

ADVISORY COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT

to the

Department of Public Utility Control

Ten Franklin Square

New Britain, CT 06051

of the State of Connecticut

Twelve-month period ending December 31, 2010

Name of Advisory Council	Cable Advisory Council of Litchfield
Mailing Address	PO 1441, Torrington, CT 06790
Telephone	n/a
E-Mail Address	
Contact Person	Stephen Simonin, Chairman
Towns Served	Torrington, Litchfield, Cornwall, Watertown, Warren, Morris
	Goshen
Cable Franchise Holder	Cablevision, (Time Warner)

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This report is mandatory per § 16-331c of the General Statutes of Connecticut and § 16-333-30 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies

Cable TV Advisory Council

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Bruce Larson
Region 6 School Dist.
blarson@rsd6.org

Council Meeting Dates*	Location
January 14, 2010	Sullivan Senior Center, Torrington, CT 06790
March 11, 2010	"
June 24, 2010	"
September 9, 2010	"
	"

*Attach minutes of meetings

SUMMARY OF COUNCIL ACTIVITIES:

Include any comments or concerns not reflected in meeting minutes, including identification of member vacancies (attach sheets if needed)

All meetings focused around the switchover from analog to digital. The loss off channels available to the public and skyrocketing of cost/fees to the subscribers.

Accounting of Financial Activities
Twelve-month period ending December 31, 2010

Beginning Cash Balance Jan. 1, 2009	\$ 1007.99
Total Cash received in calendar year	\$
Total Cash disbursed in calendar year	\$
Ending Cash Balance Dec. 31, 2010	\$ 740.17 (Nov. 10, 2010)

<u>REVENUE/INCOME</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>Actual</u>
Cable Company Cash Contribution		2000.00
Other Contributions		
Grants		
Dues		
Fundraising		
Interest Income		
Other		
Other		
Total Revenue/Income	\$	\$ 2000.00
<u>EXPENSES</u>		
Office Supplies		
Postage		110.16
Printing/Advertising		
Accounting Fees		307.66
Telephone		
Legal Fees		
Other Sullivan Center Fee		100.00
Other Scholarships 761250		1750.00
Other		
Other		
Total Expenses	\$	\$ 2267.82

FINANCIAL NOTES:

Include any Cable Franchise Holder In-Kind Services (attach sheets if needed)

[illegible]

Please Post

Cable Television Advisory Council (Litchfield)

Meeting Dates for 2011

Sullivan Senior Center
88 East Albert St.
Torrington, Ct 06790

7:00 p.m.

Thursday, January 13, 2011

Thursday, March 10, 2011

Thursday, June 23, 2011

Thursday, September 8, 2011

Please Post

Meeting Dates

Cable Television Advisory Council

7:00 p.m. – Sullivan Senior Center
88 East Albert St., Torrington, CT 06790

Thursday, January 14, 2010
Thursday, March 11, 2010
Thursday, June 24, 2010
Thursday, September 09, 2010

Please Post

Cable Advisory Council (Litchfield County)

Meeting dates for 2009

Sullivan Senior Center
88 East Albert St.
Torrington, CT 06790
7:00 p.m.

Thursday, January 15, 2009 (postponed-weather – now 1/22/09)

Thursday, March 12, 2009

Thursday, June 25, 2009

Thursday, September 10, 2009

Thursday, January 21, 2010

Cable Television Advisory Council – Litchfield
Meeting
January 14, 2010

A meeting of the Cable Television Advisory Council was held on Thursday, January 14, 2010, at 7:00 p.m. at the Sullivan Senior Center, Torrington, Connecticut.

A quorum was seated: Chairman, Stephen Simonin, Litchfield; Diane Knox, Litchfield; Lucille Paige, John Luciano, Torrington; Andrew MacDavid, Cornwall; Bernie Harrington, Goshen; John Angevine, Warren; Jeff Dunn, Thomaston. Also present were Jennifer Young, Adam Falk, and Michael Chowniac and Representative Craig Miner, Litchfield.

Mr. Simonin called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Upon a motion by Mr. Harrington, seconded by Mrs. Knox, the agenda was unanimously approved as submitted.

Correspondence: Letter from Mayor Ryan Bingham explaining that Cable Television Advisory Group, nor his office has any power to select the cable television provider for this area. Lucille Paige has received many e-mails from general public about Foodnetwork and HGTV loss during negotiations.

Upon a motion by Mr. Simonin, seconded by Mrs. Knox, the minutes of the meeting of October 22, 2009 were unanimously approved as submitted.

Mrs. Knox submitted the Treasurer's report: \$1,089.22 balance in CTAC checkbook as of 1/14/10.

Mr. Dunn commented on paying his Cablevision bill on-line and the timelines involved in payment being received. Mr. Harrington announced he will asked for responses for a new column "Town Topic". A consensus of the Cable Advisory Council members favored the creation of a website for public access. Mrs. Knox reported that she has received tons of e-mails and asked for information about the cost process of providing channels to subscribers. Mr. Angevine also wanted the same information; also he cited that there are cable boxes for each set that can be had that use only ½ the power that Cablevision boxes currently use. Ms. Paige asked if Cablevision has planned to offer credits to all their subscribers for the two channels that were lost, Foodnetwork/HCTV? Cablevision representative replied that they will not; citing packages vs. ala carte are not allowed. Mr. Dunn felt it would excellent PR if Cablevision announced that they would credit each subscriber's bill for the loss of the channels incurred by subscribers.

Representative Craig Miner @ Litchfield, asked if the State can enter into the mediation process with DPUC. He referred to the Connecticut General Statutes that a customer can compel DPUC, Sec.16-331 J©, requires 30 day notice. The contract with cable television providers cannot be held secret and should be published before the contract is signed, not after. Cablevision representatives present felt a 30-day prior notice was not feasible.

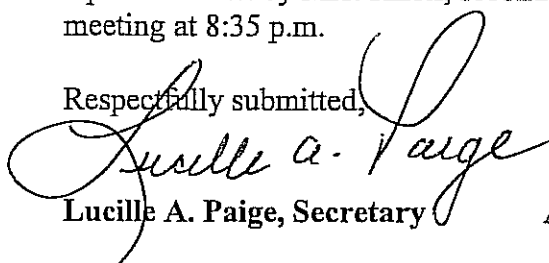
Mrs. Young, Cablevision, announced that a programming for public viewing with WAMOGO and Litchfield High School was up and running.

Mr. Simonin reported on his correspondence and meetings with Sen. Chris Dodd, Attorney Richard Blumenthal, Senator Lieberman's office and a letter sent to President Obama on the feasibility of getting a law in place that in creating "quality of picture" standards would also promote job creation; a bill of rights for consumers, create competition between cable and satellite. He cited the law that has arisen regarding the audio volume from commercials. Currently the DPUC has nothing in their regulations regarding video signal, stop/freezes on picture, channel compression, etc. The FCC requires Cablevision to provide a "box" for each TV, but it is Cablevision who chooses only to rent and not allow customers to purchase the box. A federal law is needed through FCC to regulate the cable television industry. Both Mrs. Knox and Mr. Dunn feel the State of Ct. needs to step in. Representative Miner suggested going through the Energy and Technology Department. A federal law for franchises must be non-exclusive.

Mr. MacDavid suggested I contact Vera Dineen, Town Clerk in Cornwall for the particular CGS that applies to swearing in and terms of Cable Television Advisory Council members.

Upon a motion by Mrs. Knox, seconded by Mr. Dunn, the Council unanimously adjourned the meeting at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Lucille A. Paige". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name of the signatory.

Lucille A. Paige, Secretary

Approved as corrected at the March 11, 2010 meeting

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 Donavan, 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

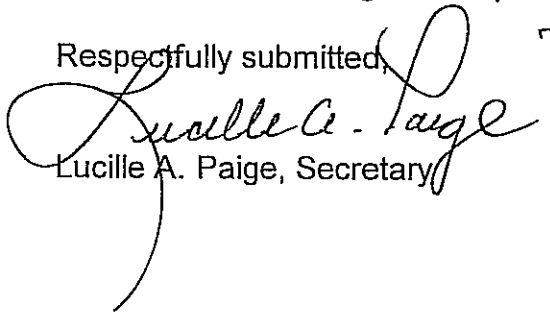
report involves rates, controls, price levels, compression levels, channel frequencies, and carrier identification per channel.

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, reading "Lucille A. Paige". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned over the printed name of the signatory.

Lucille A. Paige, Secretary

CABLE TELEVISION ADVISORY COUNCIL
Thursday, June 24, 2010

The regular meeting of the Cable Television Advisory Council of Litchfield, was held on Thursday, June 24, 2010, at 7:00 p.m. at the Sullivan Senior Center, Torrington, CT.

A quorum was seated: Stephen Simonin, Chairman, Litchfield; John Willink, Litchfield; John Angevine, Warren; Gerry Crowley, Torrington Board of Education; John Luciano, Torrington; Bernard Harrington, Goshen; Lucille Paige, Torrington. Absent: Diane Knox, Litchfield; Andrew MacDavid, Cornwall; Jeff Dunn, Thomaston; Chris Cunningham, Watertown.

Also present from Cablevision: Jennifer Young, Michael Chowanec, and Adam Falk.

Mr. Simonin called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Mr. Harrington moved and Mr. Luciano Seconded a motion to proceed with "Cable TV Advisory Council" Website. Motion unanimous.

Upon a motion by Mr. Willink, seconded by Mr. Harrington, the minutes of the March 11, 2010 meeting were unanimously approved as submitted.

Mr. Peter Tyzenski, of Morris asked about the additional set top boxes that are now required and the elimination of the channels.

Ms. Susan Fox, Torrington commented on the required boxes and the costs therein.

Jeff Linell, Watertown commented on the poor picture quality, problems he incurred with installation of set top boxes and the loss of access to channel featuring local sports teams.

John and Marion Irwin, Litchfield, asked if a TV that does not require the set top box be purchased, the costs of the boxes and loss of channels.

Mr. Jeff (?), Goshen asked if there a box or apparatus that allows customers to switch back to analog broadcasting.

Mr. Simonin explained how television signals (utility) with set top boxes were a "right" to the people, yet DPUC nor FCC has regulations in place to address the problems cited by the audience at this meeting. He urged people to go online to the DPUC website to read the postings for more information. Mr. Simonin reported on the State Advisory Council meeting held recently in New Britain. He urged those in attendance to contact their state and federal congressional people to get standards on the books for protection of the people. He explained the petition that has been drafted and what is outlined for legislative consideration. Mr. Falk, from Cablevision, did not believe that they were only using 20% of the transport for digital TV. He was invited to return with the 2010 proof of performance section that was deleted from the previous year's report. With this specific report, all can review it in detail with the goal of eliminating any outstanding questions regarding same.

Mr. Harrington felt the petition and its contents needs more explanation, perhaps an extra meeting(s). He reiterated that each town within the franchise needs to appoint/send more representation to these meetings in order to get the attention of DPUC, legislators.

Mr. Willink stated that each set top box is large and using one for each TV in a household is problematic. A small kitchen TV cannot accommodate a large set top box; three or four boxes per household should render a discount.

Mr. & Mrs. Irwin asked if some type of "bulk service" going into an institution such as Geer Village is possible.

Mr. Simonin will compose a letter to DPUC; e-mail it to all members before sending for their approval.

Upon a motion by Mr. Willink, seconded by Mr. Luciano, the entire Council will serve as nominating committee. Motion passed unanimously.

Upon a motion by Ms. Paige, seconded by Mr. Crowley, Stephen Simonin was nominated to serve as Chairman. Motion unanimous

Upon a motion by Ms. Paige, seconded by Mr. Angevine, John Luciano was nominated to serve as Vice Chairman. Motion unanimous.

Upon a motion by Mr. Simonin, seconded by Mr. Willink, Lucille Paige was nominated to serve as Secretary. Motion unanimous.

Upon a motion by Mr. Simonin, seconded by Mr. Willink, Diane Knox was nominated to serve as Treasurer. Motion Unanimous.

Hearing no further nominations, nominations for officers for 2010-2011 were closed. Voting for those who have been nominated will be held at the September 9th meeting.

The next meeting of this Council will be held THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2010, 7:00 p.m.

The meeting was declared adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lucille A. Paige, Secretary

Approved as corrected at the September 9, 2010 meeting.

Cable Television Advisory Council (Litchfield)
Tuesday, September 9, 2010

A regular meeting of the Cable Television Advisory Council of Litchfield was held on September 9, 2010, at 7:00 p.m., at the Sullivan Senior Center, Torrington, CT 06790. A quorum was seated: Chairman, Steven Simonin, Litchfield; John Luciano, Lucille Paige, Torrington; Jeff Dunn, Thomaston; John Willink, Litchfield; Gerry Crowley, Torrington Board of Education; Diane Knox, Litchfield; Bernie Harrington, Goshen; Chris Anderson, Torrington.

Also attending: Jennifer Young, Cablevision, Inc.

Mr. Simonin called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Upon a motion by Mrs. Knox, seconded by Mr. Willink, the agenda was approved as submitted.

Upon a motion by Mr. Willink, seconded by Mr. Luciano, the minutes of the June 24, 2010 meeting were approved as corrected. Mrs. Knox abstained.

Mr. Donald Heuschkel, Torrington asked about a Cable TV Council website and what the "charge" is of the Cable TV Advisory Council. Ombudsman for subscribers/public to DPUC, but have no regulatory powers. Mr. Heuschkel recommended legislation be passed to empower the Advisory Council and that he had had conversations with Sen. Liberman's office and Rep. Michelle Cook.

Mr. Harrington had correspondence regarding residents. Residents of Workman Apts. had problems with different charges on their Cablevision bills. Ms. Young of Cablevision will investigate.

Mrs. Knox reported that new releases and petitions should be dropped off at individual Town Halls within the franchise.

Mr. Simonin gave details of his conversations and correspondence with the FCC, US legislators. Any action must go to and come from the Federal level.

A representative from the League of Women's Voters took issue with the "quality" of programs on Public Access Channel 5. Asked how to get tapes to Cable Channel 5. Discussed public funding for these public access channels. They endeavor to contact people from each town in the franchise to open up public access to televise various town meetings. Mrs. Young (Cablevision) will send them information how to do this.

Upon a motion by Mr. Dunn, seconded by Mr. Luciano, the meeting dates for 2011 were approved via the Secretary to cast one vote.

Mrs. Knox reported a balance in the treasury: \$897.76, from which a motion was made by Ms. Paige, seconded by Mr. Willink, to unanimously approve the Treasurer's report.

Mr. Anderson reported that a Website Committee be formed with a nominal cost for a domain (.com). Each town in the franchise will be asked to create a "link" for their town.

Mr. Dunn reported disappointment that analog was formally dropped and that a \$5.00 charge was passed on to subscribers who pay their Cablevision bill via credit card (for cost of using a person). Also he still takes complaints from his townspeople about the cost of the required "boxes" w/digital.

Mr. Crowley reported that the Torrington BOE uses "boxes" and some other schools do also. Mr. Harrington reported that in contacting the BOE's in each of the towns regarding representation on the Council, he's received only three replies. Mr. Luciano spoke about Planet Fitness and satellite TV. Mr. Willink reported disappointment in that small kitchen TV sets are unable to accommodate the big size required "boxes" to get digital. Mr. Simonin strongly urged Cablevision to provide one box that is able to service multiple TV's in one household. He also expressed his frustration in working with the Cablevision TV repairman when he lost channels when Cablevision switched over from analog to digital. Mr. Crowley spoke about public access, Channel 5 being put "on demand". Mr. Willink spoke about live video on computers.

Upon a motion by Mrs. Knox, seconded by Ms. Paige, the Council adjourned the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lucille A. Paige
Secretary