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Mass. Dept. of
Telecommunications & Cable

TOWN OF HOLLAND

Select Board

27 Sturbridge Road
Bettina Schmidt—Member
Lawrence Mandell—Member
Ernest Fancy—Chair
November 18, 2019

Holland, Massachusetts 01521

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Janine C. Drake—Town Administrator

William Bendetson Hearing Officer
Department of Telecommunications and Cable
100 Washington St.
Boston MA 02118-6500
Email: william.bendetson@mass.gov

Re: Public Hearing on Cable Television Rates 12/4/2019 Cox Cable/Holland MA.

Dear Mr Bendetson:

This letter is a petition to intervene in the Public Hearing on Cable Television Rates 12/4/2019 Cox Cable/Holland MA. The Select Board of Holland would like to provide the following:

We are opposed to an increase. Last year on March 1, 2018 the Tier 1 rates were increased 75.5% from \$11.11 to \$ 19.50. Our town is primary a town of senior citizens. Another \$ 8 increase will absorb 3% of their average SS increase of \$ 288 this year. The board believes the seniors were to receive two years with no rate increase. This has not been happened. Also seniors were to given a 15% discount. How has this been communicated? This is another rate pending rate increase, where there are no perceptible increases in service. To the contrary we have seen a reduction in service.

We continually and constantly receive complaints about the loss of a Boston station. We had addressed this issue in 2015 rate increase but we feel that as fiduciaries to the town, we have the responsibility to re-visit this. Specifically, in 2014 Cox eliminated WBZ as an available channel option that they had been providing to our town for many years. During a past rate increase hearing, the town of Holland provided the commission a petition signed by over 300 residents supporting a request to have Cox restore this channel.

A Boston station is a critical link between our town and our state capital. Our zip code 01521 is in the Worcester county series. News from the Boston area is essential to our residents in our ability to obtain information and an

understanding of what is going on in our area. News, sports, shopping, and weather from Boston have a direct impact on what is happening in our town.

Although, Holland is technically in Hampden County, we border Worcester County. As a result, the preponderance of our political and social orientation is Boston, not Springfield. For Cox to deny us at least one channel with access to the Boston market prevents town residents from obtaining information that is relevant to their day-to-day lives.


Our understanding is that, generally speaking, television market access is an FCC issue and not under the jurisdiction of the Department of Telecommunications and Cable. That being said, the town in the past has had access to at least one Boston channel, so there must be a procedure in place to grant an occasional exception to the general guidelines.

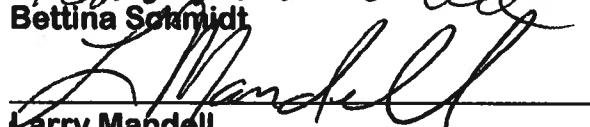
If nothing else, a possible steaming alternate was proposed at the last rate hearing. How do we learn about it and make it happen?

If, in fact, you approve the proposed increase, we ask the Department to look into this issue and exert whatever influence that you have in including a requirement of having Cox once again provide Holland access to at least one Boston channel.

Respectfully,

Holland Select Board by:


Bettina Schmidt


Larry Mandell


Ernest Fancy