

Cable Advisory Committee Meeting

8/19/2020 5:00pm Notes

Meeting Held Virtually

Per Governor Bakers Orders

RECEIVED
FREETOWN TOWN CLERK

2021 JAN 21 AM 10:13

Cliff A. Estabrook

**Meeting recording is available at <https://www.youtube.com/c/FreetownMA/videos> **

Town Administrator David DeManche opened the meeting at 5:10pm.

Town Administrator David DeManche, Committee Members Bruce W. Wilbur, and Josh Tefft and Mike Galla from Comcast were present.

Town Administrator David DeManche read statement regarding public meetings:

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, sec. 18, and the Governors March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Freetown Police Sub-Committee will be conducted via remote participation. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means. A recording, transcript or other comprehensive record of proceedings will be posted to the Town's YouTube Channel and/or the Town of Freetown Website www.freetownma.gov

Town Administrator David DeManche stated that himself and Mike Galla will make their presentations and asked Mike to open with his. He stated that he does not have a presentation but refers to his formal proposal with the same language from the previous license and is happy to listen to the towns asks and he can comment on that.

Mr. DeManche said the capital was \$65,000 and 1% would remain. Mike Galla confirmed this is accurate. Mr. DeManche posted the Town's proposal on the screen. He noted this proposal was discussed internally and with the Board of Selectmen. The documents requests the following items

1. Increase 1% Franchise Fee to 2.0%. Net Increase Per Subscriber. To support paying videographer to cover meetings/events, basically salaries, training, operating expenses, equipment and/or facilities as it relates to PEG Access programming and legal fees as it relates to the cable franchise agreement)
2. Three (3) Standard Definition channels (PEG, Public, Education and Government) and at least one HD channel.
3. Include One Additional Public Access Channel – Not Government or Educational.
4. Senior Discount – Side Letter for the Discount (up to \$5.00 per bill)
5. Capital Funding request: \$250,000
 - a. Build out a new studio at a local to be determines (FES/Regional School/other)
 - i. Equipment:
 - ii. Part-time cable teacher/assistant for school studio
 - b. Equipment: Police Station
6. Electronic Program Guide – Scrolling information guide which lets subscribers know what is on all of the PEG channels.
7. Free cable drops/monthly basic cable tv service for Municipal Buildings

8. Infrastructure improvements in cable transmission boxes to improve local service. Bay Shores has a problem with cable and wifi. (Mr. DeManche noted we want this addressed in the contract)
9. Term: Five (5) Year Contract. (Mr. DeManche noted wanting five years as we do not know what is coming with technology like 5G or Fios may be available)

Mr. DeManche would like to see this agreement in place by October. He noted the above-mentioned items are negotiable and asked Mr. Galla to make comment. Mr. Galla said that he can look at some items and may be able to come close to the financial requests. Big issue with a 5-year contract and noted Comcast would want a ten-year contract. Mr. DeManche said if Comcast came close to the items listed above a ten-year contract would be a consideration. Mr. Galla said Senior Discount is doable. Mr. Wilbur said Comcast gives basic cable for free for low-income families is that true. Mr. Galla said they have a program that provides basic internet service for as low as \$9.99/month. Mr. Wilbur expressed concern for Seniors in their 70-80's could have this same program so their family could look in on them remotely. Mr. Galla said that program was rolled out to all low-income families and he would share this information with the committee. Mr. DeManche noted it is very important that the Seniors can access internet and basic cable for news. Mr. Galla continued reviewing the requests the Town has, he noted the guide that it will show programming regionally not just Freetown so that is where the issue lies with the guide. For free drops Mr. Galla noted the FCC came out with a new order that allows Comcast to recoup costs for free drops or towns can opt to pay for free drops. Comcast has not put this in place but has not included free drops in license agreements in the past year but have not stopped providing that service. Mr. Galla will have someone to look at the Bay Shores area (couple hundred houses) to see where the issues lie with the service there and how to get it fixed. Mr. DeManche and Mr. Galla both agreed this was not a license issue it was a service issue. Public, Education and Government channels and wants clarification to add another public access channel. Mr. DeManche said the town is looking for three total channels one being HD. He noted you can strike the additional public access channel request. Mr. Galla thinks this will be feasible and noted it is up to the town to decide which one will be HD. Mr. Galla suggests scheduling another meeting for more negotiations. Mr. Wilbur would like to have another committee meeting and then have another one with Mr. Galla. Mr. Galla asked Mr. DeManche to send over the Bargaining Point proposal sheet to Mr. Galla. Mr. DeManche said he will adjust a couple things and take out the public access channel request and send it over. Mr. DeManche suggests another meeting in two weeks. Mr. Galla notes he will be away on 31st. A meeting on 29th with Mr. Galla was set. The committee will have another meeting next week to prepare for the meeting with Mr. Galla on the 29th.

Mr. DeManche thanked Mr. Galla for his help with the Police Station and other things over the past months.

- Meeting was ended at 6:03pm

Respectfully Submitted
Lu-Ann Souza
Senior Clerk, Board of Selectmen