

Cable Television Advisory Council – Litchfield  
Meeting  
Thursday, March 11, 2010

A meeting of the Cable Television Advisory Council (Litchfield) was held on Thursday, March 11, 2010, at 7:00 p.m. A quorum was seated: Chairman, Stephen Simonin, Litchfield; Diane Knox, Litchfield; Lucille Paige, Christopher Anderson, Torrington; John Angevine, Warren; Andrew MacDavid, West Cornwall; Jeff Dunn, Thomaston; Bernard Harrington, Goshen. Absent: John Willink, Litchfield, John Luciano, Torrington and Bruce Larson, Region 6, Chris Cunningham, Watertown.

Michael Chowniac, *Cablevision* was also present.

Mr. Simonin called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. Upon a motion by Mr. Dunn, seconded by Mrs. Knox the agenda was unanimously approved as submitted.

The roll call was accepted.

Patricia Donavon, Litchfield League of Women Voters, asked why ABC, being a free channel with rabbit ears/antenna, is billed to Cablevision customers. Mr. Chowniac answered that the FCC law allowed cable television providers to charge customers for "re-transmissions" or the "right to be on *Cablevision* distribution". Ms. Donavan then asked the status of Video Provider Bill #5643. Patricia Donavan explained that the League of Woman's voters is conducting a study on cable TV practices and Chairman Simonin will present at their 23 March Meeting details on cable requirements and operation.

Mr. Chowniac received a letter from DPUC stating to Cablevision that Litchfield County was not affected by the ABC issue – at this time. Mr. Chowniac feels that when other contracts with *Cablevision* expire and move to "squeeze" for price increase, the FCC should step in.

Chairman Simonin reported that Docket 10-01-09 (DPUC), Channel 5, the public access channel for *Cablevision*, shows up on customers' bills in the form of a \$9.00; this also applies to AT&T cable provider. Mr. Chowniac will have someone from Cable 5 Public Access call Mr. Simonin regarding public programming, in particular "Virtual Classrooms" that is available to all of the schools in the Litchfield *Cablevision* franchise.

Chairman Simonin reported that he has received notification that as of April 5, 2010, all **NEW** *Cablevision* subscribers will no longer be offered "analog" viewing, only digital as part of the family subscription. Mr. Chowniac explained the new phase out. The IO navigation package is being eliminated.

The Council members asked Chairman Simonin to obtain information regarding the different system being offered to the *Cablevision* subscribers in Wallingford; per Mr. Chowniac, there will be no impact to the Litchfield franchise.

A letter of complaint was received from *Cablevision* subscriber, Barbara Fontana. She requested a reduction to a "temporary vacancy" level of service when she went to Florida for several months. Contrary to her request, *Cablevision* billed her for regular service to her empty home. Mr. Chowniac will investigate Ms. Fontana receiving reduced billing.

Upon a motion by Mrs. Knox, seconded by Mr. Harrington, the minutes of the January 14, 2010, the Council were unanimously approved as corrected.

Upon a motion by Ms. Paige, seconded by Mr. Dunn, the Council unanimously approved the Treasurer's report: \$897.83 balance in the check book. (Letter from Treasurer Knox was submitted to Mr. Chowniac for request of \$2,000 stipend to Council.)

Under Town Representatives' reports. Mr. Dunn is continually received complaints about *Cablevision* customers having to "rent" set top boxes, that a box is required for each TV in a home and the costs therein. Chairman Simonin received questions from Cynthia Tompkins (Litchfield) regarding the free downloads of *Cablevision* movies; announcement to all subscribers that the movies were being offered free was not advertised on the viewing screen. Mr. MacDavid received notice on this TV screen that his cable card (insert) was "out of place", when in fact no one had touched the card, nor disturbed it.

Mr. Chowniac had nothing additional to report over and above the discussions that had taken place.

Chairman Simonin sent a request to Rep. Craig Miner, Rep. Roberta Willis, and Rep. Michelle Cook regarding the Energy and Technology Committee at the Capital – problems with set top boxes provided by *Cablevision* in having no quality or decoder. *Cablevision* will not provide any other type of box. (The picture on the screen freezes along with the voice, and then jumps along to catch up with the content). Chairman Simonin will send Mr. Chowniac a letter with brief details on the problems seen by several members. Senator Lieberman and Representative Chris Murphy's offices are actively working on "Quality of Picture" and "Customer Bill of Rights" investigating ways to create jobs and create requirements for digital video. Chairman Simonin has spoken to both offices and supplied details to support the needs of the people on these issues. He will continue to gather needed information on transport systems to establish the ground for the same.

Chairman Simonin has requested information from DPUC – proof of performance test reports. Sec. 76-6 01 of the FCC requires this information to be posted publically. *Cablevision* is obligated by law to file this information to the FCC in Washington. This

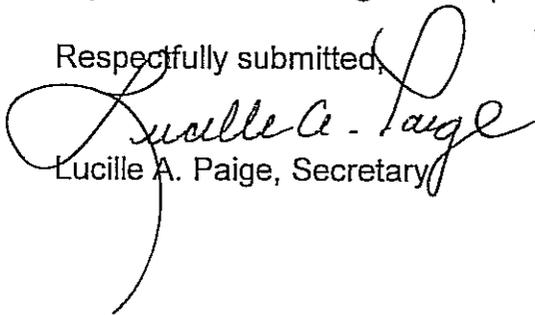
report involves rates, controls, price levels, compression levels, channel frequencies, and carrier identification per channel.

Upon a motion by Ms. Paige, seconded by Mr. Simonin, the Council unanimously approved donating the amount of \$100. to the Sullivan Senior Center (for the use of their facilities for the Cable TV Advisory Council meetings). Treasurer Knox will send check.

A discussion took place on the Website for this Cable TV Advisory Council. The consensus of the Council was that the cost of approximately \$350 was affordable. Mr. Anderson will investigate the Website creation. This will appear on the agenda for **Thursday, June 24, 2010.**

Upon a motion by Mr. Dunn, seconded by Mrs. Knox, the Council unanimously adjourned the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lucille A. Paige". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name. The signature is stylized with large loops and a long tail that extends downwards and to the left.

Lucille A. Paige, Secretary