

# Cable TV Advisory Committee

## Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 23, 2020

1. A meeting of the Cable TV Advisory Committee ("Committee") of the Town of Hingham was duly called to order by Chairman David Jones on Wednesday April 23, 2020 at 7:09 PM. The meeting was held via a Zoom audio-visual conference call.
2. Members in attendance were Chairman David Jones, Vice Chairman John Rice, Recording Secretary pro tem Michael Leary, Superintendent of the Hingham Public Schools Paul Austin, Jeffrey Cutler and Christopher Baron. Harbor Media Executive Director Michelle Balconi from Harbor Media was also present. Cable TV Advisory Committee members present constituted a quorum. This quorum remained present throughout the meeting. There were no other individuals present.

Since the Executive Director of Harbor Media, Michelle Balconi was present during the meeting, Chairman Jones reviewed the various roles on the Committee:

- Production & Programming – Vice Chairman John Rice
- Schools & Education Channel – Superintendent Paul Austin and Christopher Baron
- Finances – Michael Leary
- Legal, Contracts & Reporting – Chairman David Jones
- Technical & Infrastructure – Recording Secretary Jeffrey Cutler

3. The first order of business was a review of minutes from the March 25, 2020 meeting. A brief discussion occurred regarding the minutes with no comments.

***A motion was made to approve the March 2020 minutes and appoint Michael Leary as Recording Secretary pro tem by Chairman David Jones and seconded by Vice Chairman John Rice. All voting members present approved the motion.***

4. The next order of business was an update regarding the Hingham Public Schools. Superintendent Paul Austin gave a general update including current issues including the coronavirus, social distancing, etc. Superintendent Austin elaborated that he felt that the communication between Harbor Media and Hingham Public school was very good. Specifically, Mr. Austin stated that approximately 40 students are involved with classes such as TV1, TV2, and Senior projects. In relation to programming, a discussion occurred surrounding the ability for Harbor Media to utilize certain programming created by the school for the education channel. Executive Director Balconi reiterated that the majority of this content had copyright issues and cannot be utilized. Superintendent Austin agreed to review the matter and work with Ms. Balconi to remedy the situation. They also agreed to give the Committee regular updates on a go forward basis on programming initiatives.

The discussion then shifted to the annual school budget process. Mr. Austin stated that for at least the last 10 years that the Committee had funded approximately \$18,000 to partially fund a position at the high school. Vice Chairman Rice elaborated for the Committee the history in regards to this funding including the original investment of infrastructure and continued monetary support in order to produce programming for the Harbor Media education channel. Discussion ensued. At the end of the discussion, Chairman Jones indicated that the Committee will plan to continue to partially fund the position for the next fiscal year. Mr. Austin thanked the Committee.

Mr. Austin noted that he was recently interviewed by Harbor Media and the program has aired on the cable system. He expressed appreciation to Harbor Media for the opportunity.

Due to other commitments, Mr. Austin left the meeting after completing his update at 7:45 PM.

5. Chairman Jones requested an overview from Executive Director Balconi regarding the Harbor Media. Ms. Balconi commenced her presentation by reviewing the recent Harbor Media Board of Director meeting. She stated that a fiscal year 2021 balanced budget has been prepared. Mr. Leary inquired whether there would be increased spending in this year's proposed budget due to the approximate \$1 million surplus of reserves on their balance sheet. Discussion ensued with background information provided by Vice Chairman Rice in relation to the history of this excess cash. Mr. Rice suggested that surplus money should be utilized to enhance the quantity and quality of programming. Ms. Balconi also proposed several other uses of these funds including closed captioning of Selectmen meetings and/or the creation of a mobile app. Ms. Balconi agreed to investigate the matter of utilizing excess capital with the Board of Directors. In addition, she also agreed to add Michael Leary to the distribution list for future accounting and budget related items. She will also copy Committee members with her periodic Executive Director reports.

The conversation then shifted to various current matters. Ms. Balconi noted various programming initiatives including the already mentioned interview with the Superintendent of the Hingham Public schools, and shows relating to Glastonbury Abbey and boating called "Bow to Stern". She also stated that there are plans to utilize joint programming between Hingham and Norwell relating to an interview with the Chairman of the South Shore Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Balconi reminded the Committee that Harbor Media keeps Norwell and Hingham budgets separate and the only shared costs is the Executive Director position and reimbursement of costs associated with rent and consulting fees.

The Committee concluded the Harbor Media discussion by discussing various feedback relating to program content. It was agreed that Chairman Jones and Vice Chairman Rice will provide Ms. Balconi information relating to their observations on current content on the various channels.

6. Chairman Jones next requested an update from Mr. Leary regarding various finance matters. Mr. Leary stated that he recently requested updated trial balances from the Town of Hingham's Treasurer. He noted that due to coronavirus related issues, booking of various revenues and expenses have been delayed. Hence, the quarterly

review of Committee accounts will be received at a later date. Mr. Leary stated that Harbor Media should be cognizant of this delay to ensure that revenues are being received on a timely manner.

7. The Committee's next discussion item related to an update regarding the Verizon HD rollout initiative. Executive Director Balconi gave a brief update to the Committee stating that the initial rollout had not been a smooth transition due to technical issues. The problems have since been resolved. The Committee discussed the need to promote the new channel and timing related to that initiative. In addition, the Committee requested and Ms. Balconi agreed to share a programming guide related to this new channel. The Committee noted that all members were Comcast customers and did not have access to this channel. Mr. Cutler volunteered to watch the channel's content over the next month at a relative's house.
8. Chairman Jones updated the Committee on the Town Hall capital improvements. As discussed in previous meetings, the Town of Hingham is planning on installing HD equipment in the Selectmen's room. Mr. Jones has reached out to Treasurer Betty Foley from Harbor Media and the Town regarding the matter. Additional information relating to the matter will be provided to the Committee at a future meeting.
9. The next item of discussion related to Harbor Media infrastructure signal issues with the Comcast provider. Executive Director Balconi stated that over the past month Harbor Media had been creating a log of the issues with the Comcast channels and have provided this data to the company. Jeff Cutler volunteered to watch these channels over the next month and coordinate with Ms. Balconi regarding next steps including communication with the Town's information technology representative Steven Becker.
10. Vice Chairman Rice introduced the next agenda item related to the Harbor Media review. Mr. Rice explained that the review has been postponed due to the departure of former Executive Director and also social distancing issues related to coronavirus. The review is still being planned to be performed in the fall timeframe. It was also noted that the costs associated with the review will be borne by Harbor Media. The purpose of the review is in preparation for the Harbor Media contract negotiations and renewal process. The contract expires in September 2021.
11. Chairman Jones requested any additional matters for discussion. No additional discussion items were noted. Mr. Jones proposed that the next meeting of the Committee be held on Wednesday May 20, 2020 at 7 PM. All members were in agreement with the proposed date. Chairman Jones stated that he will send the room/virtual room request via Zoom to the Town of Hingham and will distribute an agenda in advance.
10. There being no further business to discuss, a motion to adjourn the meeting was proposed.

***A motion was made to adjourn by Christopher Baron and seconded by Jeff Cutler. All voting members present were in agreement with the motion.***

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Submitted for review to the Cable TV Advisory Committee on April 24, 2020 by  
Michael Leary Secretary *pro tem*

Approved by the Cable TV Advisory Committee on June 24, 2020