



## ***Board of Directors Regular Meeting***

**June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020, at 6:00 pm**

**LCATV**

**63 Creek Farm Plaza, Suite 3, Colchester, Vermont 05446**

**or**

**[www.uberconference.com/lcatv](http://www.uberconference.com/lcatv)**

**Board of Directors in Attendance:** Greg Drew (GD), Curt Taylor (CT), Dirk Reith (DR), Bob Shea (BShea) Dick Pecor (DP)

**Staff in Attendance:** Kevin Christopher (KC)

This Uberconference meeting had several technical glitches that sent two board members out of the meeting for short spells. KC plans to switch to the Zoom meeting platform for future meetings.

**1. Call to Order by DP at 6:06 PM.**

**2. Approve Agenda**

**Motion to approve agenda by CT, 2<sup>nd</sup> by DP, passed unanimously.**

**3. Public / Board Member / Staff Comment**

BShea asked that meeting material be sent out as hard copy to those that request same. KC stated he would do so.

**4. Approve Minutes of 5/12/2020 Meeting**

**Motion to approve by CT, 2<sup>nd</sup> by DR, passed unanimously**

**5. Executive Director's Report**

KC stated that LCATV covered two of the three high school graduations in the area. That entailed live streaming the events throughout the day. The considerable amount of content will be edited down to a digestible length.

LCATV has cancelled all summer camps. Stephanie Soules is working with RETN in Burlington to offer a virtual camp experience that will be launched before the end of June.

Channels 15, 16 and 17 are no longer active. They went dark on May 28<sup>th</sup> so now LCATV channels are in the 4-digit tier.

Milton had a school budget re-vote and LCATV confirmed to the public that the drive-through voting was resulting in ballots actually being deposited in the ballot box. To do that LCATV provided live broadcast of

town officials running the ballots through the machine. This was a 12-hour live stream providing transparency and accountability to the voting process.

Vermont Access Network (VAN) has scheduled a virtual meeting with ComCast for the first one-on-one about the statewide contract framework.

## **6. Treasurer's Report**

The treasurer (Jeff Hathaway - JH) was not in attendance. KC presented the financials. Current total assets are around \$858,000, significantly more than this time last year. Current liabilities are \$326.00.

KC stated that ComCast is reporting lower earning than normal. LCATV may see a marked difference in the next funding check (mid-august) as compared to the same time last year.

JH has raised the issue of a financial management policy review. KC commented that it has been at least nine-years since that policy was reviewed. There are several portions that are outdated. Any discussion of LCATV's financial management policy should be warned as an agenda item for a future meeting. DP agreed that this was a good idea, the board concurred, and it will be done. The existing policy can be found on the LCATV website on the *About* page. KC will also distribute the policy to Board members.

## **7. Old Business**

### **a. COVID-19 Response Plan**

KC reported that as of today (June 15<sup>th</sup>) LCATV studios are officially open for business in a limited sense. People can take out equipment using curbside pickup, though there have been no requests so far. There are restrictions when people enter the building. Staff is still working from home as much as possible with some members out in the field.

In March the Board approved three months of stipends for field producers. Most of field producers are receiving that stipend. Some have chosen to take Unemployment Benefits instead. We are now reaching the end of that 3-month period. KC would like some guidance regarding how to proceed. There have been several requests for coverage of in-person meetings and there are events on July 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>. Business is picking up and soon there will be a need for personnel other than Buddy Meilleur and/or Michael Wright. LCATV will need to bring back field some production staff. That presents several thorny questions and decisions.

DP asked if any field producers expressing an interest in coming back to work. KC replied that we have seven field producers. He has been in touch with them and three are interested as returning to work, one of those three is very enthusiastic. Three others are not comfortable with returning right now and one has not been heard from.

Because future staffing needs are not known it is hard to justify continuing the stipends that were meant to "soften the blow" of the pandemic's economic impact. The question was raised as to whether those on Unemployment Insurance benefits would be able to continue to receive such benefits if there was a minimal amount of work available. LCATV does not foresee the need to seven field producers in the near future. The question is how to transition into a time of potentially permanent reduced staffing needs.

DP asked if we still have the HR consultants available for consultation. KC replied that NFP is still available.

The Board determined that NFP should be consulted and options presented to the Board. KC summed up the discussion by saying that the Board is planning to terminate the stipends sometime soon. KC will get in

touch with NFP and report back. He stated that there may be some board action required so a short emergency meeting of the Board may be called in the near future.

**b. FCC Status, Action and Planning.**

KC stated that the FCC ruling is currently being litigated in the 6<sup>th</sup> circuit court and will proceed until late October. He does not expect a verdict until late winter of this year or early spring of 2021. In the meantime, there is no evidence of cable operators taking advantage of the new rule. They may wait until there is a court decision before doing so.

**c. Legislative Update**

KC reported that the bill (S.318) is still alive, but not receiving a lot of attention at this point.

**d. Service-for-Hire Work**

KC said he will remove this item from the agenda.

**8. New Business**

**a. Financial Management Policy**

KC will warn this as a discussion on a future agenda.

**b. Cable Line extension Fund Proposal**

This item is a proposal by DP to set aside \$150,000 of LCATV funds to encourage the extension of cable service to selected portions of the LCATV service area. He suggests that the funds be used to subsidize subscribers that would otherwise not be able to afford broadband service. The increase in subscribers would make such cable extensions economically feasible. The subsidies would be offered to locations with a higher density of users within the following groups: low-income families, families with students, remote workers, businesses, telemedicine users etc.

DP has requested information from most of the residence in his neighborhood regarding their need for better internet service. Thirty-five individual properties on four roads reported minimal broadband (DSL). He found nine children, five teachers, and businesses that require internet service.

During DP's explanation of the project technical problems removed him from the meeting for a short time. During that time, the remaining members discussed his proposal. CT expressed interest in the project but wondered how much work it would entail and who would do that work. He also expressed some concern that, at this point, the project would mostly benefit those in DP's neighborhood. KC expressed the opinion that there would be significant public good from the project.

When DP was able to join the meeting again, the discussion continued. He explained that he might try to get the project off the ground by contacting school superintendents to assess the broadband needs of the areas they serve.

BShea asked about federal or state funds or pressure to do such a project.

When asked by KC about a timeline for such a project, DP responded that this is a very slow process. He said he hardly expects much to happen before fall.

DP closed out the discussion of his proposal by asking board members to read his proposal as provided for this meeting and think about it. He will perhaps contact a school superintendent.

**9. Internet Security Assessment**

This item has not seen any progress.

**10. Board Recruitment**

This item is on hold.

**11. Executive Session**

There was no need for an executive session

**12. Adjournment**

**Motion to adjourn at 7:13 PM by CT, 2<sup>nd</sup> by DP, passed unanimously**

Respectfully submitted on July 1st, 2020 (DRAFT) by Curt Taylor – Secretary  
Approved at July 6<sup>th</sup> 2020 meeting with slight revisions.