

**SPOTSYLVANIA COUNTY CABLE TV &  
TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
MINUTES**

**February 9, 2006**

**Time & Location**

The February 9, 2006 meeting of the Spotsylvania Cable TV Commission was convened in the Board of Supervisor's Room, located in the Holbert Building, at 9104 Courthouse Road, Spotsylvania, at 7:00 p.m. There were enough members present to form a quorum.

**Meeting Participants**

**Citizen Commission Members:**

Herbert Pritchett, Chair, Chancellor District	Present
Joseph McBride, Vice Chair, Salem District	Absent
Don Shelby, Courtland District	Present
Brad Cobb, Lee Hill District	Present
Livingston District	<b>(VACANT)</b>
James McCumber, Battlefield District	Present
James Eastwood, Berkeley District	Absent

**County & Community Representatives:**

Brian Scott – County Information Technology Representative	Present
Mark Perry – School Board Information Technology Representative	Absent
Steve Judy – Deputy County Attorney	Absent
Chris Glover – CRL Information Technology Representative	Present
Jacque Hirsch – GCC Information Technology Representative	Absent

**Cable TV Franchise Companies:**

Paul R. Comes, Assistant District Manager, Adelphia	Absent
Carles Helmandollar, Adelphia	Present
Matt Drewery, Operations Manager	Absent
Jabo Johnson, Cox Communications	Present

Chairman Herb Pritchett called the meeting to order.

**I. Announcements from the Chair.**

A. Approval of January Minutes

Mr. Cobb noted a correction on page 5, under VI. Old Business, Section E, where it stated "... and whether the County should *get* revenue, although *Adelphia* says no because it comes through IP." This should read "... and whether the County should *receive* revenue, although *Verizon* says no because it comes through IP. A motion was

made by Mr. Shelby, and seconded by Mr. McCumber, to approve the January minutes as corrected. Motion was passed 4-0 in favor.

## **II. Public Comments.**

- Mr. Carl Irvin of 9011 Misty Morning Drive in Spotsylvania would like service to his home and he would like to know why he cannot be hooked up for service. Cable service is presently extended to the cul-de-sac and he is 1/10 of a mile further. At first, he was referred to the Stafford office from the Spotsylvania office, where he was told there that someone would get in touch with him, yet he never heard from anyone. Mr. Helmandollar will discuss this request with his General Manager, go back and look at it again and get back to Mr. Irvin. Mr. Scott requested that Mr. Helmandollar ensure that customers not be referred to the Stafford County office. If they find that a particular residence is handled by Stafford, their staff should call the Stafford office for the customer instead.
- Mr. Kirk Hagey of 4 Appaloosa Drive complained that no one notified him when work was to be done on his property and came home to find his yard dug up. Adelphia told him that Verizon did the work, however, it turned out to be a subcontractor of Adelphia who laid the coax cable. After numerous calling around to have the damage fixed, someone finally came out today to fix the majority of his issues. His main questions are: Why wasn't he notified and what is going to happen if this erosion starts to tear away at his property and his driveway later on? Mr. Helmandollar noted that if problems did arrive later, Adelphia would be responsible to have it fixed. He noted that notification is not given to a homeowner when work will be done in the utility right-of-way on their property, but he would contact their construction department to see if something can be done to rectify that.
- Mr. Aubrey Dye of 6166 Plank Road complained of the increase in cable prices of \$2.00 more a month for expanded basic cable. He commented that you receive nothing back for your money. Mr. Pritchett advised that the County has no control over Adelphia's rates.
- Mr. James Riffenburg of 10729 Tealwing Cove, stated that he is a citizen of the County and a member/co-chair of Cable Choice Now, who were a key factor in bringing new legislations into the General Assembly and hopefully acquire more cable choices for residents. He noted that he expects a bill to be enacted on July 1<sup>st</sup> for the new legislation that was overwhelmingly passed in the House and the Senate, which is now going for ratification and will be presented to the Governor. He is asking on behalf of the residents of the County that the Commission make a diligent effort to bring the citizens of Spotsylvania additional cable choices. They are tired of rising rates, with little or no control and an unregulated system. Mr. Scott noted that the Commission has already sent a Resolution to the Board of Supervisors, which was approved and forwarded to our state legislators informing them that we believe in competition and we want to be sure that it is fair for the County residents. This resolution was passed unanimously. He also stated that once this legislation is completed and we determine where we are going, we will then be in a position to talk with Verizon.

### **III. Reports from Cable TV Franchise Companies**

#### **A. Cox Communications**

Mr. Johnson noted that the number of calls abandoned is wrong and he will send something to the County to explain that number. He also stated that the increase in the average speed of answer is due to the problem of keeping personnel in the call centers. He advised that they are in the process of trying to connect all the Cox companies across the country where all the calls will then be answered by only Cox call centers, and not outside contractors. They are also trying to hire more personnel to handle the call volume, along with looking at the possibility of putting a call center somewhere in this area.

#### **B. Adelphia Report**

Mr. Helmandollar noted that the numbers are pretty level across the board, the categories have gotten better, and they seem to be headed in the right direction. He also commented that in 2005, Adelphia has replaced 10 miles of bad cable and have completed a \$300,000 project adding power supplies with standby batteries to help in power outages. He also noted that he has asked to upgrade 100% of their power supplies and hopefully will get them.

- Status of Full Signal Strength on Channel 25 WETA in writing – He advised that they have gotten this problem fixed and are in the process of confirming that with the customer.
- Findings on 14319 Spotswood Furnace Road requesting service in writing – It was noted that the Project coordinator went out to the site and found that it was .3 of a mile from a good connection point. However, the homeowner believes there is a closer connection and Adelphia will go back out to investigate the signal strength and easements.
- Mr. Pritchett noted that some channels are still fuzzy and this has been an ongoing problem. Mr. Helmandollar advised that most digital boxes will give you a grainier picture on your analog channels. Also, they are planning on putting every analog channel in the digital band as well, but not sure when this will take place. Mr. Pritchett suggested that, in the meantime, the Technicians should tell customers that these problems may incur.
- Audio problems – There was discussion on the different volume levels on some channels, (i.e., Channel 7, 8 and 9). The County will get back to Mr. Helmandollar with examples of other channels still having problems. It was reiterated that it is a recurring problem and that there is a definite difference between analog and digital channels. Mr. Helmandollar noted that this problem has occurred since they changed all the head-end gear and he will check into all of the channels to see if they need adjustments.

#### **IV. Reports/Questions from Commission Members**

- A. **Battlefield District** – Nothing to report.
- B. **Berkeley District** – Nothing to report.
- C. **Chancellor District** – Nothing to report.
- D. **Courtland District** – Nothing to report.
- E. **Lee Hill District** – Nothing to report.
- F. **Livingston District** – Vacant.
- G. **Salem District** – Nothing to report.

#### **V. Reports/Questions from Community & County Representatives**

Nothing to report at this time.

#### **VI. Old Business**

- A. Adelphia/VACO Bankruptcy Update – Mr. Cobb noted that the only thing new since last month is that the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has given their approval and they are looking at a July timeline, with all transfers being complete by the end of the year.
- B. Adelphia Transfer Update – Mr. Scott noted that the transfer is complete on the County side. It was approved back in December and we have received our final invoice from the attorneys.
- C. Regional Wireless Plan Update – Mr. Scott advised that the Request for Proposal has gone to the regional jail board.
- D. Cell Towers Update - Mr. Scott advised that they are having a meeting with County staff on February 10<sup>th</sup> to get an update on where they stand and should have a report next month.
- E. Verizon Franchise Agreement – Mr. Scott noted that there has been no true filing. We have been negotiating and have not asked Verizon to file any paperwork as yet. However, when the paperwork is filed, the 120 days will begin, but right now they are negotiating in good faith.
- F. Status of Audit of Adelphia – Mr. Scott noted that the audit is in the Commissioner of Revenue's office and it could take at least six months to get through all of the material.
- G. Shelter Update – Nothing to report at this time and it is still in disrepair at this time.

**VII. New Business -**

Nothing at this time.

**VIII. Next Meeting Date -**

The next meeting of the Spotsylvania County Cable TV & Telecommunications Commission is scheduled for Thursday, March 9, 2006, at 7:00 p.m. in the Board of Supervisor's Room at the Holbert Building, located at 9104 Courthouse Road.

Mr. Shelby, seconded by Mr. McCumber, made a motion to adjourn the meeting and it was passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Karkos