

**CITY OF CORTLAND
CABLE COMMISSION
Monday, July 19, 2010**

Present: Richard Menapace, Chair; John Nagelschmidt, Deputy Chair; Jim Forshee, Lisa Kahle, Sharon Stevans, Kevin Williams, Commissioners; and Vince Minnella, ex-officio member; Barbara Bergeron, Secretary

Guests: David Whalen, Time Warner representative; Carol McTague, NYS Public Service Commission representative, and Susan Feiszli, City of Cortland Mayor

Chair Menapace called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM. He welcomed newly commissioned Lisa Kahle and guests David Whalen and Carol McTague. He then asked those present to introduce themselves.

Commissioner Jim Forshee made a motion to adopt the May 24, 2010, noting they were very complete, concise and exquisite. Commissioner Sharon Stevans seconded the motion and the motioned passed.

Chair Menapace then asked for a review of Section 16 Public, Educational and Governmental (PEG) Access Channels. Mr. Whalen stated he was still looking at previous versions and the biggest change from the original he noted was \$150,000 capital improvement to \$24,000.

Chair Menapace advised sections A) and B) were the same as previous contract, but sections C), D), and E) and the rest were all new language with Appendix C "Peg Equipment" listing the equipment requested in the amount of \$24,000.

Mr. Whalen asked about staffing and it was confirmed Melanie _____ is the single staff person working nights and is flexible with hours. He noted most of the contract language is FCC required. He suggested PEG seemed to be the biggest concern. He advised public access has a place; some good, some bad. Public doesn't always look at this.

Commissioner Forshee noted there is interest in council meetings, June dairy parade, school sports events. Mr. Whalen asked the commission where they were trying to go with public access. Ms. McTague suggested it might be helpful for Mr. Whalen to know what PEG has been and how important it is to Cortland. Commissioner Forshee advised PEG is important to Cortland. Back in 1970 into the 1980's, he worked with a club at Cortland High School (CHS). Programs on Channel 2 were done to avoid paper ("Cortland Standard") bias. At one point there was too much programming, so re-contracted a second channel—all paid by CHS. Time Warner Cable did not pay for any equipment and the channel ran 24 hours. Programs consisted of school concerts, meet the candidates, sports, meetings of Common Council, Cortland County Legislative, Town of Cortlandville. TWC did community round table and meet the candidates if CHS didn't. Both worked with each other, co-existed the last 27 years or so. Local channel 2 had a server. More programming was limited by equipment.

Commissioner Stevans noted there were some tripods held together by duck tape. She and Mr. Minnella produced TWC programs while Commissioner Forshee produced at CHS with equipment that was old. There are a few other producers such as Cornell Co-operative Extension and some churches that do their own programs. Mr. Minnella noted SUNY Cortland would funnel programs to Channel 2, but no longer. President Bitterbaum has shown some interest to provide programming, and SUNY Cortland has their own production capabilities.

Commissioner Stevans advised a needs assessment survey as done. Taped council meetings for example, people let them know when it is not on.

Commissioner Forshee suggested TWC had given Binghamton High School equipment and Mr. Whalen confirmed this happened but the equipment was not put to use.

Mr. Minnella noted it was beyond TWC as there is no advertisement and Melanie trains in her studio. There is a desire needed by non-profits who need a lot of help to do productions and know how to use equipment. Why not more programs?...because people don't know how to proceed and are intimidated by the equipment. Mr. Whalen suggested a need for a one-time producer or workshop to train people in logistics, power connections, lighting, etc. Going out in the field is not Melanie's job.

Mr. Minnella suggested items noted in Section 16 are job responsibilities for someone to do these items. This is a job description.

Commissioner Forshee restated CHS working with TWC for about 28 years. Cortland has not dropped the ball as the equipment is being used. Mr. Whalen suggested reaching out to Ithaca for an out sourcing person. A second full time person would be very expensive. Commissioner Forshee asked, "How much interaction with Ithaca?" and Mr. Whalen responded by suggesting grant writing similar to what's being done in Binghamton College and getting kids off the street. Trainer to use equipment, non-profits time and money is a major strain. He also suggested 30-second spots and workshops.

Commissioner Forshee asked where was the nearest server was located for tape, PSA and drop in. Mr. Whalen advised servers are in Binghamton and Syracuse. Commissioner Forshee noted we wouldn't need high volume, perhaps 100 hours.

Mr. Whalen asked what sources were used in creating Appendix C. Commissioner Stevans stated she, Mr. Minnella and Commissioner Forshee worked together creating the list in June (2010). Commissioner Forshee had researched the internet and other sources for pricing. Mr. Whalen suggested TWC buys a lot of equipment and perhaps can buy cheaper. Commissioner Forshee noted there were two high-end items: live switcher and UHF wireless system. Mr. Minnella said in the past, a switcher had been used; and if approved, a trainer would also be needed.

Mr. Whalen stated the itemized list was very helpful. Commissioner Stevans noted this list was a "bare bones" list and that the original list had been scaled back. Commissioner Forshee

suggested a facilitator was needed to generate contacts to make more programs and train those who are using the equipment.

Mr. Whalen advised even part time positions (15 hours) get benefits and TWC figures about an additional 40% of salary to cover cost of benefits.

Mr. Minnella asked Mr. Whalen how TWC values public access. He replied that there were two things: 1) it's a real pain in the neck and 2) it's something the competition doesn't do; i.e. dish companies do not have local channels, some competitors do not have phone package, Time Warner Sports or Your News Now. Things to consider volume owed to commission and value to customers. What's reasonable and what's good for the community? Ideas are sound. Money-- how many subscribers per year?

Ms. McTague expressed concern about some channels being deleted. Mr. Whalen replied, no, but that some channels were being moved around to make room for more high definition channels. Digital signal goes to your home when you ask for it, not a signal opened to all customers. He suggested about 80% customers now have digital boxes.

Commissioner Forshee raised his concern with the channel switching 4 to 6 to 21 and he worries about PEG moving to higher numbers such as 121, 123. He advised many TV's in this area are not equipped with high numbers. Mr. Whalen stated there were no plans in place to move lower channels now. He added that once a higher level of customers get switched to digital, then perhaps moving channels.

Chair Menapace asked Mr. Whelan why the body of Section 16 was crossed out by TWC's lawyers, and the commission suggests stay with old contract.

Mr. Minnella asked for the following corrections be made to Section 16:

Section C, 2nd paragraph to read, "Funds may be expanded for new equipment, repair **and/or** replacement (within 30 days of existing equipment **failure**."

Section E, 1st paragraph, 3rd sentence, "Additional, **in** support...".

Section E, action #3 should read, "Link, support, and schedule volunteer producers **for** entities...."

Chair Menapace then reviewed Appendix A, noting the following changes:

- 1-15 are **correct** in current contract
- 16-22 are **added**
- 17 Meldrim (City Park) does **has a drop** paid by CHS
- 18 **Delete** East Side Community Center
- 25 Cortland Court House Park **has a drop** outside of Court House; CHS was the first group in New York State to record live sentencing. Currently receives a signal; at one time could get out; modulation change now to digital

Commissioner Forshee noted that there have been requests to do live programming of the June Dairy Parade at the intersection of Main St. and Court St and also of the First Night New Year's Eve Celebration at the intersection of Main St. and Port Watson St.

Regarding Appendix B, the following are old PEG connections:

5	40
7	43
10	45
12	48
15	52
18	54
20	56
26	58
29	60
31	62
34	64
36	69
38	71

All others listed may not be old and are possibly new since last contract. Mr. Whalen will check on these.

Mr. Whalen to also check:

- 23 (Cortland Fire Department Armory Station) may have cable drop
- 46 Cortland Free Library may have a drop

Mr. Whalen asked what Lime Hollow was and was it in the boonies. Commissioner Forshee noted lines go by there.

Commissioner Stevans remarked to Mr. Whalen that the Commission had worked hard on these contract items trimming to what is really needed. Mr. Whalen said he would check the language and see why so much of Section #16 had been ruled out with red. He questioned how mobile the laser receivers were at the two intersections noted earlier. Commissioner Forshee advised perhaps a pole with microwave access on Main Street would work.

Mr. Whalen again noted the contract should address 1) how much cost is involved, 2) how many subscribers, 3) what are we doing compared to around the state. Local designation public access is programmed here.

Ms. McTague thanked Mr. Whalen for traveling (from the Binghamton area) up to Cortland. Commissioner Forshee invited Mr. Whalen to tour Cortland High School.

Chair Menapace thanked Ms. McTague coming from the Albany area and those that attended this evening.

City of Cortland Cable Commission

Meeting July 19, 2010

Mr. Whalen asked who the point person would, who should he be contacting and he was advised Chair Menapace. He noted PEG is the biggest thing.

Meeting adjourned at 8:16 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Bergeron