



# Vernon Area Cable Advisory Council

## VERNON AREA CABLE ADVISORY COUNCIL Minutes of Meeting dated October 12, 2022 CVC Community Room

RECEIVED  
VERNON TOWN CLERK  
22 OCT 20 PM 3:53

Attending Members: Paul Batterson, Tolland Representative; Elaine Buchardt, Andover; Justin Wayne, Ellington

Attending Guests: Nick Lavigne, CVC Executive Director; Matt Skane, Manager Government and Regulatory Affairs for Comcast

- 1. Call to Order and Approval of April 27, 2022 Meeting Minutes** - Paul Batterson, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. Elaine Buchardt made a motion, seconded by Paul Batterson to accept the April 27, 2022 meeting minutes as written. All were in favor. Motion carried.
- 2. Comcast Report** – Matt Skane provided an update since their last meeting. He discussed the announcement by Comcast NBC Universal along with the Universal Orlando Foundation that it will donate \$2 million to support relief and recovery efforts in Florida as a result of Hurricane Ian. Notable efforts include Comcast’s opening of more than 200,000 Xfinity Wi-Fi hotspots for anyone to use as well as the creation of an On Demand destination (by simply saying “Hurricane Ian” into the Xfinity Voice Remote) to access the latest recovery and response news on X1 and Flex.

Matt noted that October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month and that Comcast, for the eighth year in a row, has been named a Best Place to work for Disability Inclusion. He outlined Comcast’s expanded Design training and the accessibility standards the company has implemented. He also noted that Comcast NBCUniversal has been named by Great Places to Work and Fortune as one of its Best Workplaces for Women for the 6<sup>th</sup> consecutive year.

Lastly, Matt discussed Comcast NBCUniversal’s recent launch of its comprehensive bilingual voter information initiatives. They are bringing back the Election Central destination to connect customers, viewers, and employees to important election news in both English and Spanish on Comcast’s entertainment platforms. New this year, visitors to Election Central can say “Plan Your Vote” in English or Spanish into their voice remote to launch a QR code that connects them to NBC News’ Plan Your Vote interactive tool which provides voters with everything they need to know about mail-in, early, in-person voting and other key election related information.

Paul Batterson said he has been getting promotions on cell phone coverage and asked what that is about. Matt Skane said if you have Xfinity internet, then you can get it. Justin Wayne said it is very good as you can get unlimited voice and text messaging and pay for only how much you use. Matt said you can also put it on your own device. It’s a very good program from a mobile standpoint. The VACAC also discussed the overall Comcast umbrella and its corporate structure.

- 3. CVC Report** – Nick Lavigne provided an update on its latest Pegpetia Grant which was originally coming in lower because they have been made available to more groups. He said at one point they were down to \$27,000. However, he said he called for awarding them on a tiered system which ended up being adopted. When the final grants were released, CVC’s grant was increased to about \$44,000. With the funding they will be getting some new items including Amazon fire sticks and Roku. They also got some Cinema camera gear. He said they would like to hold a class a few times a year with this new equipment.

Nick said they also got a stills camera and they will be getting a system to import slides and film strips. They also got a portable system including a large portable switcher that can run off either battery or mains. They can also livestream with it. He said they’ve used it twice now—at the Ellington Farmers Market and a synagogue event.

Nick said they have encountered some problems with the switchover from People’s United Bank to M&T Bank, and they could not access their bank for about a month. They are working on resolving the problems.

After two years of Covid, Nick said they will once again be doing an in-person meet and greet with Santa Claus. However, it will be more scheduled than it has been in the past to minimize crowds. They will also be doing an interview with Santa and Mrs. Claus on November 10<sup>th</sup>.

Nick said they have also filmed some farmers markets and Melanie has been doing some outreach to area schools about holding classes at CVC. He said there has been interest from one school in having a journalism class. He said they are also starting to see more people coming back in for training on the new studio equipment. Notably, their Rock this Town program has been consistent with four more bands scheduled to come in before the end of the year.

Justin Waine discussed the outreach by Melanie to Ellington High School and noted some of the challenges (both interest-related and technological) at his school with establishing an after school Video Club. He discussed his approach to teaching Tech classes during the day. Nick said the main goal of the email to the schools was to make students aware of CVC and the fact that they can come there after school to learn more. He said they may need to reword their email or try a different approach when trying to interest students in the future.

- 4. Community Access Funding** – As a member of the CVC Board of Directors and State Video Advisory Committee, Elaine Buchardt discussed funding for Public Access programming and the fact that as more and more people move away from traditional cable, their funding is slowly eroding. She said they tried to change the wording in the law to make the fees applicable to any service that comes “over the wire” as opposed to just cable programming. This would then expand the fee to internet users. However, the effort failed and they got some pushback from legislators. Elaine said right now they are working on the education phase of what they are trying to do. They need also to make people understand that if you have both cable and internet, you would only get one fee. You would not get double-billed.

Nick Lavigne said they are working on a packet that explains to the legislature what PEGPETIA grants are. He said the reason the last bill failed was that the language wasn’t quite right. They used the word “streaming” when they should have referred to “internet.” They need to explain that it is just one fee to users. He said it stopped being a bill and became a study, where they need to explain what PEGPETIA is. The study also provides a list of possible funding solutions to the problem.

5. **Financial Report** – Paul Batterson provided a handout showing the current balance and recent expenditures from the VACAC account. Currently they have \$5,218.50 in the account. Paul noted he eliminated the website. There was consensus to offer scholarships again next year.
6. **Scheduling of Next Meeting** – The Council discussed when to hold the next meeting and there was agreement to set it tentatively for Wednesday, April 12 at 7:00 p.m. in the CVC Community Room.
7. **Other Matters/Adjournment** – Paul Batterson recommended increasing the Recording Secretary's per meeting payment to \$130 effective with this meeting. Elaine Buchardt made a motion to approve the recommendation, seconded by Justin Waine. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Elaine Buchardt made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Justin Waine. All were in favor. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Annie Gentile  
Recording Secretary