

CABLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Ed Favre, Chair2005
Don Hallisey2005
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Purpose: On behalf of the Board of Selectmen, the Cable Advisory Committee's primary function is to draft cable TV licenses for cable companies. It does so by first ascertaining the town's needs and the cable company's past performance and then negotiating with the cable company. It also can provide other cable related services that may be of value to town residents.

Current Activities and Goals: The Committee is concluding negotiations for a renewal license with Comcast. The current (original) license expires on March 31, 2004. The new license will, among other things, provide the opportunity for more and better locally produced TV programs, bulletin boards, etc. for public, educational and government television programming (community television). The new license will also include higher customer service standards and better service to public buildings and schools, etc. Although Bolton has limited community television at the present time, there is much more that can be offered, such as programming that is very popular in other communities.

To facilitate this we expect to get two new channels for exclusive Bolton use and the option for a third later on, if we can produce enough programming to justify a third channel. (Cable companies have the legal right to expect that towns fill these channels with a substantial amount of programming.) We also will receive extensive funding for technical equipment needed for quality cablecasting (which the law requires must be used exclusively for this purpose) and an annual budget for a production studio and part-time employee. This technician will provide the technical skills to support and coordinate operations and train volunteers in the use of the equipment and studio.

These resources will enable Bolton – with sufficient volunteer help from middle and high school students and other residents – to cablecast student events, municipal meetings of all kinds, educational programs, train students interested in cable, broadcasting and other media related careers and much more. Those who have seen quality community television elsewhere are very interested in bringing the same to Bolton.

The law does not allow towns to influence television programming or prices. However, towns can participate in the State regulatory hearings about basic TV service rates. Nor do towns have any authority over any cable services other than TV. But Comcast has welcomed detailed feedback from the CAC about specific, unresolved customer service problems. This is done through its designated Town liaison personnel at the executive level so they can troubleshoot the problem.