

Town of Chester – PACT Committee Meeting – October 14, 2019

APPROVED Minutes

**Town of Chester
PACT Committee Meeting
Monday, October 14, 2019
Cable Access Center**

I Preliminaries

1.1 Call to Order

Bob Grimm, Chairman, called this meeting of the PACT Committee to order at 6:10pm.

1.2 Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Grimm led attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.3 Roll Call

Members Present:

Bob Grimm, Chairman
Karl Knudsen, Secretary
Royal Richardson, School District Liaison
Briana Demers, PACT Coordinator

Members Absent:

Jack Cannon, Vice Chair
Stephen D'Angelo, Selectman Liaison

Public Present:

None

1.4 Approval of Minutes July 30, 2019.

Secretary Knudsen made a motion to approve the minutes from July 30, 2019 as presented. Motion second by Mr. Richardson. NO Discussion. Chair Grimm called for a vote on the motion. The vote was 3-0 in the affirmative.

II. REPORTS

- a. Producer's Report Chair Grimm
Recently Produced shows and recorded shows –
The Annual Town Fair and Spring Hill Farm Fall festival were recorded.
- b. PACT Coordinator Report – Ms. Demers spoke on the installation of the Tighrope equipment for Channel 20. Learning curve of system and integration to current system is ongoing.
- c. Treasurer Report Chair Grimm
 1. Reviewed data from the Finance department all POs for 2018-19 have been submitted and processed.
 2. Balance and Funding to date. The latest fund balance is showing \$56,419 but the purchase of end of year equipment has not posted on last run. After \$ taken out the current balance is \$

III. OLD BUSINESS – None

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IV. NEW BUSINESS

1. Review of CIP submission – Scheduled Meeting for CIP for Wednesday Oct 16, 2019
Chair Grimm reviewed the submission for PACT which is looking for capital improvements to complete the upgrade for Channel 21 and 22 and to upgrade the equipment at Chester Academy, as well as the delivery system of the signal. The Phase 3 price would be \$32,000 to complete the studio upgrades and \$13,000 for the school.
2. Review of Line item in Town Budget – Scheduled Meeting for Tuesday October 29, 2019
Chair Grimm presented the idea of having PACT funding come from the town budget and dissolve the franchise fee. The amount requested is the same as the CIP but includes operating costs. %The line item would be for \$79,249.00
3. PACT Budget for Warrant and change to PACT funding
The third option is to draft a warrant article for spending like it has been done in the past. The second warrant would be to change the way PACT draws its funding from the PACT fund. (as discussed in the July 30, 2019 meeting).
4. Update on Franchise Fee Increase-
Chair Grimm updated the request of the increase in the franchise fee to 3%. The Board of Selectmen approved the request in August and sent a letter off to Comcast. Incre4ase request is in process.
5. FCC ruling for Franchises Fees –
Chair Grimm gave a summary of the recent FCC ruling for Franchise fees. The new order took effect on September 30, 2019 and the next move is from Comcast who has 180 days to reach out to the town to request a new franchise agreement based upon the new franchise fees.

There are four major parts to the new ruling:

1. In-kind contributions required by LFAs are “franchise fees” that count against the statutory 5% cap, even if they are cable-related;
2. LFAs may not use their video franchising authority to regulate cable operators’ provision of non-cable services – such as broadband Internet service, Wi-Fi and VoIP – delivered over “mixed use” systems that carry both cable and non-cable services;
3. The Commission’s various orders limiting the actions of LFAs also govern state-level franchise requirements, regulations, fees and taxes; and
4. The Commission’s orders preempt provisions of existing local franchises, regulations, and state laws that are inconsistent with Section 621 on a prospective basis for obligations due or arising after the effective date of the Third Order.

Of which the first one may have an impact upon the amount of franchise dollars Chester may receive. Until Comcast defines “In-Kind Contribution” it is any one’s guess. It also is not known if the charges Comcast may ask will be retro-active to the FCC ruling date. Chair Grimm said he is waiting to get more information from the State Cable Association as well as the Northeast Association. NH will be holding a webinar in December to discuss the ruling.

Chair Grimm feels that PACT should not just sit back and what and then be surprised of what our funding will be.

Liaison D’Angelo joined the meeting at 7:05 pm.

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V. POLICIES and PROCEDURES - none

VI. ROUNDTABLE - None

VII. NON-PUBLIC - none

VIII. Anticipation of Next Meeting – TBD

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Liaison D'Angelo to adjourn the meeting. Second by Liaison Richardson. No Discussion. Chair Grimm called for a vote on the motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative 4-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:47 pm.

Respectfully Submitted October 15, 2019
Robert Grimm
Chair
Chester PACT