

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

August 3, 1998

6:30 PM

Chairman Pariseau called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Pariseau, Rivard, Thibault, Girard, O'Neil

Chairman Pariseau advised that pursuant to Section 626 of the Cable Communications Policy Act of 1984, the purpose of the public hearing is 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 will be given only one opportunity to speak; that comments shall be limited to three minutes to allow all participants the opportunity to speak and any comments must be directed to the Chair.

The Chairman stated that before taking comments from the audience, he wanted to read, for the record, a letter received from Mr. Don Anderson, the Executive Director of the Miss New Hampshire Scholarship Program:

“On August 3rd at Parker Varney School in Manchester, a public hearing will be held in which we have an interest. We would like to make this known to Alderman She and Alderman O'Neil, Girard, Rivard, and Thibault.

Your Committee on Administration is facing a fork in the road (for which Yogi Berra said ‘when you get to it, take it’). The Miss New Hampshire Scholarship Program wishes to take the ‘high road’ in support of any effort to expand Manchester Community Television and its staff.

As Manchester's growth pattern demonstrates, MCTV is the community access television channel which can bring to the general public a whole new perspective on how its elected government works for them and with them.

More importantly, perhaps, is that MCTV be given the broad band access to the cable provider of the city's choice, be it MediaOne or a new player' in our community.

The opportunity to expand MCTV, upgrade its equipment, and select additional support staff in new, high grade quarters is fortuitous to the current occasion for which your committee and the City of Manchester wrestle at this time.

MCTV has been available to provide insight into Local Government, as well as to provide the cable viewing audience with public service programming, as in the case of the Miss New Hampshire Scholarship Program show held each May at Practical Arts Auditorium on the campus of Central High School.

Not only does this scholarship program benefit from MCTV, but so does many other public service venues for which the public access cable television provides a service of critical importance.

I would urge your committee to strongly support the growth of MCTV incorporated into whatever cable television system is available to greater Manchester customers. The infusion of financial assistance within the parameters of prudent and reasonable cost -- as the city budget will permit -- can not only make MCTV better, but also bring to the Aldermanic constituency of the City of Manchester the progressive image we should all be striving for as we head to the next millennium.

On behalf of our scholarship program, we encourage your Committee to stay the course that will insure quality television of community interest through the access governmental channel.

Thank you. Don Anderson, Executive Director."

Chairman Pariseau stated that the first name on the list was Ben Baroody and asked him to come to the microphone, and clearly state his name and address for the record.

Ben Baroody, 1181 Bridge Street, Manchester, NH, stated that he came tonight as producer on this station, now Channel 16. I've produced a few shows and I thought they were pretty good. I got a lot of feedback from the community. I started with my son when he was 11 years old. He'd be down interviewing professional ball players. And I know all the kids at Weston School and Hillside

would be tuning in, watching. I guess I'm the creator of the Linda Garrish show. And I've had the opportunity to be on it one time or another. That's a little bit of politics, a little bit of human interest. She makes a lot of city programs aware to the public. And I've had an opportunity to work with the people there at the station. They're very, very helpful. They're very, very knowledgeable. And they do anything they can to help an amateur. The only problem that I see with the station is the availability of some of these people. And being an amateur and going in and learning how to edit and everything, I know I want to do something good, but sometimes they just don't have the time. But they're very patient once they get with someone like me that doesn't know what they're doing. But a lot of people in my community always tell me about what they saw on the station, and I think the community in general will watch it at one time or another. I know that I've wanted to do another show that I've had a hard time getting off the ground because of a couple of incidents that happened where I couldn't get there on time to pick up a camera or whatever, or some of my friends can't go at certain times because they work 9 to 5 and the hours, I think, could be extended. I know they have a skeleton staff there. They're all very good, very efficient, and they all know their job. It's just that, whatever we can do to expand their service. I know that weekends would be a great help for a lot of people who work. I've talked to people who would like to do the shows. But if you work from 9 to 5 and go to pick up a camera, and they're closing and there's absolutely no time to edit any film. But if we had a little bit of time on the weekend, I think a lot more people would be involved. There're a lot of people in our community with good ideas for programs and whatever, and they're kind of being shut out right now. So I'm just speaking for a lot of my friends who are denied access because of the availability. I've talked to a few people who really want to get involved. I think it's a great program. I did the Manchester Bears last year. The Manchester Bears are an independent football league for kids. And they went 10 - 0. They won the state championship. And I know all the kids that were involved and all their friends are pretty proud of them, watching the games on TV. And I think kids would like to get involved a lot more. If we're not here for our kids and our future, what are we here for. I thank you for your time, and whatever we can do to help these people at the station, I'd appreciate it. Thank you.

The Chairman stated: Before we go any further, I forgot to acknowledge the members of the Committee. We have Alderman Thibault, Alderman for Ward 11; Alderman O'Neil, Alderman-at-Large; Alderman Girard, Alderman-at-Large; Alderman Rivard, Ward 8; and myself, Alderman Pariseau, Ward 9. Also in the audience we have Ward 10 Alderman, Bill Cashin.

Phil Doherty, Morse Road, Manchester, NH, stated that he was appearing on behalf of the Manchester Police Department where he serves as training director

and he said he would provide written copies of anything he spoke about, tonight. Basically, I've had the pleasure of working with Dr. Sullivan and her staff because we produce our own training videos within the Police Department, and she's provided us with a great deal of service and training in that area to allow us to use some sophisticated equipment that we would not otherwise have had access to. What I want to address tonight, though, is the future and that is that MCTV is sorely lacking in manpower and equipment. And I understand that they've made some requests that they would like to see come to fruition in the next contract with whatever media company happens to get the cable TV access. One of the things they were talking about, and I was discussing with them, was a mobile van. From our perspective on the Police Department, that would be a fantastic addition not only because of the training concept, but if properly equipped, would allow us to broadcast to anywhere in the city things that are going on at the time it's happening. For instance, if you have a major event, you have something going on in the City that may impact the City greatly, you could broadcast this information back so the command staff at the Police Department, the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, whoever, would have instant access to the event that's going on. Technically, I don't know how they would accomplish that, but I'm sure they can. One of the other things that we had talked about is using the MCTV studios and/or equipment for other types of productions that would be beneficial to the community. As it is now, we do participate. We are on programs, but we don't produce programs. One of the last things I would quickly like to touch on and one which MCTV, itself, may not become involved, but something that the Board should look at, is that one of the tools of crime prevention across the country is closed circuit TV. Closed circuit TV where we would set cameras up, say in specific areas of the City, where we have a problem and have the media people allow us to use their lines, their technology, to broadcast back to the Police Station where we would have monitors to watch areas of the City. This, again I'm sure, is technically possible, although I don't know exactly how they'd go about doing it. What could happen there too is, if in fact it was made part of a contract, they could even provide the equipment and/or training and/or technical expertise at a very low cost or no cost to the City under some type of grant procedure. As an example, if we have a problem in downtown Manchester, we could have cameras that would be set for six months a year -- or whatever it is -- shooting the length of Elm Street, not unlike what Channel 9 does now with its tower cams and its sky cams. Broadcasting the information back so that not only would we be able to watch it at the Police Department -- there are a limited number of police officers; we can't be everywhere -- and these cameras would allow us to concentrate our efforts in areas where we really need to concentrate. And again, gentlemen, I have my testimony in writing so that it will be available to you and I'll leave copies with the Clerk. Thank you.

Steve Mathieu, 836 Coral Avenue, Manchester, NH, stated that he first wanted to comment on the quality of the staff at MCTV. For the past year and a half I've been producing a program on elder planning issues. I have a business in Manchester called Elder Planning Advisors of New Hampshire and, in conjunction with my business, one of the things I do is put this television program on to help senior citizens. For the past year and a half we've been doing the program. The program has received a very wide viewership, we've received a lot of positive feedback from senior citizens, from the directors of senior citizen centers around Manchester, and from some of the other organizations that deal with seniors. We've had on the City Tax Collector, or a representative from the Tax Collector's office, to talk about tax breaks for seniors. We've had a number of other folks to talk about home health care, attorneys to talk about some legal documents and retirement planning. And in general, the program has been helpful. We've had a lot of feedback. Now the staff at MCTV has done an excellent job putting the whole thing together. They've coordinated the production, they've helped put together volunteers to do the tapings, and going forward, there's several things I'd just like to say. First of all, it's a good station. It's a good working operation right now, but obviously it can get better. There are certain equipment needs that they have that they've requested. And not only from the City, but we as a business would be pleased to help in a public/private partnership and work to assist in that area. The second thing is the station would be looking to have some type of extended hours and as prior speakers have noted, there are a lot of times when people can't get down on the weekends - or they can't get down except on the weekends to edit or do whatever else needs to be done. It would be very helpful if they had additional staffing to allow for more extended hours so that the people in the community could take more advantage of the program. Third thing I want to mention is that the use of mobile communications equipment would be greatly helpful because we'd be able to go out to the community and if they have some type of a van, I know that we, from our organizational standpoint, would be able to go in and directly interview for senior programs, to give the seniors a flavor for what is going on in some of the senior centers. And so I do think that the service the station provides is a very valuable one. To the extent that we can continue existing funding, wonderful. If we can increase the services, increase funding for it, I'd love to see that done because it is an excellent organization. I think Dr. Sullivan has done a superb job in bringing forth what they've brought forth what they have with the budget they've had thus far, and I would like to see it continued. Thank you.

Paul L. Courchesne, 345 Mitchell Street, Manchester, NH, stated that he was grateful to be here to voice his opinion. I understand that there is a quarrel going on programming as far as the EWTN Network and also the INSP Network vying for equal or more time on the same station. I think that MediaOne cable network

provides an excellent cross section of programming. There's several music stations, there's several sports stations, several movie stations, you'll find different court stations, political news stations, and so on and so forth. And I think it's unfortunate for a community or area the size of Manchester and surrounding communities that we have to, as Christians, quarrel over equal time on one station. I would like to see the cable station, MediaOne, ponder the possibility of allowing both to be on longer hours. Both EWTN and the INSP station. I enjoy both stations very, very much, and I think it's silly to have Christians of different viewpoints to quarrel over two good programming networks. In fact I used to like to watch also Warship Live on WGOT station out of Merrimack that televised this network out of Florida, and I think we as parents and Christians in the community should demand more and better programming of this type. In fact, I heard on the radio last week that more parents are becoming interested in programming for their children, and the three top shows of interesting programs to parents were: 1) Touched by an Angel, 2) Moesha, and 3) Seventh Heaven. And I think this is a healthy atmosphere for parents, for family, for Manchester, and the surrounding community, and for MediaOne. Thank you for your attention.

Harriet W. Bingel, 154 Head Street, Manchester, NH, stated that in the near future, the City of Manchester will be negotiating with cable access businesses. It is my understanding that the City receives a percentage of fees from the cable provider. From these monies, a small portion goes to the Manchester Community TV Station, Channel 16, with the remainder going into the general fund. The importance of Manchester Community TV is well known to those present, particularly the Mayor and Aldermen. Since its inception, MCTV has won awards and provided numerous hours of volunteer time to the residents of Manchester by broadcasting public hearings, school board meetings, Aldermanic meetings, as well as showcasing community organizations and their events and providing voter education. These broadcasts allow the people of Manchester to keep in touch with their elected representatives and issues of local concern. The facilities at MCTV are staffed with knowledgeable individuals and are used by both high school students and local volunteers. The committee negotiating with the cable companies should include members from this staff. Manchester is a growing City. It represents a much-desired market for cable companies. I expect the City to negotiate the best deal possible. This should include, but not be limited to, an increase in fees received from the cable provider with a large portion of the money going to MCTV. The amount presently received barely covers some of the employees' wages. Free Internet access for all city departments. This is a soon-to-be offered service to cable users. MCTV to be listed on the Preview Channel. Three-quarters to a half-a-million in additional money to build a studio for public access use. The present one is sorely lacking in space and equipment. Create more channels for public access: one for students, one for government, one for

education. These requests are not unreasonable for the amount of money to be gained by the cable provider chosen. Thank you.

Arthur Adamakos, 1196 Union Street, Manchester, NH, stated that he came here today was for four things. MCTV is a wonderful educational tool for our students in Manchester. Having had a television program on MCTV now coming on seven years, we've worked with a variety of students, they've learned a lot, and gone off to wonderful institutions in programming and television. So that's one thing that's really been a benefit to us. The second, of course, is our impending connection of our Internet access that the City is currently being wired for. That's tremendous as well. But the thing is, the thing that concerns me the most, is the fact that for the money that we pay for cable, we really don't get as many channels for access as we should. The reason that I'm saying that to you this evening is because, recently, I visited my brother down in Virginia. He's a Lieutenant Colonel in the Army stationed at the Pentagon, and he lives in Fairfax County Virginia, one of the most well-known counties in the United States. They have 120 channels on their network for the money that we currently pay for maybe 50 - 60 channels. The difference, though, is the amount of access or public access channels. Right now we only have one channel, and it's all mixed together. We have the Public Broadcasting Channel, we have the Ed Channel, and the Government Channel all mixed together. And, coupled with that, we also have the Bulletin Board. Now all of those should be on their own separate channels like they are in Fairfax County. The only time that I get to watch you people in Aldermanic meetings unfortunately, because we're out so often for school-related issues, is on television. The thing is, you're not on all the time. If there was a government channel where you were continuously running Aldermanic hearings, Aldermanic meetings, just think. Other communities have it. Why don't we for the money we pay? One channel strictly devoted to education. One just being the community bulletin board. Instead we're flip-flopping around. For the money we're paying we should have, I think, four channels just like Fairfax County not only has four channels, I think they have eight. They have them in various languages as well because of the diverse populations they have residing in the Washington, DC area. So just some food for thought no matter who we select as our next cable provider. One thing I think we should stress is for the money we're paying, we should have more than one channel. I'm sure people come up to you as they come up to me. They say they do watch Channel 16 to find out what's going on in the City. It's only fair for those who work odd hours or who are not able to watch it all the time, to have a choice. do I want to watch what's going on in government this night? Or am I going to see Pause to Consider? They shouldn't be on the same channel. The last thing is if you could negotiate the Golf Channel for me, I'd appreciate it. Thank you very much.

Kathy Masso, 144 S. Maple Street, Apt. 2, Manchester, NH, stated she was here in support of Manchester Community Television. She is a former student when the channel first began, and I took two years in that class and enjoyed every moment of it, learned how to produce and direct, and it focused my energies to go to college. I credit, more than partially, my advancement into a university in Washington, DC because of all the experience I learned and gained from Manchester Community Television. I came back to New Hampshire to finish my BA in Communications at UNH and now I'm currently in the job loop to find a job in communications. Funding, I hope, gets increased with the times. They need to keep up their technology just like everyone else and to expand their program would be great, to break it up as the last person mentioned, public-educational-government. That would only expand more students to be able to take classes, more people to get involved, it would just benefit the community because information is beneficial to everyone, to be a community. I'm just here to support Manchester Community Television. I hope you definitely give the money that they deserve. Thank you.

Theresa Chabot, 106 Putnam Street, Manchester, NH, stated that she was here to speak for everybody that couldn't come. We want EWTN on like it was before. Like I said the last time, they found a way to take it off, find a way to bring it back. And whoever is on after 9:00, I'm sure they can fight for their station also. They can be on another program at another time. I know that we need a program that puts morality back into our lives. Everyone. Young and old. We certainly need it. If, like many people, at night you can't sleep, you get up and you're sure of watching something to think about. I first saw Mother Angelica on PTL. I'm not prejudiced; I'll watch something that's interesting. And I enjoyed the testimony of people that came on PTL. Too bad he didn't practice what he preached. But we need this program for many people. For shut-ins. A lot of people would like to come here. I came here in their place. It's not easy when you've never done this before. Since May 1st, 1995, when I came for Catholic Medical Center. And we're praying for it. It's not done by any means. We've got a good Bishop that's coming, and he's going to help us. Thank you.

Patty Cornell, 787 Montgomery Street, Manchester, NH, stated that she was a Guidance Counselor at Parkside Junior High School, and she was here to talk about MCTV and the opportunity it gives us to publicize the positive activities that students are involved in. At Parkside, we're very involved in the Kids Voting USA program and last year we got to participate in a panel at MCTV. I brought students to the live election night coverage, and they got to see the actual workings of the station and be on live to talk about the election results and the percentage of people voting. And they also televised the National Wish Day which took place at the Mall of New Hampshire. This fall, Parkside is joining West High School as a Community of Caring School. We'll be the only Middle School in New Hampshire that is part of the Community of Caring Program. And one of our goals is to have the students develop and produce public service announcements that will be shown, I hope, on MCTV. Myself and a few other faculty members have been lucky enough to attend workshops at MCTV and be trained on how to do a program, how to videotape. We have a wonderful camera that we won from Magical Evening of Giving that MediaOne donated, and in turn we've been able to train students to videotape musical events, pep rallies, basketball games, different activities that are shown on MCTV. And I think in today's society, many families and parents aren't able to attend all the activities that their children take part in, and they can watch it on MCTV if we have the opportunity to tape it at school and they have time to show it. Opposite of children is the older people. I know that my mother is not able to get out as much as she used to go to Aldermanic meetings or school board meetings or anything like that. And she loves watching it on TV and it enables her to keep up with what's going on because, even though she's not physically able to get anywhere, mentally she's very able to take part in what's going on and I think there's a large community of older people, and MCTV affords them that opportunity. So I would encourage you to negotiate a contract with MediaOne that would give MCTV more staff, more equipment, more room so that they can do more with us. Thank you.

John McDonough, 1122 Belmont Street, Manchester, NH, stated that he would like to thank the Chair and the distinguished panel and Channel 16 for affording us this podium tonight to express our views because, as you know, very infrequently does the ordinary mortal get to speak with people of your caliber. I think the big problem with MediaOne is competition. If the only car ever made in the USA was an Edsel, we'd all be driving Edsels at exorbitant prices. But thank God there is competition so we can have selection and we can go down any road we choose. MediaOne is a giant, as we know, and they haven't flexed their muscles yet in Manchester. But when the time comes, they will. And I hope to God, then, that you do have competition. We had a very unfavorable experience within County Government where MediaOne went over to Goffstown and promised them that if

they would allow them in, they would wire public buildings, free. That's fine. Everyone agreed, including the town fathers, your counterparts over in Goffstown. But hardly had they got their feet in there, but they decided to dun the nursing home as if they were condos. And everybody, the elderly who can ill afford it, would be dunned a certain price. They did this on the premise that the Hillsborough Country Nursing Home is not a public building. Well, if Hillsborough County Nursing Home is not a public building, neither is the town hall, nor the police station, nor Bartlett School, nor any of the other public buildings over there. Neither is City Hall. Neither is the building we're standing in today. So I just ask you, because you are the people -- the Board of Mayor and Aldermen -- I'm not speaking just to present company, who've been selling us these Edsels for many, many years. And I wish you'd close that agency and bring in some other models. Thank you very much.

Joseph Forseze, 37 Laurel Street, in Goffstown, NH, stated that he was speaking as Principal of Highland-Goffes Falls School. If I were speaking as a private citizen I would encourage you to have Nick-TVland so I could watch Sgt. Bilko every night, but unfortunately I'm speaking in my capacity as a principal. I would like to also add my voice to all those for more funding for Manchester Community Television, Channel 16. Dr. Sullivan has done a great job with the limited funds and the little capabilities she has to provide excellent programming for the citizens of the City of Manchester and also for the children of Highland Goffes Falls and the children of the Manchester School District. Many of our students in our City have appeared on Manchester Channel 16, and have shown many positive things that are going on in our schools. The second thing I would like to speak about, and once again this is in my capacity as Principal, I would like to see cable access in all classrooms at Highland Goffes Falls. I'm not speaking for other principals, but I am speaking for my school. And also instant Internet access for our students. I think the modality of cable and also instant Internet access, the capability will help our students in the future. We want our students to be ready for the Year 2000, and with the new grant plus cable TV access in all our schools, at least at Highland Goffes-Falls, we'd be very pleased if that would be possible. Thank you very much.

Alderman Girard asked if he wanted the entire building wired for cable television.

Mr. Forseze responded, yes. Right now we only have two places where we can watch TV. I would like it so that every classroom has it so that we don't have to pull kids out of a class and bring them to a library. It will be much easier to bring a TV to them without moving children. It's easier to move equipment than it is to move children.

Alderman Girard said thank you. I just wanted to make sure I understood correctly.

George Chaprass, 69 Lucille Street, Manchester, NH, stated that he would like to first respond to a few things he heard from other folks. One gentleman who talked about Fairfax County in Washington, DC spoke about what those folks have. This relates to something I said to you at the Webster School some weeks ago. At that time I said, what do communities of our size, throughout the nation, have? How can we say how good or how bad -- and probably bad -- MediaOne is until we find out what the other folks have. What does Fairfax County have? What does San Francisco have? What does Oregon have? What does...and so on. We need the lay of the land in order to make a decent evaluation. Another person, two or three in fact, were concerned about morality and programs and so, I just wanted to say, please don't forget us secular humanists. The old folks' home... money, money, money. That's exactly what this is all about. This is all about what I call, economics and politics. Economics and politics are separate words, but the concepts are linked and overlap forever. All economic events occur in some political system. For example, marriage. And all political events occur in some economic context. Which is usually the only reason that politicians are allowed. If there was no economics, there wouldn't be any politicians. Except maybe the Pope. Economics and politics. Another thing that I and another gentleman at Webster Street referred to, and I'm quoting from the Union Leader, he said he was concerned that MediaOne may be passing off to its subscribers the cost of introducing new technologies, so on and so on. Well, a few weeks later the company, MediaOne, blamed the rate increases on continued investments on new technology. That sound like CWIP to me. Do you mean that our rates are being used for their new technologies? Am I the investment banker for MediaOne with however little I may pay? One of the questions that we have to ask is, not only the landscape -- what's happening throughout the country -- but what's happening her. What does that rate of \$29.23 go for? Am I paying CWIP again? It's bad enough that part of my electric bill subsidizes corporations, I'm sure you're aware of that. And if I'm going to subsidize the civic center next, my God! Am I going to have to subsidize MediaOne too? Do the rates and taxes subsidize everything? That scares me. I don't have that much money, I don't think. One final thing, there was a real question about how much the rates might increase because ESPN was going to have to charge so much for their programming because they paid \$600 million to the National Football League, or whoever they paid the money to. Well, that's not really true. It's a matter of what economists call, allocation. If ESPN is going to cost so much, it doesn't have to affect our rates. It can become a premium channel. We can allocate it to the premium, not to Cable 1 or Cable 2 or to Basic, but to premium. That way it doesn't affect the rates except for those who

opt for this luxury called, ESPN. Allocation. Economics, politics, allocation, no CWIP. Thank you very much.

Grace Sullivan, 47 Hermit Road, Manchester, NH, stated that she wanted to thank everyone who has spoken about MCTV. It's been seven years since we have been operating, a little less than seven years since we've been operating, and it still astounds me as to how the community has come together and done programming. I also want to thank the Aldermen. I know that some of you took time during June which was a very busy time. I know we taped a lot of meetings in May and June. To come and visit the Lowell MediaAccess Corporation. I also want to thank the Chairman of the Committee, Alderman Pariseau, and the other Aldermen who couldn't make that, and extend the invitation to take them this summer if they want to go down, or in the fall. I also just want to thank the Committee in general. I know that public service is something that you spend a lot of time doing. And I've been trying to get as much information together as possible and synthesize this and try not to give you too much information. So, basically, I've provided a fact sheet on Manchester Community Television which talks about some definition points that you can look at. I've also come up with an initial report. I've done a lot of investigating on what's going on in other cable renewal processes throughout the United States. MCTV belongs to the Alliance for Community Media. And that's an organization that a thousand community access people, organizations, belong to and that way I've been investigating things like access to someone's contract, I've been investigating -- MediaOne is now split off from US West -- we used to be owned by US West for a few months -- so I was investigating how US West was dealing with different municipalities, predominantly out in the West. And this information in this packet, which also will talk to you about the outcomes of recent cable franchise renewals throughout the United States. And I've also come out with an initial report, things that I've been finding. And I wanted to talk about that tonight. When MCTV started back at the end of the '80's, Alderman Wihby had spoken to the Superintendent of Schools and said, "Is there anything you would be interested in doing with the new cable renewal process?" I had been on a cable committee formed in the early '80's to look at the cable company and what was going on in town that Mayor Beaulieu had at the time, and I had just gone back to school to start studying the new technologies in television. I was very frustrated that with the new cable industry, students, in my opinion, were not going to be able to have the experience or the training -- or just any equipment -- to be involved with technology. And it was very disturbing to me the images I was seeing on cable television. Things that in the past ten years we know have had an influence on the way our culture lives. It was very disturbing to see more and more violence on television. It was more and more disturbing to see some of the ways women were portrayed on television, the elderly, whatever. So I got

together a plan and brought it to the cable committee at the time and Alderman Wihby was very helpful. And I sat down and said, "I'd like to do what they do in Massachusetts. I know that using students, we could do some community programming." And what happened in that negotiation process was United Cable Company gave the City of Manchester a quarter of a million dollars to build and equip a studio, one percent of yearly cable franchise fees, the other three going into the general fund. They also gave us a 16.4 mile fiberoptic institutional network connecting municipal buildings and schools. It was built in 1992. That idea I came up with. I went and brought in this idea. Wouldn't it be great if we had an INet and that INet was using the new fiber technology. Why should it be fiber? Back then, if you mentioned fiber, people thought you were talking about bread. But that fiber network that I brought as an idea was one of the first fiber institutional networks in the United States, as the result of the cable contract. When the Technology Challenge Grant money came up, the federal government had money, the foundation for that grant was the 16.4 mile fiberoptic INet that we got United Cable Company to build. So right now Internet access through the majority of schools that are connected, because not all the schools are connected to the INet because we couldn't get all the schools connected to the INet 10 years ago. People were looking at my and saying what's fiber, let alone what is the INet. So now we have this need to connect the rest of the schools. We also have the need to connect the municipal buildings. But we got that network and, even though it was built in 1992, it started being used in 1996. This contract, this process for me and for people at MCTV and the community, really gives us the ability to stop and say, what is it we really need? We have to look to the future. What kind of technology are we going to need? We have such a lot of great resources, not only in our government officials, but in the people who live and work in the City. And as we look at the new issues that we have to be dealing with in the cable franchise renewal process, a lot of what people have said and what I've been listening to, in looking at other contracts. You'll find that there is a contract synopsis from Portland, Oregon. Portland, Oregon has a telecommunications department. MediaOne has a lot of lawyers. They've got a lot of lawyers. They're not going to take this lightly. We are the largest City in the state of New Hampshire. They're going to come in here. They're going to have experts. They're going to want to make sure that they try to do the best job for their corporation. I know, having been the Director of MCTV and been a teacher at MCTV, and a teacher at Central High School, and a lifelong native of Manchester, that we can match them in negotiations. I know we're going to come up with a very good contract for the people of Manchester. Not just for the year 2000, but for the year 2005, 2006. Because this is going to decide whether or not we're going to have enough telecommunications infrastructure that the economy and education can build on in this town. When I think back to the 19th Century, if Portsmouth didn't have a port, there would have been no growth in this state.

There would have been no home port coming in. If we didn't have the river to bring the goods downstream, we wouldn't have the industrial base. We wouldn't have had the Amoskeag Mills. We need the best information infrastructure available for our community in the 21st Century. We need additional channels. I wish I could come to the Committee and speak sometime as a resource?

Alderman Pariseau said, yes. We're not going to finish the contract tonight. You are cordially invited to come to any Committee meeting to speak on this subject.

Dr. Sullivan: Thank you. This information is available. I'd love to be able to talk to you at a committee meeting in the future. I'd like to be able to be a resource for technical information. I'll be more than happy to discuss this with all of you. And I look forward to being a resource, and I look forward to serving the community through Manchester Community Television. Thank you very much.

Alderman Girard said that Commissioner McDonough had brought up the idea of competition. What do you think of the idea, generally, of having multiple providers competing for this subscriber base?

Dr. Sullivan: I think that's really important, but I think that people have to understand that what happened after deregulation in 1996, was what cable companies did to fight competition, was to do concentration, and they traded off businesses. So in this area you saw Continental Cablevision buying up pieces of the Cape, so Continental Cablevision could turn around and sell to MediaOne. They would trade off places out in the Midwest, and trade it off with TCI. So there's areas of competition. Some places like RCN, I'm looking forward to competition, but I think there are some things we have to be very careful with the language in the contract in regards to competition. a level-playing field has been used by some cable companies against municipalities. We have to be very careful of wording, that and passthrough.

Alderman Girard: My question, basically, is whether or not we should continue to hold an exclusive franchise with one provider or should we split the franchise.

Dr. Sullivan: I think that competition is really good, and we have another company come in, we have an RCN come in, I think that's great. In Tacoma, Washington, the municipal government has started their own cable company as a utility.

Alderman Thibault asked Dr. Sullivan if she could keep the Committee informed of new technologies as they come available to her.

Dr. Sullivan responded that as a municipal employee, that's what she thinks she should be -- a resource. If you look at some of this information, for example that we need to upgrade the institutional connect INet, to connect all governmental institutions with a minimum of 120 MHZ upstream and downstream, that's a capacity thing. And so, sometimes just getting hung up on tech language... Mark is very good at it. There's a lot of technical provisions that we need to go through. I think one of the biggest things we need to do, and I spoke to the Mayor about this, is to get a Municipal Committee together and to look at the contract that we have now, and see where the cable company is in noncompliance technically. And we need to do that now. Thank you very much.

The Chairman asked if there was anyone else who wished to address the Committee.

Bill Moquin, 103 Lake Street, Manchester, NH, stated that he had thousands of signatures of viewers that want EWTN televised 24 hours a day, and to put EWTN on a tier one channel so the monthly cost would cost less, per month, for low-income viewers. I said that before I could prove that the majority of the people of Manchester -- I've did it in the past with other people with Continental Cable and United Cable -- that the majority of these people are watching EWTN. MediaOne has stated that there was a lack of interest and we've proved this to them as far as I'm concerned with a lot of letters and postcards that have been sent to MediaOne in the last two weeks. And we've got others. We've got 5,000 cards printed out. We have petitions. We have hundreds, maybe thousands of petition signatures. And we must have at least two or three thousand that have been sent to MediaOne now. They've committed to me already that they had a thousand a week ago or more.

Ald. Pariseau stated that the Committee did ask MediaOne for that information, but they haven't got a figure yet.

B. Moquin stated that they are not out to push EWTN, the religious program, on you. What I'm looking for is that they have many religious programs on different

channels. And there's no reason why they can't put EWTN on one 24 hours a day and others on the other channel. The cost of cable companies and the cost here in Manchester keeps going up. They're cutting down on the religious viewing time. So what we should do is look into another cable company if they want to give you a commitment to do something here. I said last time that Harron just bought out the one in Hudson, and they're right in Londonderry. They're very close to Manchester and they're a big enough company that you people can sit down and talk with them. If you can't do anything with Harron, then you have Time-Warner in Nashua. Both of them put EWTN televised 24 hours a day. I was watching C-Span the other day in Washington on the hearings of cable rates. And I watched the president of TCI, and he stated to the committee that he only went up 3 1/2 percent on the rate costs. It could have cost more, but he held it down. The average increase in cable rates they were saying is 8 percent. A couple of weeks ago I was at one of the hearings here, and one guy got up and said that MediaOne in Manchester went up 17 percent. I don't know how true that is. I don't know nothing about figures, but I watched that program. It was very educational about the situation we're in. If this MediaOne is going up 17 or 17 1/2 percent, and you're cutting viewing time and their rates are going up like that, and their rates are going up across the country, the average of 8 percent -- I could be wrong, but that's what I thought I heard -- there's no reason why we can't get what we should be getting. And one other thing, I want to thank all of you. And I want you to think of the older people in nursing homes that are hurting, and a lot of these people can't pay the twenty-something dollars, and they're losing these religious programs because they are going up on a higher channel. This company should at least bring it down to a tier 1. And they said that at the Washington hearing. They should bring these channels down to the lower tiers for the lower income. It's very important for them. These rates keep going up, and they don't want to help the poor or the low income people. They're in trouble as far as I'm concerned. And I think it's your responsibility -- you people -- to do something about that. And I think you will. By the way, that guy right there, Bill Cashin, he's the one that helped get us EWTN in the City of Manchester. He did a great job. And I want to thank him while he's here. Thank you very much everybody.

Lorraine Richard, Pinardville, Manchester, NH, stated that she cut off MediaOne on December 15th because they cut off EWTN. And I now have a satellite dish at 15 dollars a month. Period.

The Chairman asked if there was anyone else left who wanted to speak.

Theresa Chabot, 106 Putnam Street, Manchester, NH, stated that she just wanted to say that that was one of the reasons she came tonight. A lot of people are thinking of taking the dish. I know one man, and you may find it hard to believe,

never had a TV. And he just go the dish because he wanted EWTN to be on 24 hours day. Maybe if we had a little more morality, maybe we could clean up the act and the politics. It wouldn't hurt.

The Chairman state that there being no one else present wishing to speak, a motion would be in order to take all comments under advisement and further to receive and file any written documentation presented. On motion of Alderman Girard, duly seconded by Alderman O'Neil, it was so voted.

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

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of the Committee