

Connecticut State-wide Video Advisory Council

April 22, 2021 - Regular Meeting

Via WebEx

Minutes

The Statewide Video Advisory Council meeting was held on Thursday, April 22, 2021 and called to order at 8:00PM by Chair Merja Lehtinen.

In attendance were the following members: Merja Lehtinen, Michael Meinz, Alan Budkofsky, Elaine Buchardt, Marco Iacoviello, Stephen Simonin, Peaches Quinn, Stephen Fuest, Philip Markuszka

Members Absent: Alex Fraser, Gregory Davis, Stewart Strelzer, Russell Gomes, Wayne Church,

Providers: Brad Palazzo (Comcast)

The minutes from the February 25, 2021 meeting were approved. Motion made by Elaine Buchardt and seconded by Alan Budkofsky. Motion passed with two abstentions.

Treasurers Report:

- Alan Budkofsky gave the treasury report. The current balance is \$43,223.51.

Chairwoman's Report / Correspondence:

- Chairwoman Merja Lehtinen read a letter from a Frontier consumer expressing extreme frustration with Frontier relating to dropped channels, price increases, customer service responsiveness and other related complaints. Merja indicated that this letter reflected the same complaints that she continually hears from customers.
- Comcast and Xfinity and Cablevision Altice USA customers are also complaining about dropped channels and signals and lack of visibility of the Customer Service phone numbers on the bill.
- Request that providers put Customer Service numbers in big bold type on the first page of each bill.

Provider Reports:

- Brad Palazzo (Comcast) reported that Comcast celebrated ten years of the Internet Essentials program. He also reported that Internet speeds have been increased for program members. Comcast's low-income Internet program has helped many Connecticut families get connected during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, WiFi hotspots have been installed in several communities.
- Alan Budkofsky raised a concern about non-profits being charged sales tax by Comcast.
- Elaine Buchardt raised a concern about the visibility and content of the Cable TV Advisory information on the cable bill. With many no longer receiving a paper bill, the information is only available by viewing the PDF version of the bill on the billing web page.

Committee Reports:

Technology:

- Stephen Simonin has been working with area towns to get Internet connectivity where none exists. When the towns were exploring installing their own fiber, Stephen suggested they work with the cable companies to have them extend their network. As part of this effort, Stephen asked Comcast for Proof of Performance reports but was unable to get the reports he wanted.

Legal:

- Peaches Quinn reported that CB-4 Data Privacy and Net Neutrality bill was dead. Governors Bill 6442 – An act concerning equitable access to broadband is continuing to progress. Members should let their representatives know that they support the bill.

Membership:

- Michael Mainz reported on lack of attendance by one member and a provider. He asked that members review the SVAC member list to make corrections about themselves and their regional advisory council chair.

Old Business:

- None

New Business:

- Stephen Fuest made a motion to move the meetings to 8:00PM (via WebEx) or 7:00PM (In Person) on the Fourth Wednesday of even months except for December when the meeting would be on the second Wednesday. Marco Iacoviello seconded. Passed unanimously. Remaining Meetings for 2021 are June 23, August 25, October 27, and December 8.

Motion to adjourn by Marco Iacoviello and seconded by Stephen Fuest seconded.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael Mainz
Vice-Chair