

Town of Wolfeboro Cable Franchise Committee

Meeting Minutes May 24, 2021 at 6:00 PM

Attendees: Jim Pineo, Beverly Woods, Paul O'Brien, David Wells, Timothy Goodwin, Brian Deshaies, and ABB reps - Nadine Heinen, William Newborg, Fran Bradley, Marc Sylvester, Jason Sieglinger

ABB reps shared a presentation with the committee, which they declined to have shared with the public at this time.

Marc Sylvester kicked off the presentation. He spoke about some points of interest that the Wolfeboro customers feel need some work. Wait time in the call queue has been a big issue. Graph shows wait times and abandoned calls dropped from Winter months to the Spring months and then started to climb again as snowbirds returned to the area. IVR handles a large volume of the calls.

IVR

- can pay bill
- box reset
- outage information
- text messaging will notify of outages and other tasks

ABB says they are improving their phone system by moving it to the cloud. In October they are looking at Mosaic Automated customer support. The ABB Chat program is manned 7/24. The bot functionality will look at billing, can look at service in the home, and provide status.

Around April leadership created new department Gov. Grants and Funding to help under-served areas. ABB says they will provide a \$50. discount to persons who qualify for the discount. Internet package available to families who had students who are on the free lunch program. It goes through a third party to verify.

SNAP program is one of the qualifying programs. Two step application process. It will be available as long as the money is available. No one knows when that will be. This is a federally funded initiative. ABB is happy to partner. For the Town of Wolfeboro, ABB partnered with the town and the Cares Act.

Nadine Heinen, Regional Director of Field Operations: We are always looking for ways to decrease service calls. The service calls have gone down. We are always evaluating the plant, replacing electronics, coax that was old and either in or near Wolfeboro. We have created a communication forum for town managers, etc. to get

through quickly. Last year we completed the customer care project.

Jason Sieglinger, ABB, spoke of the new features that ABB is deploying now. Wifi Your Way improvement in customers' homes. Use of app to problem solve. No need to call customer service. Wifi pods connect to the cable modem gateway. You can manage devices connected to the wifi pods. Parental controls, pause the network during certain times.

Bill asked Jason what percentage of calls to customer support are for internet support. All calls not related to the cable TV are about internet and wifi. ABB states that older technology usually is the problem, probably 70% of the time they spend on the support calls are because of old technology, Netgear boxes, older phones, majority of wifi calls are pertaining to the customer equipment. Jason says: We aim to be problem free. This system provides tools to our agents to troubleshoot.

ABB team signed off at approximately 6:59pm.

Jim Pineo kicked off discussion of the Cable Franchise Agreement. We did a survey. It looks like we have a lot of complaints about ABB, but look at what they have done to address the problems and the other issues that really have more to do with customer equipment and not ABB problems.

Timothy Goodwin expressed concern is that they can charge the town for services that they provide to the town that currently are complimentary. Schools, police department, town hall. They can deduct the piece from the Franchise. If we lose our franchise fees, they can send us a bill for the services. Timothy says that the town cannot afford to lose that Franchise fee.

Paul O'Brien agrees with Timothy. We want the same access and cost as we've had in the past. Density = 15 homes/mile. It is up to ABB to make it simple for us, not us make it simple for them. Drive them to zero density. I'm not paying for any incremental services that I used to get free, and they need to educate the customers to do self-care. The agreement we were under says that if we added anything more, then the town would be billed for that. My request would be that they not attach it to the franchise piece. Assume that the FCC is going to drop that requirement. Think about saying this address: Parks and Rec, Police Dept., Fire Dept., School Dept. we want those addresses to be provided free services. Those four addresses free. Then discuss a cap if they don't agree to that. You want Timothy to get his franchise fees. Public safety building, library, and town hall, parks and rec, the water treatment plant. Those are not enumerated in the contract. Those should have free basic services and the basic services need to be ample to do what they need to do. Get a route map of where First Light is coming from. If a pole goes down in Alton, Route 28, will it take out

both ABB and First Light. You want to get more competition in the town. If ABB starts charging us for things that were free, that is bad for business.

David asks: Is it customary for the broadband companies to give free services to the towns?

Paul: Freemium services. It has always been understood that consideration in a rural area should provide free public safety, town hall and parks and rec.

Brian: Cable TV customers are cutting their services. Hulu, Roku, etc. are offering regular TV streaming and that is changing the culture of the cable/internet companies.

Paul: In the town of Wolfeboro, if you ask the cable company, about 30-40% are not purchasing cable tv services. We want free internet for our fire, police, town, parks and rec. Keep pushing the competitive model. Drive really hard to get 5-G internet service in the town. T-Mobile is going to be here soon.

Discussion of communications with Charter to get WCTV a connection to neighboring towns.

Brian says all the towns he has communicated with have the exact same problem working with Charter/Spectrum. They are not communicating with anybody at a government level. Suggestion was made to send the CEO a letter.

Paul: The reason they aren't communicating is that it will cost them money. One strategy is you quietly, privately, invite Danny and Nadine to Wolfeboro. Take out the network map. Figure where we end in connecting to Tufonboro, Brookfield, Ossipee. Once you figure that out, you go back to Spectrum and say: why can't you do this?

Timothy: We only need one connection to any of those towns. Once we have that, they can share it with any of them.

Timothy motioned to adjourn.

David seconded the motion.

All approved.

Meeting was adjourned at 8.06pm.

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Minutes respectfully submitted
by Beverly Woods