extended hours and parking away from the high school.

There was concern from members that this was the first time the committee had heard about this capital plan. After some discussion, which the Town Manager attended the meeting to contribute to, it was clarified that because the budget process had been severely compressed this year (because the Town did not take over from CCTV and create MMN until October 1, 2018), there had not been time to let the committee know of the plans in advance. Ms. Hodges explained that there would be ample time and meetings for citizen comment before any money was actually spent, but it was necessary to request enough money at Town Meeting that projects could proceed this year if needed. If the money is not used this year, the allocation can be used later. In future when there is not such a time crunch, the decisions about how to reach citizen goals will ultimately be decided by the town, but they will consult with this committee.

Some concerns about the capital plan for 105 Everett St raised by the committee were:

- Though the town apparently has a license with the state to use this location, it would have been good to have considered alternate locations, in different areas of town, for the convenience of citizens who don't live near the high school. Christine mentioned that Carlisle might like easy access, too.
- This is a lot of money to be investing in a building that the town does not own, or have a guaranteed long-term lease for.
- Ms. Hodges agreed that other options, like "studio in a box" with everything needed to film/edit a PEG program, are also under consideration for the future.

### **CITIZEN COMMENTS**

1) Ms. Dorrie Kehoe, Concord resident at 51 MacArthur, is also a member of the Affordable Housing subcommittee of the League of Women Voters. She spoke for the frustration of many residents who found it so difficult to hear the January 7<sup>th</sup> Select Board meeting that they gave up and turned it off. This is an urgent problem for those who want to hear meetings live, as the sound is usually better upon repeat broadcasts. She asked that MMN spend money to make the Select Board meeting room acoustics better.

Ms. Stevens explained that the MMN staff has to make a trade off between picking up every rustle and tap during the live filming in order to pick up voices of people who aren't speaking into the microphone OR avoiding those irritating sounds and just turning up the audio for rebroadcasts later. She apologized for the incorrect decision staff made to minimize the rustles for the 1/7 meeting, and she said that in the future decisions would be made to make sure that all voices are audible. Ms. Kehoe asked if the historical nature of the room was impeding making it have better acoustics. Mr. Booth explained that from years of experience it was mainly the responsibility of people to make sure they were speaking directly into the microphones, no matter the acoustics of the room. CCTV had already installed microphones hanging from the ceiling in the Select Board room, and directional mics can be used, but it's still hard to hear when people don't speak into the microphones.

2) Mr. David Allen was extremely concerned that the town management was still planning to use the 105 Everett St. site in spite of the negative reaction the idea received from citizens attending the League of Women Voters First Friday presentation about PEG access last year. He said that the role of the PAAC is to support the strategic direction, and many citizens want the committee to set the strategy that management of PEG will go private in a few years. He does not see that happening, and wanted to let the PAAC know that if citizens are unhappy with the committee's work they may show it at town meeting this year.

Peggy Wargelin left the meeting at 10:25 AM.

Continuing the survey draft review, it was agreed to get any questions and suggestions to Erin Stevens within two weeks.

### **MINUTEMAN MEDIA NETWORK**

Erin Stevens stated that there have been twelve applications received for the Station Manager position. She will keep the committee informed of progress. In response to a question about the structure of the MMN enterprise she stated that MMN will be managed by her as Public Information Officer. There will be one fulltime Station Manager who will oversee a department that includes one Education Coordinator who will work with schools, local non-profits, and churches regarding programming and training opportunities. There will be one part time Technical Services Coordinator, and part time Videographers and Producer Project Specialists. These people will do their own editing. At this time, MMN consists of Videographers and Producer Project Specialists who work under a one-year contract with the Town and are eligible to submit applications at the end of their contracts to become Town Employees.

### **LIAISON REPORT and PUBLIC COMMENT**

Court Booth reported on perceived audio problems with the recent Select Board meeting. Erin Stevens reported that was due to a decision made by the videographer to compensate for the volume of a participant.

Christine Lear reported that the contract with Carlisle has been signed.

Frank Breen referred to the website and difficulties finding new programming. Erin Stevens reported that rather than posting new programming at the top of the playlist, it is inadvertently going to the end of the list. This will require staff to be conscious of their methods of posting.

In response to questions from David Allen, Erin Stevens noted that 1) staff currently under contract to the Town may apply at the end of their contracts to become employees; 2) all three PEG channels are available to broadband streaming; 3) wireless personal microphones worn on clothing have improved over time, and can be useful if the individuals could be trained to use them correctly.

Nancy Pierce of the *Carlisle Mosquito*, stated that in the past it has not been possible to use CCTV as a news gathering tool due to inadequacies of audio issues. In her opinion, it is important to find a way to correct these problems before investing in a new studio in either Concord Center or West Concord.

Upon a Motion duly made and seconded,  
It was VOTED to Adjourn at 10:45AM.

Respectfully submitted  
Peggy Wargelin, Clerk  
Ruth Lauer, clerk pro tempore

Approved: 2-20-19