

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

April 29, 2000

1:00 PM

Chairman Gatsas called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Gatsas and Pariseau

Messrs: Alderman Lopez

Chairman Gatsas advised that the purpose of the public hearing is to identify future cable related community needs and interests and also for the purpose of reviewing MediaOne's performance, including customer service, 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.

Chairman Gatsas 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.

Representative Peter Leonard, 35 Andrew Street, Manchester, NH stated: My question is how much do they charge the schools for the cable for the computers and the TV. That is about it.

Richard Girard, 517 Hevey Street, Manchester, NH stated:
I came here for several reasons and Alderman Pariseau I will be very brief but there are a couple of things that I wanted to bring to the attention of the Committee. If you recall, last year the prior Board of Aldermen granted conditional approval of the transfer of the franchise from MediaOne to AT&T. There were four conditions that the City placed on the transfer. One was that Channel 9, the cable access Channel 9, be repaired so that the signal quality which is pretty poor and sometimes you can't see or hear anything on the channel, will be corrected. Another and to my knowledge that problem has not been corrected from what I understand in discussion with various City officials. MediaOne does not believe that there is a problem that needs to be corrected. I can tell you quite honestly that I speak for myself and thousands of others who can't get Channel 9

on a regular basis that there is a real problem there that needs to be addressed. The second item was that they had to connect all of the City schools to the Internet. I believe this has been done, but recently I spoke with Mr. Brennan, the Assistant Superintendent to Schools because I had a client that was interested in using a school setting to use the Internet to participate in a conference in Washington, D.C. I spoke with Mr. Brennan who tells me that the schools do not have that capability – not one of them with the possible exception of the School of Technology which I haven't found out yet but I found it rather odd that MediaOne, which provides Broadband cable services would not have given the schools those capabilities because after all that is what they do and that is what Broadband is about and if they had then the schools would have those capabilities and I think they should. The third item, I believe was taken care of and that had to do with replacing some of the cable and changing it from cable to fiber. The fourth item was a question on open access and that will be resolved by the City in the future, but the first two that I brought up really need to be addressed by the Committee. As to the other items because frankly they were supposed to satisfy those conditions I believe by this past March and if they hadn't the City was supposed to rescind its conditional approval of the transfer of the franchise and that is a very, very serious item. The other matters that I would like to speak to have to do with programming and whether or not MediaOne has been responsive to the community's needs. I do not believe that they have. As Alderman Pariseau knows all too well, there was a great controversy over the loss of 24-hour EWTN programming. MediaOne thus far has been very unresponsive to the significant community outcry to restore EWTN to a 24-hour channel. I don't believe that should be done at the expense of the Inspiration Network, which now shares that channel. Certainly there is enough channel capacity for both of them and Reverend Bianchi had also approached the City and MediaOne about adding the Odyssey Channel. If it is anything that we need in this community it is certainly more family and/or religious programming. The prior board also sent a letter asking MediaOne to develop a so-called friendly tier of programming that wouldn't contain a lot of the channels that have programming that we wouldn't want children to be watching. I am not aware that they have responded to that request yet either. So those are the matters that I wanted to bring to the attention of the Committee and I thank you for the time and opportunity to do so.

Alderman Pariseau asked, Alderman Girard, do you have problems getting Channel 9.

Mr. Girard answered consistently and there are several others that I know, Alderman, throughout the City but for some reason particularly on the west side that have trouble getting Channel 9.

Alderman Pariseau asked, Peter, do you have problems getting Channel 9.

Mr. Leonard answered yes.

Allison Marshall, 48 Trahan Street, Manchester, NH stated:

I would like to present my comment to the Chair please. We have some difficulty with Channel 9. It seems to break up a lot. We also have the extra TV screen turning black. Several residents do have this problem. We also seem to have a lot of static with Channel 9. Also, I would like to bring up the fact that the price of cable when I first arrived here in Manchester was \$11 and that was the basic. I now pay \$38 and I think that perhaps there should be some adjustments made to that if at all possible.

Stella Hebert, 55 South Main Street, Manchester, NH stated:

I have a friend on Market Street who couldn't come tonight but she doesn't get Channel 9 at all. Sometimes the writing is on the bottom or in the middle or on the top. She doesn't get Channel 9 at all. I also think that the rates are too high. There are lots of people in the Burns High-rise who are going to cancel the cable because it is so high.

Chairman Gatsas asked are you aware of what the lowest tier is on a monthly basis. Has anybody made you aware of that?

Ms. Hebert answered just on my bill.

Chairman Gatsas stated the lowest tier available is \$5.83/month.

Ms. Hebert replied a lot of people are complaining about it. My friend just asked me to come because she couldn't.

Gloria Trudeau, 5 Lorraine Street, Manchester, NH stated:

I want to mention myself that we also have a problem with Channel 9 and I live in Pinardville. It doesn't come in clear.

Rob Sommerfeldt, Mason, NH stated:

I am the IT Director for the Manchester School District. Currently a number of schools, including the district office, do take full advantage of the fiber optic cable for networking. One tremendous advantage about having the fiber cable is allowing the district to standardize and centralize the software district-wide. That is our finance and student management system. Fast and stable access to the software applications and data is critical. The fiber optic cable network allows us to provide this for only some schools. More and more schools are using Internet access as part of their curriculum. Fast and stable access by using this resource is essential for student growth and staff growth. Currently, however, several of our schools do not have the fiber optic cable for networking. These schools include

Parker-Varney, Smith, Wilson, Bakersville, Highland, Weston and Hallsville. Currently, these schools utilize the 56K free frame relay technology, which is much slower than the fiber optic cable, as all of you know who access the Internet from home using a modem. Because of the growing needs for technology in today's world, all schools in our district need a faster and more stable access to our centralized system, as well as access to the Internet. I hope this provides you with the information necessary for you.

Alderman Pariseau asked what excuse did MediaOne give you for not having the fiber optics available at these different schools.

Mr. Sommerfeldt answered I have not received any of that information. The contact or the negotiations are going on with other representatives and not myself at this time.

Chairman Gatsas stated I think the question that Alderman Pariseau has asked is have you asked why.

Mr. Sommerfeldt replied not directly to them. It has been through another person who is negotiating.

Alderman Pariseau asked where you live do you get Channel 9.

Mr. Sommerfeldt answered even though I work here in Manchester I live in Mason, NH. I use DirecTV.

Chairman Gatsas stated I would like to thank Alderman Lopez for giving up his Saturday afternoon to participate with us in this public hearing.

Bryan Murray, 16 Wedgewood Lane, Manchester, NH stated:

I would like the Board to focus on what you could do as far as cable access goes within the scope of your control. Clearly under the Telecommunications Act of 1996 your options are limited, however, as far as the local basic life line, I think that MediaOne has not been forthright in getting the word out as mandated by FCC regulations as far as the tier levels. In my personal instance, they have required charge throughs from one level to the next. That is in contradiction to FCC regulations. I think you need to put pressure on them to follow the rules of the law and to provide the information as mandated by FCC regulations in a clearly understandable, readable documentation that, especially elder citizens can understand. They need to know that they don't have to spend \$16 or \$38 a month to watch cable TV but they can spend \$5.83 and get the majority of the channels that they would like to watch. At the same time, I think you need to consider your actions very clearly when citizens are faced with a \$5-\$7 on the \$1,000 personal

property tax increase this year potentially and if you go to 5% on your franchise fee you know, as well as I do, that this becomes a tax to the citizens that participate in any realm of cable TV access. Essentially what you are passing is a 5% tax increase on the services from MediaOne. That would include cable TV access, telephone access and Internet access. So it is not beyond the scope or realm of possibility that someone could send \$100/month to MediaOne and you would receive \$5/month times 36,000 users in the City of Manchester that is a significant infusion to the property tax or to the general fund, excuse me. I would expect, then, that you would stay on top of MediaOne to insure that you in fact are getting those revenues as required. I don't believe that you have audited MediaOne for quite a few years and I believe the last time they were audited you did not, in fact, get the monies due you. I have this expectation as a taxpayer. I have seen too many instances of lack of management in the City of Manchester. With that, I think that the elder citizens are paying the brunt of this and you may put on your innovative hat and look at some of this franchise fee money and allocate 1% as a chargeback to senior citizens and then look at making sure that you get the revenues that you should be getting from MediaOne. I would hope that you are getting telephone, Internet and television. If you are not, you should push the issue. At that time then you can roll back a credit to senior citizens and demand the contract that you currently have with MediaOne be executed properly. I believe the original contract had a network organization that should be in place with all of the schools and City government. It appears, based on what the schools have said, that has not been done. Why hasn't it been done? Again, I have an expectation as a taxpayer that these things will be managed efficiently and it appears that they have not been managed efficiently. I do not get Channel 9 clearly. You don't have to ask me because I know that you don't like to engage in discussion with this side of the aisle. Thank you.

Chairman Gatsas stated just so you know, the Administration Committee has ordered an audit and they are in the process of delivering that audit. The audit hadn't been asked for for 10 years. I can tell you that this Committee has asked for it and it should be forthcoming within the next week. The other thing is that this Committee was very passionate about a senior discount so that is in the process of negotiation also.

Mr. Murray replied just as surely as we are going to pay a 5% franchise fee and as I talked to Alderman Pariseau a year and a half ago when I addressed the issue that you need to take into consideration the major telephone companies coming in and purchasing the cable TV companies which lo and behold happened and then I said you need to look at telephone and Internet access and it came along. What has our revenue stream been from these increases?

Chairman Gatsas interjected we are currently charging them for their Internet access.

Mr. Murray stated telephone is a significant, significant revenue stream. What they have done is they have taken these businesses and they have rolled them off and MediaOne charged 2% to 3%, the national average cable TV rate increase, to build their fiber optic network and then as soon as they built that on the backs of subscribers in Manchester they then diversified these businesses out and continued to raise the rates and we see no benefit. I look to you, as the City, to get a handle on it and to execute the contract as was signed and clearly the original contract from Continental which was transferred to MediaOne has not been executed as written I don't believe and I think there has been some discussion of their commitment and execution of that contract. I don't think they have lived up to the scope in terms of the contract. We shouldn't make the same decision, but you were prudent enough to hire a telecommunications lawyer who, I hope has given you some concrete and prudent advice this time around. I don't think that we are going to see anything as far as the transfer to AT&T. I do not see the intestinal fortitude within the City to take any strident acts in that regard, especially concerning open access. However, with the renegotiation of the contract, again, you have to get your ducks in line, you have to become educated, and you have to make the right decisions. Thank you.

Don Drouin, 700 South Porter Street, Manchester, NH stated:

Today I am representing the Masonic Home as an Administrator. We sent a packet to the Mayor's Office, I believe, that was distributed to all of the members of the Board. Sometime after May 2, 1990, United Cable and The Masonic Home entered into an agreement where the Masonic Home would allow United Cable to wire every single room in the facility. Our facility is a charity. Our people receive a total of \$50 personal needs allowance and in return United Cable was assured that they could sell advanced or enhanced cable. This has been going on since mid-1990 until August of 1999. In August of 1999, MediaOne sent representatives to the facility and they proceeded to disconnect empty rooms without informing us what they were doing. I wrote a letter on December 9. It was ignored. I wrote a letter on January 14. It was ignored. I finally wrote a letter on March 2 and got some reaction. We will not allow MediaOne to enter the building unless we are there and we know in advance what they are doing. Our argument is that there was an agreement and when one company purchases another company they buy the assets and they buy the liabilities. We just want to make this Board aware of the fact that MediaOne is going contrary to that agreement at this time. Yes, I do get Channel 9.

Denise Daigle, 93 Lynnwood Street, Manchester, NH 03109 stated:

I came to support other people because I was asked. Now that I am here I would like to discuss a problem that my husband and I are having with MediaOne. It has to do with our Internet and the lack of service that we are getting. I think back in December of 1994 we signed up to get the Roadrunner service from MediaOne. We have not been able to operate it or to work it. We have made several calls. We have written letters on top of letters on top of letters mailing them to the Massachusetts Office or the Manchester Office until finally we started to register those letters and about three weeks ago we finally did get a letter, but still no service. MediaOne has a very lax attitude toward servicing its customers. Their attitude is if I don't like the service I don't have to buy the product. I would really like to be able to get my Internet service to work and I would like somebody to help and maybe have them change their attitude toward the customer. You can't just get as many customers as you want and not service them. Another problem that I have had with them too which is very upsetting is I cannot get them to commit to come to my house when I am there. They always show up when I am not there. It is just not working and I am very frustrated so whatever help you can give my family and others like us would be appreciated.

Bob Steiner, 527 North River Road, Manchester, NH stated:

I have served this City as a member of the School Board for two terms. My wife has served this City for seven terms or 14 years in the NH House and we have raised our three children here who all went through the Manchester school system. Obviously, we are interested in Manchester. You Aldermen have a responsibility to listen to these people on the complaints of MediaOne and bring proper action so that we will get the best possible cable service at the lowest possible price and if that means kicking out MediaOne, so be it. I had United Cable and when MediaOne came they said things would improve. It did for MediaOne. They raised the price. My second complaint and I am a sports fan is I like to watch the Red Sox and I hate to admit it but I even watch the Patriots. What did MediaOne do when they don't have a capacity crowd in Boston they black it out and I used to get the Maine channel so I outwitted the promoters down there and turned on the Maine channel and watched the Red Sox or the Patriots. MediaOne took away the Maine channel and that is undemocratic. Besides, I like to hear the twang from some of the Maine announcers. The next thing was that MediaOne had some Harvard psychologist telling us in New Hampshire what we should watch. Their office is in Woburn, MA and I don't need them to tell me what to look at on TV. I get this music TV station that looks like a bunch of hippies with long hair and I don't know if they bath and they play music that sounds like it comes out of a war dance in Africa. To me that is not music and I don't want to watch it. To me that is not music and I don't want to watch it, but I have to get it. I would rather have John Phillip Souza of the Boston Pops. What I am saying is I will give them back the music channel and another channel to be named later if they will give me the

History Channel, but I have to pay extra for the History Channel, which is educational and better for our kids than some crazy music channel. The next thing I want to mention is that this is a free country and we ought to be able to choose what we want. We don't need them to do that. If they can't, then let's get rid of them. There is another point I wanted to make but that is all right. I think I have said enough on this. By the way, Alderman Pariseau, Channel 9 is like the New England weather. It comes in fuzzy sometimes and sometimes it comes in clear. It is a good channel to watch, but the screen is not that great. I think that in looking this whole picture over, I have to reemphasize the fact that if somebody doesn't provide the service and they are a monopoly we should not allow it and you have that responsibility to give us that kind of TV that we want or cable TV that we want. Thank you very much.

Barbara Foote, 323 Franklin Street, Manchester, NH stated:

I have a television that is a year old and I can't get channels 5 and 6. I might have to drop the cable because I can't afford it. It keeps going up and up. I had to get rid of my cable box and I have a little TV that is 16 years old and I was able to get the Animal Planet station on Channel 75 and now I can't get it anymore because they put it on 77. I can get it on my new TV, but if I want to lay down and watch it, I can't get it. I wanted to know why they changed it. I love the Animal Planet station but if I go in my bedroom I cannot watch it. The prices are going up and where I live half of the people are dropping cable and going to the antennae box. I just want to know why they are going up all the time. I might have to drop mine. Thank you very much.

Alice Wallace, 233 Tarrytown Road, Manchester, NH stated:

I live in a complex for senior citizens, which is run by Manchester Housing. They took our Channel 9 way so that they could put in a security station so we can see who is ringing our buzzer. We used to watch Channel 16 and the School Board and Aldermanic meetings but they are not on that channel any more. There is nothing on Channel 16 that we would care to watch. Did anybody speak to the Housing or Grace Grogan? I know that she put a note on the board one-day saying that she was going to try and change it but we haven't heard anything yet?

Chairman Gatsas replied I think that is in the process of being worked on.

Ms. Wallace stated I came alone today but there are 102 apartments up where I live and most of the people do want to watch Channel 9. I can get some signatures if you want me to on a petition. Most of the people up there want to watch Channel 9 so I hope we do get it. We do want to watch the School Board and Aldermanic meetings.

Alderman Lopez asked why do you want to watch Channel 9 versus Channel 16.

Ms. Wallace answered there is nothing on Channel 16. The School Board and Aldermanic meetings aren't on Channel 16 anymore.

Alderman Lopez asked if it was reversed and everything on Channel 9 was put back on Channel 16 and everything on Channel 16 was put on Channel 9 would that be okay.

Ms. Wallace answered that would be fine.

Rev. Theresa Bianchi, 196 Currier Drive, Manchester, NH stated:

I am the Pastor from the Gethsemane Lutheran Church and I am also a citizen of the City of Manchester. I come as a citizen and as a representative of the Manchester Clergy Association. As I walked in I understood that former Alderman Girard was speaking in favor of the Odyssey Channel that the Clergy Association has supported adding to the line-up for MediaOne for the last several years. Unfortunately, every approach that we have taken with MediaOne has met with total ignoring. We have not been responded to at all. Whenever we have tried to write letters or make phone calls, we have never had any response from MediaOne. I also have a letter from David Lamare Vincent who is the Executive Director of the NH Council of Churches and the NH Bible Society and on behalf of the NH Council of Churches he tried to set-up a meeting between MediaOne and the leaders of our various churches to discuss this and was met with no response whatsoever. This was in 1998. I come today because I would like to speak on the issue of the type of programming that I have been seeing going on with MediaOne over the last two years in particular. There seems to be a growing cost as I have seen and many of the citizens here have spoken about. Having lived in Manchester myself for the last 15 years, my cable costs have more than doubled since moving here. I have watched as more and more of the programming that I as a mother and parent of children and also one who does not like to watch violence and other low morale type of shows have watched less and less of the family oriented programming that is so needed in our society today. There are more and more channels being removed. I think one of the citizens behind me just mentioned one that recently got dropped and that is the Animal Planet, which is a very wholesome type of channel. I think there is a great need to have more family programming on MediaOne and more response, customer response, from MediaOne to the community for the kinds of things that we enjoy watching instead of having more pay-per-view, and more programming that is not really meeting the needs of families in our community. I am here to ask that you consider approaching MediaOne and asking them to add more family programming, in particular, the Odyssey Channel which is inter-faith network as well as a three way ownership with Hallmark Entertainment and the Jim Henson Corporation and seeks to provide not only family centered programming, but also faith centered programming. It even has Kermit the Frog as its national campaign person who is

supporting the addition of the V-chip in our TV's so that we can tune out the programming that is not appropriate for our children. I would just like to give to you some handouts if I may before I leave that shows you some of the programming that goes on and one of the things that I would like to say too is that in the middle of the night the programming on the Odyssey Channel is different than the psychics and the infomercials that one sees constantly when one is awake in the middle of the night and wanting to watch some TV. One of the other things that I would like to say about the Odyssey Channel is this is the one issue that we in the Jewish community and the Christian community, which includes the orthodox, the Roman Catholic, the Protestant, the Angelical and the Pentecostal faiths, have all been able to come together under this one umbrella. It is one of the wonderful things of unity that we have seen in the Judeo-Christian community and I think it is worth supporting and having on our line-up for the Manchester community. Thank you.

Senator Lou D'Allesandro, 332 St. James Avenue, Manchester, NH stated:
Alderman Gatsas it is very gracious of you to be holding a hearing on your Holy Saturday and I wish you a very Happy Easter and I know that it is always nice to be with your family on these days and to take the time in public service I know that people appreciate it. To everyone who came here today, I think we all should be very appreciative of the fact that they came out on the best day that we have had in the last couple of weeks to give public testimony and that is really what responsive government is all about. Taking public testimony and reacting to it. I would like to speak to you briefly about a couple of things and first and foremost, public access. I know that people are focused on other aspects of cable television, but I would like to speak specifically to Channel 9 and Channel 16 and the need for public access. Public access for many people is the only way that they really get information about their government. A lot has been said about the Board of Aldermen meetings and the School Board meetings. These are vital. Both bodies are involved with the movement and management of the City of Manchester and people need to view these things clearly and succinctly so that they can get a perspective on how their government operates and where they can go if indeed they need more information. For many, the pleasure of watching television is one of the few luxuries afforded them as they move on in life. I think it is important that these pleasures be affordable and accessible and when I say affordable I mean that. There are so many people in the City of Manchester who have restricted incomes and who live on restricted incomes. Hardworking people who have been wonderful contributors to this City. It seems to me that pleasure should be theirs and should be available to them in a very succinct and clear manner. In terms of education, public access provides an opportunity for education to be pervasive throughout this City. That is a relatively new phenomenon. It is something that everyone in this City should take advantage of. It is extremely important. We are in a new world. We are in a new society and anything that provides quality

information to people enhances their ability to function effectively within this society. We are an aging society. The median age keeps moving up. We know that for the life span of people in their later years and I am moving into that category, there only certain things that we want to do and entertainment is certainly one thing that should be afforded us. These are the reasons why I strongly support the commitment to public access; strongly support it. It brings a vitality and a vibrancy to a community and gets people involved in their community and it affords them the ability to interact, even if it is from a distance. I think Representative Wallace articulated it quite clearly when one channel was disengaged at a facility, an area of government was shut off from people. Now granted the alternative was a security mechanism within that facility, but couldn't that have been done someplace else. These people want to know what is going on in government. The visibility of that channel gave them an opportunity to do that. With that screen blank, that opportunity disappears. That is not fair. People want to become involved. We encourage involvement. We have encouraged public access in order to create more involvement and to get more people thinking about what we are doing. I think it is extremely important that we continue along these lines and I said affordable and accessible are extremely important issues and in terms of the public sector and the education of our youngsters, I can't tell you what a significant impact that public access has made on the youngsters at the Manchester School of Technology and their ability to learn and move on. It is remarkable the kind of work that is done there with the facilities that have been provided to them. We should continue that movement. We want more and more of our youngsters to be educated in that vein. Thank you for your attentiveness. I appreciate and I commend you for taking the time to get this public input. I think it is an intricate part of the process and it has to happen and I am very glad that it is happening.

Representative Carol Williams, 200 Hanover Street, Manchester, NH stated: I want to repeat Senator D'Allesandro's remark. Thank you for taking your personal time and listening to us today. One of the things that I wanted to address in particular was MCTV. I would like to give you a little scenario. If I took a group of people of any ethnic background and I said only you people can watch this cable and the rest of you can't watch it, we wouldn't allow that. The operative word here is public, public access, but for some reason we have left out a whole vast community and that is the community of people with disabilities who are visually impaired or deaf. Visually impaired it is okay because you can hear it, but if you are deaf, Manchester cable access is not accessible. That is absolutely...first of all it is against the law. The Americans With Disabilities Act, as you know, which was passed nine years ago now says that we have to have closed captioning so that our Manchester cable access TV is accessible to all in the community. Again, the operative word here being public access. For some reason, MediaOne has not provided closed captioning on our channels 9 and 16. I

also want to repeat what Representative Wallace said. She reiterated about living in Manchester Housing & Redevelopment and I also live in a building similar and we lost Channel 9 as well. There are 106 apartments there and many, many of the residents are very upset that they do not have access so again you have blocked out a whole portion of the community with I believe four or five high-rise buildings that have absolutely no access. This is outrageous. Again, to the deaf community, they have no access and that is also outrageous. We just can't have that. It is something that we really need to think about. That is hundreds of people who are denied the same access as others and it is wrong. Yet, we have to pay for the service. We have to pay for it but we don't get it. So, that is really clearly not acceptable and the fact that the deaf community is totally left out of the whole Manchester public access is not acceptable and it is illegal and we need to talk to MediaOne about that in particular. I am speaking on behalf of my constituents who are senior citizens who have to pay for cable access TV and they don't have what they need to watch and there is another thing that I would like to add. One of the things that I noticed is that many seniors stay up late at night or wake up very early in the morning and want to watch TV and I counted 15 channels that were either selling products or infomercials and there was only one station giving the news. This is wrong. This is not worth \$30/month. We need to think about that. That is outrageous. It seems interesting to me that we have every channel that wants to sell something to us, but yet we are denied Odyssey or we are denied...how about the Discover Channel or the History Channel. This is wrong. Where are our priorities? I would like to again reiterate that I can't speak enough about how important it is that people who are deaf have access to Manchester community TV. We need to have closed captioning. You are nine years late according to the law and we need to look at that. Thank you very much.

Brian Tremblay, Manchester, NH stated:

I am the Director of Development at the Manchester Boys & Girls Club. I would like to talk briefly about a positive impact that MediaOne has had on a segment of this community. One that I am near and dear to and that is children. The Manchester Boys and Girls Club has a computer learning center. We developed it throughout the summer last year in 1999 and in August of that year we wrote a grant requesting support from MediaOne. We got a reply from them, a positive reply, and they gave us a \$10,000 grant toward the development of a computer learning center at the Boys and Girls Club. In addition to that, MediaOne provides for the Boys and Girls Club, Internet access. Both of these gifts to the club have had a significant impact on our members. On any given day during the school year, we average 315 to 400 kids in our building. What those kids do when they come in to the Boys and Girls Club and use our computer learning center plays a significant role in enhancing the educational process. I was happy to see the School Department here earlier. What we try to do at the Boys and Girls Club is certainly not replace anything that kids are doing, but supplement the educational

process of the kids. On any given day, we have 13 computers. They are tied into a file server. They have full Internet access. MediaOne provided an opportunity for us to receive some education on content filtering and some hardware that we just purchased so that our kids could come to the Boys & Girls Club, get onto the Internet, and not have any concern for inappropriate types of information coming to them via the Internet. For us, it has been an incredible enhancement to our program. We have developed some new programs like Power Hour, which ties in with what the kids do at school. When the kids come to the Club they do their homework and they are involved in tutoring. We have even had some teachers who have developed a web site put their homework on it so when the kids come to the Boys & Girls Club we ask them do you have homework and they say no and we say we checked the website and it looks like you have some homework to do. It is kind of a neat way for us to encourage kids to work on their homework and the Power Hour program ties in nicely with that. For me, the bottom line is a critical component of the future of this community is how well we take care of our kids. I think it is critical that we give them every possible opportunity to develop their self-esteem and for many of the boys and girls who come to our organization, they would never have an opportunity to get a computer at home, let alone to be on the Internet and there are so many kids at school that many of them don't have the time that they need to get on a computer. So, for us we are very happy that MediaOne has assisted the Boys & Girls Club. We hope that they will continue to do that and we are just pleased that we can impact the children of this community in that way. That is what I wanted to let this Committee know about today.

Alderman Lopez stated it is commendable that they gave money for such an educational process. What peak hours do these kids use the Boys Club?

Mr. Tremblay replied from 2 PM – 8 PM Monday through Thursday and from 2 PM until 10 PM on Friday and on Saturdays from 9 AM – 4 PM.

Bernadette Benard, 110 Brook Street, Manchester, NH stated:

Thank you for having this hearing. I would have preferred that we would have had a longer notice. I have been on the phone for several hours trying to get people to come, but it just appeared in Thursday's paper and it gave me just a few hours yesterday and this morning to call people and they were at the Catholic War Veteran's Convention or had plans for Holy Saturday, etc. so short notice is not that good for some of us people. I have lived at 110 Brook Street since 1937. My dad was once a Selectman. I came two years ago. It was at the end of June, 1998. Mr. Pariseau was here. A few of you are new, but he was here. I was a teacher for 41 years and retired from the Manchester school system after 36 years teaching junior high. I retired in 1991. I am an active person and intelligent. I love people and I give of myself. I am from a large family. That is all I know is to give of myself. I visit many nursing homes and many older people who are lonely. The

TV is about their only distraction. What do I see them watching? I am glad and my mother used to love the show "I Love Lucy." I also see them watching EWTN. They would love to see it on Sunday. It is cut off at 12 noon, not a very good time for those who are lonely on Sunday. I know that I visit them on Sunday also. We had better service with Continental and with United Cable, but with Continental especially. Two years ago at the end of June it was recorded on Channel 16 and I saw myself on TV there was a meeting with a representative from MediaOne who said we don't here from people who want EWTN full-time or prime time. He said we don't hear from you people. I said you have to be kidding. On every bill I pay, and lots of my friends, we would write a note telling them to please give us better programming. You see people have mental needs, spiritual needs and emotional needs and it all helps their physical well being if these needs are satisfied. I know. I am a caregiver of a large family and these older people I know that it helps them physically to have something good to look at. The animal program is very good. For a while we couldn't have anything else and one got used to the animal program and said she loved it and I said that is good. We also need EWTN on basic programming that people can afford. That is the lowest tier. People need that. People in the nursing homes and such can't pay \$33/month. I have a sister with Parkinson's Disease. She is one of 40 there. The whole Holy Cross Center is wired for MediaOne, but not the individual rooms. We bought her a TV. She is limited as to what she can do. She is very sharp. She was four years in Rome and elsewhere studying and teaching. She is very sharp and she needs this encouragement and I am happy to see her when she is satisfied. This is not a selfish motive that I have and I will prove it in a little while. Two years ago the MediaOne representative said he didn't hear from us. I said you have to be kidding. I know of two people and I am a network person involved in many things. Less so now. I am 71, but I am still very involved. I, with the help of friends, had 6,000 cards printed. I wrote the message and showed it to a priest friend of mine. I wanted it to be delicate and polite and tell MediaOne that the people of Manchester would like some consideration. Not what MediaOne, big business, wants to give us. I mean crazy dancing and everything else. This can't be fun for the kids. The kids need other things too and so does everyone. If certain programs are cut off at 9 and then they are seen only during the night. Who is going to get up to watch them then? That makes no sense. So MediaOne wrote to EWTN and they tattled on me and EWTN kind of naively accepted their story. MediaOne was adding lots of hours. It is a monopoly more or more. Suncook, Hooksett, etc. They added hours, but what the heck do they mean in quality if they are night hours after 11 PM until 7 AM. What does that mean? It is counted as eight hours but you see hours are not equal to hours. We know that. Those 6,000 cards got to MediaOne, but do you know what they said because I would check. I am a follow-up person. I don't do things halfway. I would call now and then and ask if they were getting mail. They would say not that much. They told somebody else that they had to hire someone extra to take care of the

mail but to me they said not that much. What they told me was this. They checked the names and addresses. These were real cards that were sent in. I had gone around to many churches and many places. It cost us \$1,200. They checked the names and if they weren't higher tier payers they threw the cards out. That is the honest truth so they said they didn't receive many. That doesn't mean that the people of Manchester don't need it and don't want better service. I don't think they have been fair and square. EWTN said you people stop this nonsense of cards and everything. You are giving them bad publicity. Poor MediaOne. Well I am sorry, but I feel for myself and my people. I will tell you that it is not really me. I have suffered long enough. I am now down to basic tier of MediaOne and I am encouraging many people to do that. I am on to the dish and I get what I want 24-hours a day.

Nick Macelli, 473 Straw Road, Manchester, NH stated:

I would like to throw in my support for 24-hours of EWTN. I am a higher tier paying person. It is not just the lower tier people who want this. I really don't understand why we are seeing more and more channels added but we can't have two channels, one for EWTN and one for Inspiration. I don't see why this sort of programming doesn't have a higher priority with MediaOne than some of the other stuff that they are putting on. I am one of the people who sent in a card. Thank you.

Clerk Bernier stated former Alderman Girard asked me to bring this up to the Committee. He had two items that he forgot and I would like to read them. MCTV should be available to all service tiers so that all Manchester residents can see their community channels. The second is that people should be able to pick and choose satellite channels above the basic tier so that family-friendly programs can be brought into the home.

Chairman Gatsas advised that there being no one else present wishing to speak, on motion of Alderman Pariseau, duly seconded by Alderman Gatsas, it was voted to take all comments under advisement and further to receive and file any written documentation presented.

This being a special meeting, no further business can be presented, and on motion of Alderman Pariseau, duly seconded by Alderman Gatsas, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee