



**Portsmouth  
Cable Commission Meeting  
3:30 p.m. – November 1, 2007  
City Hall/City Manager’s Conference Room**

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The Portsmouth Cable Commission met on Thursday November 1, 2007 at 3:30 p.m.

The following were present:

John Gregg, Chairman  
Louis Vinciguerra, Commissioner  
Brian Gregg, Commissioner  
Kathy Pearce, Commissioner  
Nancy Beach  
Gary Lowe, Alternate Commissioner

Also present were Alan Brady, City of Portsmouth Webmaster and Suzanne Woodland, Assistant City Attorney.

- I. Call to Order** - Chairman John Gregg called the meeting to order at approximately 3:30 p.m.
- II. Approval of Minutes – October 4, 2007** - Voted to approve the minutes of the October 4, 2007 meeting. Motion passed.
- III. Other Items** – The chair referred to the letters sent to our two Senators and a separate letter to Comcast and Comcast’s reply. Today is the day that they move channel 45 which is gone but is not showing on channel 247 as yet. The Chair spoke with Customer Service who advised you need to have the box at \$3.95/month in order to step up to the 200 series or to have digital. They have taken Channel 247 and will make it available without having to step up to the next level of digital package. At \$51.00/month you can get channels that take you under 100 giving you the music channels and on screen capabilities to see the listings. In addition you will be able to see channel 247. Basic Cable Channels is \$51.00/month and will cost \$4.00/month more. This covers only part of New England. You need a converter box whether you have analog or digital. The Chair stated there is a digital starter that takes you up to 100 and digital classic gives you channels in the 200 range a lot of which are children’s programs and an ESPN classic. The bottom line is we received their letter and can either sit tight and wait for an answer from the Senators or continue to beat a dead horse. Kathy Pearce asked if there was a reason why the letter was only sent to the Senators and not the Representative. The Chair stated “perhaps an oversight.” The motion was to send letters to both Senators and Representatives.

The Chair asked the Committee if there was any other action you want to take or should we sit tight and move on?

Brian Gregg suggested sit tight and move on.

Kathy Pearce suggested doing something if we have not had a response from the Senators or representatives by the next meeting.

Suzanne Woodland will send the letter to the Representatives.

Suzanne Woodland gave an update of the Fair Point situation. The PUC should be in the process of closing the Verizon/Fair Point hearings. The testimony of the City of Portsmouth and other municipalities who participated was accepted including their concerns relating to fios fiber, video and construction issues. Felt the PC will issue a decision by the end of the year or January. The leadings are that the Commission will possibly approve the transaction subject to conditions including some changes in the financial transaction to try and give Fair Point a better start. There was a week and a half of testimony from a lot of financial experts. Residential customers are being represented by the office of Consumer Advocate. PSNH, Unitel, Granite State Electric did reach settlement agreements with Fair Point agreeing they would not contest the transfer. The electricians made it clear they were not able or interested in weighing in on whether the financial aspect was going to work as this requires experts. Verizon employees are opposed.

Louie Vinciguerra stated that they advertised that cash flow will be better.

Atty. Woodland stated that Terri Norelli, Speaker of the House basically took the position of not for, not against, but significant concerns primarily because of the financial nature of the transaction. Verizon is not making investments in the infrastructure that New Hampshire needs.

Louie Vinciguerra stated there are wires hanging down the poles, have been there for months coiled on the ground on Woodbury Ave. and corner of Woodlawn and Echo, wire dangling, does the City know it's there and who is suppose to wrap it up.

Suzanne Woodland will have someone from Public Works go there to take a look at it.

Brian Gregg informed the Committee of his trip with Alan Brady to Bedford, the New Hampshire Coalition Media. In the afternoon looked at Manchester Community Access Media. They checked to see what the latest developments are since last being there. They had a couple of representatives from Comcast at the meeting including Jay Somers' boss who feels Fair Point will be approved with conditions. There has never been a case where Fair Point rolled out video in areas where it's not already provided, but preserve it in places where it's already there. Fair Point has 300,000 lines around the country, the largest world provider. Comments of the Maine Public Advocate which are on record probably describe the problems that Fair Point will face fairly accurately. 1.6 lives are at stake in the deal. Another issue raised was the conversion to digital television. February 1, 2009 mandated by the 1996 Telecom Act. What will happen to those who have analog TV's when it switches over? The Federal Government set aside \$1.7 billion to institute a program to help with the transition which largely includes a \$40.00 voucher for a converter box for over the air digital to something you receive on your analog. The cable companies have pledged \$250 billion to help consumers become educated. New Hampshire capital expenditures, Comcast expended \$231 million. The Manchester facility has been developed a lot since the Commission was there.

Alan Brady stated they do not have the radio station.

MCAM gets 2% of the franchise fee which is \$300,000/year.

Alan Brady asked if the television studio should be put in the CIP again this year at 0 dollars and for FY10 put in \$30,000. The City Council voted to take it out for two years. The Chair asked if there was money if needed for Channel 22, or do we need to get money in there.

Alan Brady responded “yes” there would be funds available if something broke, the equipment purchased a couple of years ago should be good until FY ’10. We are not asking for any money, just reminding them that it exists and next year we will be asking for it. Mr. Brady presented the page in the CIP which basically is the same page as last year except FY’09 0 dollars with same terminology as last year.

**MOTION** made by Kathy Pearce to keep it in the CIP and trust Alan Brady and John for the rewording. Seconded by Nancy Beach. Motion passed.

Suzanne Woodland referred to a couple of people being interested in the FIOS service and was told by Verizon the reason they couldn’t deliver videos to Portsmouth was because it was being held up at City Hall. A gross misrepresentation and as a practical matter probably getting Verizon to do a better education job on their employees and Suzanne will send a letter reminding them that we are not the hold up. If we should receive more calls, let Suzanne know and we should consider whether there’s a way to get word out that the reason why Verizon is not delivering video in Portsmouth is not because something is being held up at City Hall, to the contrary, we would love to have competition.

The Chair explained there seems to be a change in their corporate business plan or strategy. At one point they were rolling out video all across the country and then decided not to roll out video in New England and to sell all their equipment in New England.

**MOTION** made by Louis Vinciguerra to go into non-public session. Seconded by Gary Lowe. Motion passed.

**IV. Non-Public Session (meeting with Legal Counsel) –**

**MOTION** made by Brian Gregg to go back into public session. Seconded by Kathy Pearce. Motion passed.

Next Meeting is scheduled for December 6, 2007.

**V. Adjournment - MOTION** made by Nancy Beach. Seconded by Louie Vinciguerra. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,  
Elaine E. Boucas, Recording Secretary