

**Watertown Cable Access Board  
Minutes**

**April 15, 2025**

**6:00 PM**

**Topic: Board Meeting**

**Present:** Chris McKenzie, Elaine Mello, Robert Romano, Jim Vershbow (via Zoom), James O'Connor, David Stokes, Andrea Santopietro and Evelyn Brito. Minutes taken by Elaine

**6:02 - Call to Order**

**6:03 - Approval of Minutes**

- March 18, 2025

David motion to accept minutes, seconded by Rob. Approved by the board.

**6:03 - President's Report**

- Welcome Evelyn!

Chris gave an overview of where we're at in terms of the upcoming future and the need for Evelyn's skills to help us go forward in hopefully acquiring grants and funding in the future.

Motion to accept report by George and seconded by David.

Motion to enter executive session made by James and seconded by David, approved by roll call vote of board members present.

**6:21 - Treasurer's Report**

Currently, payroll information is in flux due to the staffing changes and will be updated once James and Andrea have the information from Joanne (who is about 2 months behind on the info.)

	Statement balance ending 3/31/25	Balance as of 4/15/25
Total cash available:	\$514,362.26	\$487,857.64

(Treasurer's full report is included in shared drive)

Motion to approve the treasurer's report made by David, seconded by Rob. Approved by the board.

**6:23 - Action Items**

- Vote to approve quote from Key Code Media for LiveU cloud hosting and warranty renewal

Andrea explained the charges for warranty for the LiveVu as well as charges cloud hosting.

George made a motion to approve this quote, seconded by Rob, approved by the board.

James brought up the question about when minutes go public and whether attachments are listed (ie, serial numbers for systems) The answer is no and they are accessible on the shared drive if for some reason they need to be produced..

- Vote to approve quote from Ockers Company for Cablecast renewal

Renewal for Cablecast and support. This went up \$400 from last year.

George made a motion to accept the quote, seconded by Rob. Approved by the board.

(quotes can be found in the shared drive)

### **6:28 - Discussion**

- Meeting of the Ad Hoc Ascertainment Committee, April 7, 2025
  - Progress report on items for Comcast contract negotiations

Chris gave a report about the meeting, and Grace showed several of the videos that have been edited; they had a general discussion about what the meeting would look like. Andrea gave some suggestions for changes (ie, shorten videos) - content-wise, it was great progress. Grace had the city member and staff videos ready. Chris said that they were very good content-wise. They haven't planned the next meeting at which they will discuss the structure of the presentation.

Andrea said that the city manager noted they will have to move the meeting because the lawyer can't be there for the May date originally planned, so this will need to be rescheduled. Comcast was also not notified, so this is another reason for the meeting, though the lawyer said that they didn't have to be there. Andrea said that we would like them to be here, so this will be scheduled at some point in the future. In the meantime, we'll continue working on preparations. Hopefully we can get it scheduled but there are a lot of meetings going on through Memorial Day.

On the report part for the presentation, Andrea said it was close to being done. She's waiting for some estimates for potential infrastructure upgrades, and that the manager wants a draft for the lawyer, so she's going to send what she has once she finds out what he (Jeff the lawyer) needs to plan for negotiations.

- Meeting of the Bylaws & Organization Committee, March 27, 2025

Chris stated that this was a continuation from the previous meeting, digging into articles 4 and 5. The group is hacking away at making progress. Minutes are in the subcommittee folder, but it was clarifying some things like term limits, etc...

- Discuss establishment of a Fundraising Subcommittee

Chris discussed the need to codify a subcommittee who can focus on outreach and fundraising and provide board support for Evelyn. Looking for people to join - Elaine has volunteered. Chris may possibly reach out to people as the other committees wind down. It will become a standing committee once it is added to the by-laws. If anyone wants to volunteer, get in touch with Chris.

#### 6:42 - Community Outreach & Fundraising Coordinator's Report

- Outreach & fundraising - current efforts

This was Evelyn's first week on the job, so a lot of what she's been doing has been observing, seeing what's going on and looking at things like potential sponsorships, fundraising, donations, etc.

She suggested giving a tiered sponsorship - ie, 6 months, 12 months, etc to provide different options for groups or companies.. She also is looking into more depth of what they want out of their sponsorship and talking to staff about getting some feedback to inform future sponsorship agreements (ie, perhaps provide metrics to give value to the sponsorship for organizations.)

For grants and donations, she is going to look for non-traditional grants (ie, seniors, helping them use their phones - there's funding for that!) Look into donations - more than Paypal, other options of donating, etc to make it easier for people to donate via the website.

She sent out emails to a lot of partners, ie, Watertown Cultural District, and is planning some meetings about partnering up with other groups in the city. She is looking into ways to increase promotions, perhaps through Youtube, looking at the target audience for ways to reach them.

Also looking into relaunching social media efforts, participating in community events, looking for partnership matchups for scholarships, etc. Doing surveys, looking at metrics - maybe do a cooking show. One idea is to do a partnership with MGH on healthy eating, partnering with various groups, restart a film festival (perhaps partner with the Majestic.)

Chris said that when talking, Evelyn mentioned data - what kinds of things is she looking for?

Evelyn suggestions - ie, for STEM night, have a clipboard to do surveys, get some feedback on what works and what they need to do. This also provides information for future grants.

James had a question (from Zoom) - had a question of the perception of where cable is going and asked if there is a time to think about rebranding the station (ie, remove cable), and to get word out about us being able to do more than just be a cable channel.

Elaine wondered whether this would require changing our charter regarding the non-profit's name, or whether we could do a dba and not need to do that. Andrea will look into it with Mass Access and corporations that are currently doing that sort of thing.

There was also some general discussion talk about doing more social media, vertical videos, and to consider ideas for getting our name out there.

George mentioned that we are a year away from the new high school opening and it's a good time to start thinking about building the relationship with the high school, the admin at the school and building a rapport with the students and what they're doing now.

He suggested that hopefully we can work with the CTE coordinator, Richard Saunders who oversees digital arts with shared technology. He's also on the cultural district partnership, so can collaborate with him there as well.

David agreed and in particular with the CTE program (they need to supply a lot of programming as part of their core work for Chapter 74) and they only have 2 years to build out the required classes to offer. The advanced classes are not just elective for juniors and seniors, so perhaps offer coops or internships to help them fulfill requirements. So this is a good time to reach out for helping them give a breadth of opportunities.

George said that as the city starts the envisioning process for the new middle school, it is thought that this would be a place to do a feeder program into the CTE programs being built, so that once they get to high school, they can go right into CTE courses.

Evelyn said they've already applied for a few grants with more coming up.

George made a motion to accept the report, seconded by David, and approved by the board.

### **7:01 - Executive Director's Report**

- Staff - employee resignation

Ben will be leaving for another position, so Andrea is looking to bring in a paid intern. Matthew has been interning with them for a few months now, so he would be a good transition into a 20 hour role to fit into through the end of the summer when he goes to CA for school. At that point, we can evaluate whether we need to fill the existing position. There's the possibility of having some other interns coming in to fill into that role in the Fall.

- Projects - Parker Annex meeting room

Andrea met with Maurice the new CTO and Christian Nixon who is the Project manager for DPB (department of buildings) who is overseeing the work in the Annex space. Andrea talked to them about getting one of the Cart systems over for use in that room. The meeting room already has cameras for that space - she is unsure of who is doing the integration for the AV, and hopes it will be Okers. Hopefully they will have a three camera set up in there, but it won't be to the level of the council chambers. What the use of those spaces will be is still under discussion.

Andrea also mentioned that we'll need to install an additional switch on the second floor to jump up to the router on the third floor, because the run would be too far a run using regular network cable - we have existing equipment for the schools that can be used and then purchase a new router at a future date.

- Programming - March highlights and comparisons

March update - 1st anniversary of the Little Local Conversations podcast.

Rob asked about the Gold Kings playoffs that were covered and how they came about. They started talking at the last faire in the square and ended up having some time to cover playoffs. See the share drive for view numbers for the month. This year includes podcasts as well.

- Legislative updates - federal and state updates

Andrea watched the policy call and reports about ACM who spoke to Congress about various issues.

The Protecting Community TV Act should be re-introduced at some point.

They also mentioned a bill in MN that was in their state legislature for a tax on Social Media companies for extracting consumer data. Mass Access mentioned that they wanted to talk to them about that bill and how it might be something that could be done in Mass.

Not much of an update on the stream access bill. Originally there was supposed to be a hearing in the spring, but that has been pushed off for now. There's a question about whether this might not be addressed at all, so it's hard to know what will happen. Mass Access is still looking for support from municipalities.

Andrea reached out to the city council clerk to do a resolution to support local access and that this will be added to an upcoming meeting. This should be on the next city council agenda. They would like someone from the corporation. Chris may be able to attend to answer any questions that come up. Next city meeting is the 22nd.

Motion made by George to accept the Executive Director's report and seconded by James and approved by the board.

## **7:20 - Old Business**

- Performance review structure for Executive Director and Director of News & Studio Operations

Chris mentioned that this was discussed last time and suggests we ask for self-evaluations for the Exec Director and News Director where the board discusses in a meeting session, and then the president and vice president will meet with each for the final review and potential compensation agreed by the board.

Rob mentioned his concern that he wouldn't want his job review to be part of a public record. This brought up a question of how we do this, as going into an executive session for a performance review is not allowed (unless there's some sort of disciplinary reason, which then allows us to go into executive session.) However, if we have SMART goals, it would be something that would. (Note: SMART goals are a framework for setting objectives that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Related, and Time-bound.)

So if the self-eval is based on these goals, individual board members can have conversations and do a report for the compensation (which would be done in executive session).

David said that the board would be presented with goals, and an assessment of the progress, what was achieved, what still needs to be done, and then the board would take that, make comments, after which they go into executive session to discuss compensation.

David also said that we also don't have to be verbatim in our meeting notes for this. And that we post the SMART goals, progress and future goals for next year, so we have them for future

reviews. Chris and George will then meet with each person and then report to the board for the executive session for compensation discussion.

Both staff will give separate presentations with SMART goals at the meeting with the board before meeting with the president and vice president. It was suggested that a meeting on June 10th to do these and defer regular agenda items for that session. Part of the presentation will be the Executive Director's budget impact statement, compensation recommendations for staff and her self-evaluation. After the presentation, the board will meet in executive session to discuss compensation.

In the wake of this meeting, the President and VP meet separately with both staff and present a collated review based on the board meeting and compensation, and perhaps work on future SMART goals.

No finance subcommittee meetings for the future until probably summer.

#### **7:45- New Business**

Because Andrea is going to be on vacation. Elaine will review with Evelyn any upcoming upcoming grant proposals.

#### **7:55: - Future Meetings**

- May 13, 2025
- June 17, 2025

#### **7:58 - Adjournment**

George made a motion to adjourn, seconded by David, and approved by the board.