

**COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION/INFORMATION SYSTEMS
(PUBLIC HEARING)**

June 30, 1998

6:30 PM

Chairman Pariseau called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Pariseau, Thibault, O'Neil

Absent: Aldermen Rivard and Girard

Chairman Pariseau advised that pursuant to Section 626 of the Cable Communications Policy Act of 1984, the purpose of the public hearing was to identify future cable related community needs and interests and also to review MediaOne's performance under the current Cable Television Renewal Franchise; that each person would be given only one opportunity to speak; that comments were to be limited to three minutes to allow all participants the opportunity to speak and any comments must be directed to the Chair.

Chairman Pariseau requested that any resident wishing to speak come forward to the nearest microphone, clearly state their name and address when recognized, and give their comments.

John Faggiano, 162 Brook Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

My wife Paulette and I and two sons live at Brook Street in Manchester here. I'm here to speak briefly about one of the community's most valued assets and that Manchester Community Television Channel 16. This past year Smyth Road School sponsored an Artists in Residency Program. For three weeks, artists from Ballet Workshop came in and worked with our students. As part of this residency several sixth graders and fourth graders were involved with documenting this process through video. Initially when we had this idea we called Dr. Sullivan at Channel 16 and spoke to her at length, she had a lot of great ideas, and she assigned Jason Cote to our project and since this past January we had the residency in March, Jason came in and worked with the students on several occasions. He worked with them on using the equipment, camera setup, doing interviews, logging video, and also is going to be working with them on post-production. This has just been a really great experience for these kids and the

Smyth Road Residency Committee which I'm a member of would like to make this Committee aware of the read great work of Dr. Sullivan and of Jason and we'd like to thank Channel 16 for that. And, finally, I feel that as a parent this panel should do everything that they can do to continue to foster these kinds of relationships here in Manchester. Thank you.

Bob Steiner, 527 No. River Road, Manchester, NH, stated:

Thank you, Alderman Pariseau. I'd like to recognize Aldermen O'Neil and Thibault and City Clerk Bernier, it's good to see you. I'm not here as a politician. I once served this City, this Ward as a member of the School Committee for two terms and my wife served for 14 years in the Legislature. So, now we sit home and watch TV, not really. I'm concerned that when United Cable is taken over by MediaOne the price went up, you expect that. But, what concerned me most was that I'm a sports fan and those nasty people in Boston blackout the Red Sox and the Patriots periodically. But, we were smart we had the Maine cable station in New Hampshire, so we could get the program from Maine and what is Media 21 do, they eliminate the Maine station so we can't watch the Red Sox or the Patriots when they black it out, that's not fair plus the fact that I like to hear the people from Maine they have a nice twang when they talk. The second thing is when they raised the price they gave us all these extra television channels they said. Well, that's very nice but they put some television channels on there that were horrible like MTV where they call it music, I think John Philip Sousa would turn over in his grave if he ever listened to that, probably come in with a bayonet instead of a baton and they have people dancing around there half naked and I don't know what else they're doing. It's a terrible channel, I don't like it, I don't want it. There are also channels for certain groups here in the City and they're important. We have a large Franco-American population and there's a French speaking channel. There is also a Spanish speaking channel, now I don't parlez vous francais and I only took two years of Spanish in high school, so they're no good to me and what I would like is The History Channel because I'm interested in American History and you have to pay extra for it. Well, I'll trade them those three channels for The History Channel and a player to be named later. They're not fair, we should have the freedom of choice of our cable TV. We select our elected leaders, we choose our long-distance carrier for telephone, but we can't select what we watch on TV and some of the stuff they have on there and I'm speaking from education is terrible. There are some good programs too like the National Geographic Specials and things of that nature, but we ought to have that right and you, Aldermen, have that right by the Year 2000 to give us life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness by choosing a cable company that will give us, the viewers, us the taxpayers the right to choose what we want...whether it's pressing buttons or going on the computer or however. We should have that in a

democracy, we don't need a politburo or a dictatorship telling us what we are forced to watch and that's my big criticism of Channel 21 is that they are forcing us to watch things we don't want to watch, and we the people should speak up and you people as our representatives should do that and give us our freedom by the Year 2000. Thank you very much and I'd be glad to answer any questions.

"RJ" Norton, 21 South Elm Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

Twelve or thirteen years ago I used to drive down to Medford, Massachusetts, they had a public access station there...we didn't have one here at the time and Dr. Sullivan got together with some of you folks and Alderman Wihby and got this Manchester Community Cablevision and it's really wonderful and it's a very active, active station. More so than most other public access stations in most cities because this City is involved in politics year round, it's very intense, we have the First in the Nation Primary and just all the time constantly, week-after-week, this is a very, very dynamic area...the City of Manchester and so it's a very busy, intense television station. More so than any other access station I've ever been in. What they did down in Medford, they had a contract with Warner back in the mid-80's and they contracted for...wanted to build two studios. One in the school such as the one we have here right now that's shared by the students and the faculty till two o'clock in the afternoon and then the access takes over from two in the afternoon till whatever time at night their closing hours are and that's a good system. What they did down there, of course, they started this way and then after a couple of years when Warner became Time/Warner they renegotiated the contract and they had Time/Warner build a separate studio and the students then had their programming and had their facility for the day, the school was able to expand their programming and their training and everything they do is really a wonderful situation. At the same time, the access channel itself in the separate facility...they put in a free-standing building a couple of years ago were able to expand their hours and serve the community in a much better way, they had programs at ten o'clock in the morning, eleven o'clock in the morning...times when they couldn't before because the school had that facility. I would like to see that same situation negotiated here...have the cable company supply a separate studio so the school would have their access all day and all night and also the community would have their access. Also, it would be wonderful if that studio could be located somewhere in the Downtown area...there's I feel that would be more accessible to more of the community, there is also folks who don't have vehicles and depend upon busing and whatever and they can't get to the studio out there in off-hours when transportation isn't available. But, I think it would just open the studio to a much wider audience. Now, one thing I did run around to and I've only got three minutes, so I'll get right to it...I'm Irish, it's hard. As I did 300 programs, I don't work for Channel 16, but I am a member of Channel 16 and I

produced over 300 programs last year and one thing I ran into was a lot of people have no idea what ward they're in, they don't know who their Alderman is which doesn't surprise me in these days...more people are being informed through this station primarily because they can put on programming in Primetime which commercial television stations just can't do, they don't have that leeway. But, this station has really gone a long way and bringing people into the community, giving people a sense of community...For Manchester programs we've had on there, we've had Neighborhood Housing Services Program, a lot of their programs... Sheridan Park Clean Up and the positive things in the City that are happening. So, we're not running around down there when there's a fire or a fight or something down there. We're down there to cover the positive aspects of the community. I know I've done program on the Overlook looking over the falls and Jane Beaulieu's Flowers in the Community, and all the For Manchester...Neighborhood Housing who's rehabed the housing, but I'll get right off the air here, but I really urge in the negotiations that you do in the future that you take that into consideration and MediaOne has always been very open, I think to the community. I know anytime I've had any programs I've wanted or ideas I call them up and let them have it and they've been very receptive. Thank you very much for the time.

William Dedrick, 33 Riverfront Drive, Manchester, NH, stated:

I have wondered why am I still paying a rental on the box and on the channel selector. It somehow doesn't seem right to me, it's like the old telephone routine and they've changed that as you know. In addition to that I find that they have many pay-per-view programs in excess of 15, I believe. In addition to that they have five to 10 paid programs that they allow on their television that we get to watch if we so choose. I think the problem is that they are selecting our television for us and we are not. It would seem to me that we need some degree of control or at least negotiable control in order to alleviate the problem and like the gentleman prior to me said that they have raised their rates. I think they've raised them three times if I recall correctly and I'd like to know why. They're providing me with things I don't need or don't want or don't use, yet they charge me for them and in addition to that they took all of the major sports program and now you have to pay for them, I'd like to know why we have to do that. I'd like to see it open, if it's at all possible similar to the telephone companies in terms of utilizing the existing cable lines for feed purposes where other cable companies can come in and offer you a service utilizing those lines and hopefully that will be an option.

Gerald LaFleur, 195 Electric Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

Prior to January of 1998, my bills for cable was \$23.01 and then it went up to \$26.90. Since then, for some reason, it went up one penny and I don't know why.

All I know for sure is that I lost three channels and was raised \$3.89 and I lost three channels. I lost two channels that are very dear to me (TNN and a religion channel). When I called the company I was told that if I wanted those channels that I would have to pay an additional \$2.40+ per month because that's a big reward...you lose three channels when you pay \$3.89 more and because unfortunately for me and my TV it's too old, although it's coming in as good today as the day I bought it, if it's over 10 years old it's under so-called low-density and I'm not sure if I'm right on this and since then they went into a new setup which is considered high-density and so either I pay the \$2.40+ per month more to get the three additional channels or I go out and pay \$300 for a new television set that would pick it up. I hope someday I have a decent answer from the company because it's very difficult for me to understand why I pay more and I have less. Thank you.

An anonymous Gentleman, stated:

I notice that this company bills in advance and they charge you, they bill you approximately \$6.29 and the bill is due on 7/3; that doesn't even give you a 30-day period to pay for it or what would be normal procedure for most bills. In addition to that if you lose service via their problem, you must notify them for the credit, they don't automatically give you a credit. A short time ago, we lost a day's service, I'd like to know why they didn't credit those bills and how can they credit those bills if indeed they're billing in advance.

Jean Malone, 476 E. Dunbarton Road, Goffstown, NH, stated:

I'm here to request them to have EWTN put back on for 24 hours. They cut it off a half day on Sunday and at seven o'clock on Saturday, and every night from nine till twelve they cut it off and my complaint is a lot of people really, sick people get a lot of help from that and a lot of enjoyment. My husband was four years dying of emphysema and that was the one thing that held us together, we had the rosary and everything and it was something we could do together and he could have it mass, he's only one. There are a lot of other people out there that can't get out and it's a very good station, it's not just religion. I read it in the paper today, so I never did this before, so I'm very nervous. I have a petition out, my son printed it up and I was amazed, it's the first time I ever...I asked them, I kept calling them and they lead me on and finally I said what can I do now. They say, we'll maybe if you got a petition, so I did that, and we sent it to Mr. Girard and I have quite a few names now that I've been collecting since he told me to get more. But, I'm new in the area, I'm from Pennsylvania and I don't know many places around to go. So, I've just on this...what I can do, but there are a lot of people out there that really could use it.

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Chairman Pariseau stated you did a good job with the petition, I think it was something like 271 signatures.

Ms. Malone stated it was more than that, I have quite a few more. Miss Kathy said that it was three hundred and something, but somebody else said...Fr. Marc at St. Marie's announced it after each mass one weekend and somebody counted 700 signatures and everybody was so glad...I'm glad you did this, we can't have nothing to do, we can't get...we complain but nobody listens and so anything you can do we appreciate it. Thank you.

George Chaprass, 69 Lucille Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

The folks who went before me, I am very happy to report stole my thunder; that's okay, that means we're united even though we're not suppose to be united, we're suppose to be MediaOne. Mr. Steiner and other gentlemen referred to all the channels that they don't ever use and can't use and wouldn't like to use anyway, he mentioned MTV, well, it's kind of hard looking at it from MediaOne's point of view to allow each user, each user of the system to select...sort of like some Roman Catholics do these days, they select the commandments that they'll obey, I think they're called "cafeteria catholics". Well, we can't be "cafeteria" MediaOne people. But, there is something we can do. We can't quite go Mr. Steiner's route, but we can do the following. We can have more than just basic Cable 1, Cable 2 Premium. For example, I never watch although I respect the right of people to have it community stuff. I never watch religion stuff, but I watch news stuff all the time and I watch entertainment stuff and here come the tomatoes, I never watch sports stuff either which really got me mad today when I saw that ESPN just paid \$600 million and I may have to pay for football games that I'll never watch. So, each of us has his own individual complaint. Somebody wants religion, somebody doesn't want sports, etc., etc. There must be a feasible, an economical feasible way to redistribute these programs so that I can non-select all the sports and select all the news and select all of the entertainment and tell the community and the religion television things to go fly or something. So, there is a feasible way to do it even though I can't just do it one channel at a time, but I can rearrange them into sets and select sets at some minimal cost. Enough. Next, all cities in the US, 100,000 or more with a median income similar to Manchester's must have some sort of cable service, maybe one, two, or three competing services...what do we know about the rest of the country...probably nothing, but if we're going to make smart decisions between now and July of 2000, we ought to know what's going on in other cities like this throughout the country and with the Internet and with mayoral organizations, the organizations of Mayor's or something like that it shouldn't be too hard to collect that information through the Internet and a little cooperation from the various cities. In fact, I know it would be easy, even I could do it, but I won't. What specifically does MediaOne plan in as much as planning is possible in electronic helter skelter like we're in. What will it

cost, who will pay the cost, will the ratepayer be the secret quasi investment banker for MediaOne's plans. I want to know if I'm paying for what they're building now to charge me for down the road; that is a fair question and it may be a legal one. I don't want to be their investment banker.

Carlos Gonzalez, 1826 Front Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

I'm here on behalf of the Manchester Community Television Channel 16 and also because I believe that when it comes to cable or fees we need to have lower fees and that we do not need to have them any more expensive than what they are already. As for Manchester Community Television I speak on their behalf and I will use two phrases: one, from Abraham Lincoln and one from the Bible. One of them is about democracy...for Abraham Lincoln he said "as I would not be a slave, so I will not be a master"; that expresses my idea of democracy or the first of these to the extent of the difference is no democracy. And, for the Bible Hebrews 13 I have this one of my favorite phrases: "keep your lives free from love of money and be content with what you have." Communication is about evil versus good and I will explain to you what I consider commercial television is today. It is about ratings and about making money basically, greediness. Commercial television filters information given to people which is almost amounting to some sort of censorship. It does not offer real true public access. It exposes the public to violence, sexual immorality, poor family values, and does a disservice to educating the public as God wants it to be. What Manchester Community Television has accomplished is offering free access and vocational training to people, access to government and its policies, and good access to real freedom of speech as mandated by the constitution. The facts about Manchester Community Television that since it was created in 1992 the programs have increased from 103 programs in 1992 to 655 programs by 1997. Public access in 1992 was 7.7% and the public access as of, I think, 1997 increased to 68%. Because of this growth the Manchester Community Television has experienced will conclude that they need new facilities to host all of the programs and Manchester Community Television also needs a channel for each one of the branches and by that I mean one channel for public access, one channel for government programs, and one channel for educational programs, and also Manchester Community Television needs new staff or personnel. In closing, I encourage you as the leaders here in the City of Manchester both the Mayor as well as the Aldermen and any of their representatives that you were chosen by God and by the people and please consider the expansion of Manchester Community Television since it offers what is considered freedom of speech, it has access to the public. And, one more time I will remember and I remember this phrase that I have already quoted to you it is, "keep your lives free from love of money and be content with what you have", and that goes for the fees that have to do with cable TV. We must remember that we

must be fair to the public and we must offer free for all and good realistic godly communication because we deserve it. I can also tell the public elected officials trust that they were chosen for one purpose. When people elect you as leaders, you are to do what you were elected for. May God bless you all and please consider freedom of speech. Manchester Community Television is good for Manchester and is good for the State of New Hampshire. Thank you very much.

Jason Ku, 4 Dow Street Apt. 4, Manchester, NH, stated:

I'd just like to say that Manchester Community Television is a vital asset to Manchester. It shows information you couldn't find on Channel 9 or anything like that and most of the students at Manchester Community Television...it's taught a lot of students about public access and how to produce shows and everything. It's a very good class and it would be very helpful if there was another class like in a studio nearer the Downtown area where students can go to easier and they would have more access to it and learn more. MTV...even though the stuff on MTV doesn't appeal to the adults it does appeal to the teenagers, so it's a good thing. Thanks.

There being no one else present wishing to speak, on motion of Alderman Thibault, duly seconded by Alderman O'Neil, it was voted to take all comments under advisement and further to receive and file any written documentation presented.

There being no further business to come before the public hearing, on motion of Alderman Thibault, duly seconded by Alderman O'Neil, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee