

**FARMINGTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
SPECIAL MEETING**

**Wednesday, September 16, 2015**

Chairman Joshua Bell called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. with the following members present: Andrew Buckland and Michael Fogg. Matthew Smith was unable to attend. Stephan Bunker joined the meeting at 6:50 P.M. Town Manager Richard Davis, Town Secretary Linda Grant, Channel 11, and members of the press and public were also in attendance.

**ITEM 1: Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag**

Chairman Joshua Bell led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

**ITEM 2: Welcome Wilton Residents and Board of Selectmen**

Richard Davis welcomed Wilton Selectman Jeffrey Adams and Wilton Town Manager Rhonda Irish. There were no Wilton residents in attendance.

**ITEM 3: To Conduct a Public Meeting to Discuss the Performance of the Cable Operator under the Current Cable Television Franchise and receive input on any Cable Services Subscribers would like to see in the Future**

Richard Davis explained that the purpose of this joint Farmington and Wilton public meeting is to give cable television subscribers an opportunity to discuss the performance of the current cable operator under the current cable television franchise, and provide input on any cable services they would like to see in the future. He stated that this public meeting is part of the process for renewal of the current franchise agreement, which is effective May 1, 2007 through April 30, 2017. Mr. Davis introduced George Allen, Vice President and General Manager of Bee Line Cable. Mr. Allen gave an overview of the cable franchise over the last eight years, which included: the building of approximately 25 miles of line extensions, of which 16 miles were in Wilton and 9 miles were in Farmington, and the future outlook of additional line extensions; the low ratio of subscribers within a one (1) mile radius; the number of trouble calls for the cable, internet and telephone services that Bee Line provides, and how they are billed, as well as the number of trouble calls that are from the elderly and consist mostly of consumer education. He also explained the subscriber broadcast tiers, ie. video, digital, HDTV, and how they relate to the loss of cable subscribers versus the increase of internet subscribers and relative to the high cost of programming; how channel lineup is networked, and Bee Line's inability to move channels around in their packages; how the cost of channel

**ITEM 3: To Conduct a Public Meeting to Discuss the Performance of the Cable Operator under the Current Cable Television Franchise and receive input on any Cable Services Subscribers would like to see in the Future (Cont.)**

network contracts are based on the subscriber count; that Bee Line Cable is a member of the American Cable Association and they are constantly fighting with the FCC to try to give them more support; and transport agreements have recently been signed that will significantly lower internet costs and allow them to offer better packages soon. Several Farmington residents were present and participated in the discussion. In answer to a question as to why Farmington’s only option for cable television service is through Bee Line Cable, Mr. Allen stated that the FCC Rules and Regulations in the 1984 Consumer Protection Act and 1992 Cable Act make cable television franchise agreements non-exclusive, so another cable company can come in, but the overbuild is not economically feasible due to the density requirements. Mr. Allen explained the programming tier system again, and Bee Line Cable’s inability to change the channels and networks within each tier because of the programmers. In answer to a question regarding the possibility in the near future of a “Fee for Service” package, Mr. Allen stated that the FCC is currently looking into such a package and the most important thing a consumer can do to try to help this change come about is to complain to their legislators and the FCC. Mr. Allen pointed out the pros and cons of “Fee for Service”. He also reviewed the programming costs, and the elimination of analog and conversion to a digital format and HD soon which will allow more band width for whatever changes need to be implemented in the future. The Selectmen thanked Mr. Allen for his presentation.

**ITEM 4: To Discuss Other Business**

There was no other business to discuss.

There being no further business to come before the Board, **Stephan Bunker moved to adjourn at 6:57P.M.; Michael Fogg seconded.**

**VOTE           AFFIRMATIVE   4           ABSENT   1           MOTION CARRIED  
  (Matthew Smith)**

Minutes respectfully submitted by Linda H. Grant.

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Andrew R. Buckland - Secretary