

BOONSBORO MAYOR & COUNCIL
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2020
PUBLIC HEARING
BOONSBORO – ANTIETAM CABLE FRANCHISE AGREEMENT

The Mayor and Council of Boonsboro held a Public Hearing as duly advertised on Monday, February 24, 2020 in the Meeting Chambers. In attendance were Mayor Howard Long, Assistant Mayor Rick Byrd, Council Members Marilee Kerns, Ray Hanson, Terri Hollingshead, Tony Nally and Rick Weaver. Also present were Town Manager Paul Mantello, Town Planner Ethan Strickler, Office Manager Kimberly Miller and Police Chief Kevin Morgan.

Mayor Long opened the Public Hearing at 6:00 PM for the purpose of receiving public input, either in support of or in opposition of the Boonsboro – Antietam Cable Franchise Agreement. He stated that due to a misunderstanding with the time, Antietam Broadband President Brian Lynch was not at the originally scheduled Public Hearing on January 6, 2020 and that the Public Hearing was rescheduled for this evening. Mayor Long reviewed that the Antietam Cable Television Franchise Agreement, which has lapsed, and Irrevocable Consent to Amendment of Franchise ensures that the Town will not lose the 5% franchise fee commission or the in-kind services of internet due to the guidance issued to Antietam Cable Television by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). He stated that the Franchise Agreement, a non-exclusive proposal, would require Antietam Broadband to pay the Town a franchise fee of 5%, up from the previous 3%, of the company's gross subscriber revenue per year for a 15 year term, noting that due to lack of infrastructure, which is expensive to build, there is not much competition for Antietam in the area currently.

Mayor Long introduced Antietam Broadband President Brian Lynch and Director of Marketing Tom Williams.

Paul Duenas, 314 Lanafield Circle. Stated that he is displeased with Antietam Broadband service and read his complaint and cyber concerns to the Mayor and Council. Addressed Mr. Lynch as to what can be done.

- Mr. Lynch stated that Antietam Broadband is currently at 80% fiber. Stated that the cyber-attacks that happened last summer were directed at damaging Antietam Broadband's reputation and not to access subscriber's information. Gave Mr. Duenas his business card and told him to contact him directly.

Linda Downs, 105 Fishing Creek Lane. Stated that she is very frustrated with the unreliability of Antietam Broadband's internet and inconsistency of service. Stated that she must take her granddaughter out of the area to do homework because they can access internet at home. Stated that it took over a year for Antietam Broadband to install the fiber-optic service in the Crestview Development and that there are still unfinished wires laying about.

- Mr. Lynch apologized and stated that they will tidy up Crestview. Gave Ms. Downs his business card and told her to contact him directly.

Carrie Stevenson, 213 Green Fern Circle. Stated that she wants Comcast in Boonsboro. Stated that she moved here from Baltimore and runs a small business out of her home. Stated that she can not function with poor internet service and just wants Comcast in Boonsboro, noting that the Antietam Broadband fiber-optic option is very expensive.

- Mayor Long stated that he spoke to a representative from Comcast at Maryland Municipal League and they informed him that they were hit as well during the summer cyber-attack.
- Mr. Lynch stated that it would be very expensive for Comcast to run lines in Boonsboro. Gave Ms. Stevenson his business card and told her to contact him directly.

Amanda Coronado, 213 Green Fern Circle. Stated that she moved here from Baltimore with Ms. Stevenson and runs a small business out of her home. Stated that she is an artist and is required to send large art graphics to her clients as well as invoices. Stated that she cannot do what she needs to do for her business because at times she cannot access the internet and the download and upload speeds are not good.

- Mr. Lynch apologized for the speed issues and inconsistency. Gave Ms. Coronado his business card and told her to contact him directly.

Council Member Kerns stated that there were 36 attendees at the January Public Hearing that had many of the same issues. She stated that she, too, has experienced intermittent low speeds which are more frequent and outages that occurred just last week. She further stated that the Flight Gigabyte is double the cost of regular internet service and many residents simply cannot afford the added cost. Council Member Kerns stated that it also seems like internet speed gets slower depending on the time of day.

Mr. Lynch stated that speed issues can be created by overloading local networks in your home and compared it to multiple people showering and using water in the home at the same time. He stated that the result is that the personal system suffers.

Assistant Mayor Byrd stated that he has constant modem issues and has had 10-12 outages since January, which he gets an alert for on his phone every time his doorbell security camera goes offline. He stated that when he contacted Antietam Broadband, they told him he cannot get Flight Gigabyte even though his neighbors 8 houses away have the service. Mr. Lynch stated that they plan to continue the installation of the Flight Gigabyte lines but that the installation was stopped due to the Town not signing the Agreement. Council and Town staff stated that was never conveyed to them.

Mr. Williams stated that doorbell security camera uploads take up a significant amount of internet from a service location. He stated that Antietam Broadband is looking to find new vendors and trends for better upload and download speeds and plant performance. He further stated that Antietam Broadband is very concerned with the customer experience.

Council Member Hanson stated that last month there was a roomful of people wanting to talk to Mr. Lynch and he didn't show up on time. He stated that the bottom line is that there is an entire Town that is upset with Antietam Broadband's product performance, noting that residents are very displeased. He further stated that he is imploring that Mr. Lynch and Antietam Broadband do better and help unhappy customers. Council Member Hanson asked if there are issues in other Municipalities or if the internet issues are just here in Boonsboro. Neither Mr. Lynch nor Mr. Williams commented.

Hearing no further comments, **Motion** by Council Member Hollingshead, second by Council Member Kerns to adjourn the Public Hearing at 6:52PM. **Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly A. Miller
Office Manager

