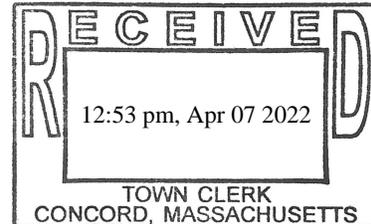


**Minutes 220210 - PEG Access Advisory Committee Concord, MA  
February 10, 2022**

**Meeting - Date, Time, Location.** Thursday, February 10, 2022 Virtual Meeting, 1:00 PM  
Video Link and Transcript: YouTube  
Email: [paac@concordma.gov](mailto:paac@concordma.gov).

[Concord PEG Access Advisory Committee February 10, 2022](#)



1. **Roll Call.** Chair Karlen Reed called the meeting to order at 1:07 PM, and announced that it was being recorded. Present were Ms. Reed, Vince Carlson, and Scott Hopkinson. Absent were Court Booth and Cory Atkins, possibly joining later. Karlen Reed declared that a quorum was present. Also present were Mark Pauley (MMN Production Manager), Erin Stevens (Public Information Mgr.), Kate Hodges (Asst. Town Mgr.), Mark Howell (Fiber Broadband Taskforce), (Matt Beren MMN), and Carole Cushing (COA Observer).
2. **Future Meetings and Minutes Jan 6, 2022**
  - Jan 6 PAAC Minutes. There were no comments on the Minutes. Karlen Reed called for a vote. The Minutes were approved unanimously by those present.
  - Meetings: Thurs Mar 3 (operating budget), Apr 7 (cable consultant RFQ), May 5 (PAAC awards) and June 2.
  - As discussed earlier, the Apr 7 meeting could be a hybrid Zoom meeting based on member feedback and technical feasibility. Scott Hopkinson mentioned a preference for evening meetings when possible based on his work schedule. Karlen Reed noted that the PEG committee now has an email address: [paac@concordma.gov](mailto:paac@concordma.gov). It goes to Karlen Reed and Erin Stevens
3. **MMN Update (Erin/Mark/Kate)**
  - Erin announced that MMN is interviewing for 2 new videographers (part time positions)
  - Scott Hopkinson asked about the YouTube posting process for Zoom committee meetings generally - it sometimes seems delayed. Mark Pauley noted that there is only light editing, mostly to identify when a Zoom meeting starts after attendees log-in and chat informally. Usually meetings are processed in 2 days. Select Board and FinCom meetings are posted the following day. The responsibility of the meeting host, usually the committee chair, to notify the Town Manager's Zoom administrator was discussed. Karlen Reed volunteered as an action item to raise the topic at the next Chair's Breakfast meeting. Mark Pauley stated that there is now an MMN email address for submitting Zoom meeting video files: [mmnzoom2youtube@concordma.gov](mailto:mmnzoom2youtube@concordma.gov)
  - Kate Hodges reviewed the MMN Enterprise Budget numbers, noting that some edits were still pending. On the capital status she mentioning that since PEG has "special revenue" legal accounting status, the capital expenditures are stated differently within the CMLP Enterprise Fund. It looks like MMN is operating at a loss, which is not the case. On the

operating revenue side, projections are estimated conservatively at just under \$400,000. Variables here include Comcast payments (which have been declining slowly for several years), an item for the Comcast contract renewal consultant, and possible expanded service requests from Carlisle.

- Mark Howell asked about the reasoning behind the 1.5% Payment In Lieu of Franchise (PILOF). Kate sketched the general history of CCTV/MMN. Following the 2017 founding of MMN, the former Town Manager, along with Town advisors estimated the impact of declining Comcast revenue on the future of MMN. Early estimates of a 24 month 3% decline gradually dropped to 1.5% when MMN expenses were analyzed in detail, particularly when staff salaries were aligned with Town salary norms. All PAAC committee members and Mark Howell agreed that the review process had been open, and that there was no immediate threat to MMN stability. However, because of the impact of Covid-19, the press for fiber completion, and the general passage of time, all agreed with Kate that it was timely to consider a general review by PAAC and possibly the Select Board. Karlen Reed stated that she would put it on the agenda for the next meeting when Court Booth and Cory Atkins could also weigh in.
- On Capital budgeting vs operations, Karlen Reed asked about pending equipment needs for the schools, particularly Ripley, and the Harvey Wheeler Council on Aging. Kate said that the post-pandemic Ripley review was still pending. On Harvey Wheeler there are plans to upgrade room(s) there for general committee meeting space as well as the activities of COA. In the case of COA this will also include ADA upgrades from the Town budget rather than the PEG budget. Karlen stated that the purpose of the estimates to is to have a number estimate for the Comcast renewal of 2024.
- On the open MMN slot for an "education coordinator" Karlen Reed asked if that was still pending. Erin Stevens said it was, particularly for middle school and high school student training but the hiring date is still TBD.

[Kate Hodges excused herself due to another meeting request]

#### 4. **Comcast renewal update (Karlen) (town counsel report)**

- Karlen displayed an expanded contract timeline. She noted a December 21 2023 deadline in particular, as the Warrant submission deadline. This would be preceded by a needs assessment survey and public hearing. Statements made during the 2015 renewal process indicated that Town Meeting approval is not required. However Town counsel has recommended getting town meeting approval. There is also an issue about whether the contract itself must be included in the Warrant Article. The initial Comcast consultant RFQ discussion is coming up at the April 7 PAAC meeting; and on April 25 PAAC is scheduled to go before the Select Board to describe the contract renewal process. Scott Hopkinson asked whether an RFP was required and who negotiated the contract itself. Erin Stevens did not think an RFP was required. Karlen mentioned that the negotiating responsibilities could be discussed at the April 25 meeting.

#### 5. **Broadband update (Scott/Vince)**

- Scott (PAAC's representative on the Fiber Broadband Completion Taskforce):  
We're in the stage of developing a report. It is organized into three broad categories: (1) what places in town don't have fiber service, (2) what will it cost to address those services and (3) how Concord might pay for it. Part 1 is obtained from detailed GIS information. Mark Howell has actually done a fair amount of work on parsing that up and characterizing the different areas. There are different examples that are somewhat representative. Two very common ones are a homeowner's association or apartment owner such as on Keys road or at Concord Greene that are a barrier to deployment. Another one is areas that are adjacent to the edge of town or already have underground utilities, but have no facility for bringing fiber in. Part 2 is what is it going to cost?. We've looked into some alternatives. We think that there are some policy issues relating to homeowners and a third party, which is often a homeowner's association or the landlord of an apartment, that have to be negotiated. Where does funding come from for that? Then Part 3 is how does Concord pay for the fiber?. Basically there are a lot of homes in Concord that have the broadband passing in

front but do not take the service and would be lower cost once you generate more capital revenue which in turn can be invested in reaching these more difficult ones. We're trying to have this report in a draft form in April. So we're on a pretty tight schedule.

- Vince mentioned an issue which may impact PEG and the Fiber Completion plans: The FCC approved an Order effective January 2019 allowing prospective Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to use poles within the municipal jurisdiction of the local cable franchise authority. This would permit Verizon Wireless, for example, to string fiber on the poles in Concord for 5G backhaul or perhaps pole mounted antennas. The municipality cannot refuse access, but can negotiate location, technical details and expense payments. (A sort of reverse franchise fee.) Early legal challenges have favored the FCC Order. PAAC can probably check with the Mass Department of Telecommunications and Cable to see if and how this Order is being implemented in Massachusetts. Scott mentioned that there is "dark cable" underground wiring in various sections of Concord which might apply to the ISPs. Sudbury has also already taken advantage of the ARPA and Infrastructure money to fund Internet expansion.

## **6. Liaison Comments, Public Comments**

- Carole Cushing (COA Liaison) mentioned an issue about accessing the MMN network. She wanted to watch a Lincoln-Sudbury girls basketball game. She was instructed to go to sudburytv.com but that just led to a pull-down menu of PEG channels. The COA Feb Newsletter has a web address (URL) pointing to TV schedule. But is there a way to tell Concord residents who are reading without a live link how to watch the channels? Erin Stevens said that MMN now has a simple address - minuteman.media - that will bring up the schedule.
- Carole also asked about how people sign up for Comcast Internet Essentials. She thinks many COA members will be interested. Vince mentioned that Lauren Baretta and Ginger Quarles had started posting brochures in late 2019 and may have updated them after the COA re-opening. Scott Hopkinson mentioned that there is a moratorium for people who currently subscribe to Comcast. They cannot get Internet Essentials for 90 days if they have a current subscription to Comcast Internet. It is OK if they only subscribe to Comcast cable TV service.

## **7. Adjourn**

Karlen Reed called for public comments and having none, a motion to adjourn. It was approved unanimously by those members present.

Karlen Reed adjourned the meeting at 2:30 PM  
Submitted by Vincent Carlson, Clerk  
Approved on March 3, 2022