

Old Lyme Area Cable Advisory Council
10 October 2013 Meeting in Old Lyme Minutes

Attending: Peter Sielman, Chair, (Town of Salem); Pamela Munro, Vice-Chair, (Salem BOE); Cathy Frank, Secretary, (Town of Old Lyme); Russ Gomes, (Lyme Old Lyme BOE); Tim Devlin, (Town of Old Lyme); John Bairos, Comcast.

Absent: Gary Mezzi (East Haddam BOE)

Chairman Peter Sielman called the meeting to order at 7:40pm.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Russ Gomes, seconded by Tim Devlin, to approve the minutes of the April 11 2013 meeting. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report

The checking account balance is \$358+. Money Market account is \$15,000+.

Statewide Video Council Report

- **Correspondence to Sen. John McCain**

Peter Sielman did not attend the most recent Statewide Council meeting, but did check with Council Chair Steve Simonin about his correspondence to Senator McCain, requesting that he add a requirement for cable providers to share cable wires with each other to his Television Consumer Freedom Act Bill. Simonin has not received a response from Sen. McCain, but is working with Senator Blumenthal on proposed cable provider legislation.

Comcast Report

- **Westbrook Comcast customer service issue**

John Bairos reported that a Westbrook subscriber's customer service issue brought to the Council's attention has been resolved to the customer's satisfaction.

He distributed a new Channel Line up card, along with information on a C-Span Student Cam contest, and Comcast's Internet Essentials program, offering reduced cost internet to qualified families and now in its third and final year.

Public Access Report

John Bairos reported for Lynn Perry that she has scheduled an Open House at the Public Access studio on Thursday, December 5, from 6 to 8pm.

Old Business

- **2013 Scholarships Awarded**

Three scholarships were awarded to students from Lyme-Old Lyme High School in June 2013. All checks have been issued and cashed.

New Business

- **Resignation of Robin Purcell, Lyme representative**

Council members agreed that Peter will send flowers from the Council to Robin Purcell along with a note of thanks for her active participation on the Council.

- **Election of Treasurer**

A motion was made by Russ Gomes, seconded by Tim Devlin to elect Cathy Frank (current Secretary) as Secretary-Treasurer for the Council. Motion passed. Cathy will work with Peter to be added to the Chelsea-Groton bank accounts for the Council.

- **Discussion of possible changes to Scholarship Program**

Council members agreed to change the essay topic required on the scholarship application. The new essay can be in the form of a written document, a video, or a multi-media presentation on area tourism. Pam Munro will draft a revised document and send via email for approval at the next meeting. Pam & Cathy Frank will notify the Council's high schools that 2014 scholarship(s) will be awarded, and application forms will be available at end-January.

- **Discussion of converter rental charge (converters were previously provided @no charge)**

Peter expressed his objection that the converters initially provided by Comcast at no charge when the service changed from analog to digital, are now being provided at a fee. Pam agreed that customers might have a "perception of deception" because the charge was not announced initially or early enough in the program. John clarified that this is a national Comcast program.

Council members concurred that John should bring the message to Comcast that all its departments need to be mindful of working together when new programs are planned to avoid surprising customers with unexpected charges.

- **Discussion of digital dropouts that are becoming more frequent of late**

Both Peter & Pam reported recent experiences with "digital dropouts" – either audio or video. Peter contacted Comcast and was disappointed that a customer care representative he spoke with did not seem to be aware that the problem was area-wide and not peculiar to his converter. Pam did not contact Comcast about the problem and state it seems especially prevalent on one particular channel.

John explained that sending a technician to investigate a reported problem is standard procedure. He will follow up with the correct Comcast department(s) to determine where the problem is originating and make appropriate repairs.

- **Records Retention Requirements/Permission to Destroy**

Cathy distributed forms for Peter & Pam to sign so that older Advisory Council documents can be destroyed according to the requirements of the Connecticut State Library. She will follow up with the State & provide the required authorization to both Peter and Pam.

- **Set 2014 Meeting Schedule**

A motion was made by Cathy, seconded by Russ, to approve the following 2014 Meeting Schedule:

January 9, 2014

April 10, 2014

July 10, 2014

October 9, 2014

Motion passed.

(Note: locations for the meetings need to be established)

Other Business

Cathy distributed copies of a guest editorial written by members of the Cable Advisory Council for the New London Day in 2008.

Public Comment

None

Adjournment

A motion was made by Tim Devlin to adjourn at 9pm.

Catherine Frank
10/11/13