

Minutes of the Wilton Select Board Meeting
January 21, 2025

(FULL RECORDING IS AVAILABLE AT www.mtbluetv.org)

Members Present: David Leavitt, Mike Wells, Tiffany Maiuri, Keith Swett, Phil Hilton, Maria Greeley (Town Manager-Absent).

Item #1- Pledge of Allegiance

Item #2-Minutes from January 7, 2025 Special Town Meeting

Motion by David/Second by Keith-To Approve the Special Town Meeting Minutes from January 7, 2025.

Vote: 5-0 Unanimous

Item #3-Minutes from January 7, 2025 Select Board Meeting

Motion by David/Second by Keith-To Approve the Select Board Meeting Minutes Meeting from January 7, 2025.

Vote: 5-0 Unanimous

Item #4- Public to speak on a non-agenda item

Nathan Hiltz spoke on the Town website. If you open the menu titled departments and offices and click on the second item, Boards & Committees you will see a list of the people who occupy the seats. Since the last Select Board Meeting the list has been updated to display the information that is current. Thank you!

Tom Saviello commented on how fortunate we are to have Nathan around because he does the homework and keeps us all including the county commissioners on our toes. Thank you!

Item #5-Andre Cormier-Mt Blue TV

Andre Cormier gave presentation on the Director Report for 2024. (Attached)

-200 Live stream events were covered last year. 37 athletic events that were done in the Jay, Wilton, Livermore Falls, Farmington County Commissioners Meetings, Board of Directors for RSU 9. Assistance with production on UMF athletic events. Also covered were special events.

-For public access is the continuing franchise fees dropping off. It is \$14,000.00 less between Farmington and Wilton when Beeline was bought by Spectrum

-LD1967 was discussed. This bill is an effort to update legislation to reflect the current technology and keep the intention of the initial laws to make sure there was funding for public access via the revenue of service providers.

-Keith asked if Parades, Blueberry Festival, Chester Greenwood Parade were covered.

-Andre-It is traditionally covered. Though for Blueberry Festival, this past year was not covered due to staffing.

-Tiffany commented on the terrific job Andre does at Mt Blue TV. It is essential. Tiffany did ask on the archives and if the transcripts could be turned on.

-Andre explained that there is a tool you can add, chapter markers. Andre will check on adding or enabling this.

-Franchise agreement was discussed. Farmington's is a 10-year agreement that is up in 2027. Andre believes Wilton is on the same schedule. He is not sure if there is an auto-renewal. He will talk with Maria as he gets more information.

Item #6 -Franklin County Commissioner-Tom Saviello

Tom Saviello spoke on three goals. 1. To make us more transparent. 2. To make sure we are in compliance with all laws and rules that are out there. 3. To break down the silos. Tom has been working a little bit on the transparency. There was a phenomenal presentation about freedom of access, freedom of information by an attorney. Tom asked if they could put job descriptions, contracts, salaries on? We can't, we just have to redact the name. Tom got asked what does the county do well? Tom replied with, we manage money, we manage the jail and registered deeds and probate court are being managed. Some of these are dictated by law. These are some of the things Tom is working on accomplishing and are working on some of the things that are in compliance with the law.

A charter was discussed. A county charter is a goal. There is no recall provision and there is a gray area on how they deal with personnel issues. If there is a charter, it is very specific about what you do. So then, you identify who your elected officials are. We have a government that we are running that we are not only the legislative body but we are the executive body.

Shared services were discussed. What the county actually provided. Right now, it is just the Sheriff's. They used to have a county highway department. We have a road commissioner. It was recommended by Tom to bring Scott Nichols in to have a conversation in reference to police. Tom is going to try and find out if there are other counties that have created regional programs whether it be fire or police.

Tiffany asked on how we can be more efficient and Tom had the suggestion of trying to move a county meeting to Wilton, as a thought.

Item #7- Franklin County ACO-Letter of Support

Animal Control vacancies were discussed. This is a problem for several towns. Town Managers went to the Administrator and listened to concerns. It is hard to find a consistent Animal Control Officer. The county is seeking up to \$30,000.00 for two years though the Betterment Grant Fund to provide a trial run for a countywide Animal Control Officer. Maria is asking for

the Select Board to support the county moving forward to get this grant. It would not obligate us to actually accept the Grant, but whether or not we would support this effort. We do have an Animal Control Officer and she is fantastic.

Motion by Mike/Second by Phil-To Authorize Maria to send out the letter to sign on for the Betterment Grant Fund Vote: 5-0 Unanimous

Item #8-Blueberry Festival Committee Member Appointments

a. Black, Marah b. Butler, James c. Luce, Heidi d. Luce, Michael

Item#9-Comprehensive Plan Committee Member Appointments

Nick Santora

Motion by Keith/Second by Mike-To Accept all 5 members listed for the Blueberry Festival Committee and the Comprehensive Plan Committee.

Vote: 5-0 Unanimous.

Item #10-Other

David asked on the ATV Access discussion

Tiffany suggested it be put on the next Select Board Meeting

Item #11-Manager's Report

None

Item #14- Executive Session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. § 405(6)(H)-Code Enforcement Consultations

Motion by David/Second by Keith-To enter into Executive Session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. § 405(6)(H)-Code Enforcement Consultations

Vote: 5-0 Unanimous 6:24 P.M.

Item #15- Action following Executive Session, if Applicable

Action is to have the Code Enforcement Officer continue with penalty

Item #12- Executive Session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. § 405(6)(D)-Labor Contracts

Motion by Dave/Second by Tiffany-To enter into Executive Session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. § 405(6)(A)-Personnel. 6:38 P.M.

Item #13-Action following Executive Session, if Applicable

None

Item #16-Adjourn

Motion by David/Second by Keith-To Adjourn

Vote: 5-0 Unanimous 6:48 P.M.

MBTV Executive Director Report FY 2024

To the Wilton Selectboard and Town Manager Greeley,

I would like to take this opportunity to update you on how the year went for MBTV, but it is also paramount to focus on the future of MBTV. I will start with the details of another successful year.

We covered **over 200** livestream events in 2024. We had 31,882 total views, with 10,619 unique viewers. We had 275 watched broadcasts.

- **37** MBHS Athletic games - Including two Unified Basketball Games, Nordic State Championships
- **24** Jay Select board Meetings
- **26** Wilton Select board meetings - Including the Annual Town Meeting
- **24** Livermore Falls select board meetings
- **26** Farmington select board meetings - Including Annual Town Meeting and Revaluation Meeting
- **28** County Commissioners Meetings
- **20** RSU 9 Board of Director Meetings
- **5** UMF Athletic Games (Baseball and Field Hockey)

Special Events

- Farmington Recreation Holiday Dance
- Meet the Candidates County Commissioners
- Meet the Candidates Legislative Races
- Farmington 4th of July Parade
- Chester Greenwood Parade
- MBHS Graduation
- Get Ready to Vote Concert
- Foster Tech Recognition Night
- Tri-Town 4th of July Parade

Other Production

- Mass Incarceration and Parole Presentations
- BeaverMoth
- No Higher Service, Franklin County Maine's Fallen Soldiers of WWI
- Rotary Meetings
- Farmington Historical Society Meetings
- Beautiful Futures (Literacy Volunteers Collaboration)
- Franklin County Chamber of Commerce Awards
- Last season of Talkin Maine
- Teague WW1 Memorial Arch Celebration
- Western Maine Audubon Meetings
- News Gone Wrong
- Battles, Bugs, and Brothers
- CES Changemaker First Annual Awards
- Rangeley Winter Kids

MBTV Executive Director Report FY 2024

As for the future of MBTV, it is unfortunately not directly tied to the efforts of our staff. Many of you on the select board are familiar with the funding model of Public Access Stations, but I will take the time to do a brief overview. The Franchise Fees that are paid out to the town come from a percentage of two different revenue sources for the cable company. Two very specific sources. Cable subscriptions and cable advertising revenue sales. Additionally, a PEG Channel contribution of a specific amount has been contributed by the cable provider.

Here is an example of what the breakdown looked like in 2018 from the letter provided to the Town of Wilton from Bee Line Cable:

In accordance with Section 14 of the Franchise Agreement dated May 1, 2007, the franchise fee shall be paid as follows:

FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2018

Broadcast Service & OTC	\$ 173,184.38
Basic Service	204,565.81
Premium Channels	32,381.10
Advertising	<u>42,203.25</u>
	\$ 452,334.54
Rate	<u>.05</u>
Franchise Fee	22,616.73
Public Access Contribution	<u>7,500.00</u>
Total	<u>\$ 30,116.73</u>

We have known for awhile that Cable subscriptions have been wanning with the rise of streaming services and internet access. When Bee Line was purchased by Charter, we were told that things would be the same. Early this past December, I was alerted that while Bee Line was still handling the subscription numbers, advertising numbers were to come from Charter. And that they would not be very much.

Here are the numbers for this year:

PEG Fund: \$7,500
Subscription: \$15,292.91
Advertising: \$464.29

Total: \$23,257.20

This summer, LD 1967 came in effect. This bill was an effort to update legislation to reflected the current technology and keep the intention of the initial laws to make sure there was funding for public access via the revenue of service providers. Here are the benefits of LD 1967:

Here are some of the benefits included in this new law:

- 1. No loss of right-of-way rental fees* simply because of a change in delivery technology. According to data provided by Charter in EUT Testimony, over \$8.6 million in franchise fees were paid to Maine towns by Charter/Spectrum alone in 2019.*
- 2. Quarterly, not annual franchise fee payments. Cable operators and Video Service Providers will no longer be able to keep collected franchise fees for up to a year in their bank accounts earning interest that is not paid to the municipality.*
- 3. No loss of municipal control for commercial entertainment use of the public right-of-way.*

MBTV Executive Director Report FY 2024

- 4. Establishment of a PUC dispute resolution process for franchise non-compliance issues that can't be resolved at the local level with no cost to consumers.*
- 5. Guaranteed build out provisions for broadband and video services.*
- 6. Costs for upgrading cable company HD transmission equipment will not be shifted to the municipality, a savings of thousands of dollars for each municipality that televises their meetings.*
- 7. Capital and staffing costs for televising and internet streaming of municipal and school meetings will not be shifted to local tax roles or eliminated entirely.*
- 8.. PEG channels will be provided in their normal channel locations on channel selection streaming applications.*
- 9. An error in State Statute allowing for exclusive, non-competing cable franchises will be corrected.*
- 10. Consumer protections required of cable operators will be required of other video service providers providing the same services over the public right of way.*
- 11. Passage of other municipal and consumer benefits and protections as summarized in the bill.*

** Franchise (rental) fees paid to the municipality are decreasing as traditional cable tv service is being replaced by new Video Service Provider channel selection applications. This law corrects this trend.*

As the Executive Director of MBTV, I am asking this board to work with me to make sure that Spectrum / Charter is abiding by these updates to the law. This also means that other Video Service Providers should be expected to sign a Franchise Agreement with the town and collect fees to ensure the viability of public access.

Our station is a member of MCMA (Maine Community Media Association) which worked to get this legislation passed and is working to help make sure this legislation is put into effect. I will work to provide Manager Greely and the select board with information, but it is the town that will have to work on Franchise agreements with existing and additional video service providers.

I want to stress to those that are not already aware, how valuable a resource public access is. We make meetings like these accessible to the public, on-demand. We keep an active record of what takes place here and there is a different level of accountability when these meetings are recorded and live streamed. MBTV has been doing more with less for years now, because we understand the resource we are to the community and the role we can play in an informed democracy. We work with other vital non-profit community partners to try and amplify our resources and get the message out about the amazing work that is being done in our community and inform people of the resources that are available. We work to bring art and entertainment to our viewers, particularly those who cannot always get out to the many enriching events that we have in our area.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak to the board, town manager, and the viewers. And I look forward to an engaged effort to make sure that we sustain the long term future of MBTV.

Sincerely,
Andre Cormier
Executive Director, MBTV

Central Maine Media Alliance
Budget vs. Actuals: 2025 MBTV Operating Budget - FY25 P&L
 January - December 2024

	Budget 2024	Budget 2025	% Change
Revenue			
4100 PEG FUND/FARMINGTON	7,500.00	7,500.00	0.00%
4200 PEG FUND WILTON	7,500.00	7,500.00	0.00%
4300 Franchise Fees Farmington	40,242.76	31,241.41	-22.37%
4400 Franchise Fees Wilton	19,911.34	15,293.00	-23.19%
4450 Franchise Fees Jay	12,092.77	11,319.26	-6.40%
4475 Franchise Fees Livermore Falls	20,488.00	17,862.04	-12.82%
4700 Sponsorship	8,000.00	10,000.00	25.00%
4750 Membership	3,000.00	5,000.00	66.67%
4800 Media Services	10,000.00	10,000.00	0.00%
4950 GRANTS	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00%
4955 Donations Public	200.00	100.00	-50.00%
Total Revenue	\$ 130,934.87	\$ 117,815.71	-10.02%
Expenditures			
5100 Employer Expenses			
5105 Director	56,000.00	48,000.00	-14.29%
5120 Health Insurance / Retirement	10,000.00	10,000.00	0.00%
5107 Production Coordinator	15,000.00	7,000.00	-53.33%
5130 Worker's Comp	500.00	500.00	0.00%
5150 Payroll Expenses	900.00	1,100.00	22.22%
Payroll Tax	16,000.00	15,000.00	-6.25%
Total 5100 Employer Expenses	\$ 88,400.00	\$ 81,600.00	-7.69%
5140 Liability Ins	2,340.00	2,400.00	2.56%
5200 Equipment	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00%
5250 Equipment Reserve	1,000.00	0.00	-100.00%
5300 Production	1,000.00	1,500.00	50.00%
5400 Office Supplies	500.00	750.00	50.00%
5600 Postage and Delivery	100.00	100.00	0.00%
5700 Dues/Memberships	600.00	600.00	0.00%
5800 MBTV Website Fees and Maintenance	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00%
5833 Video Hosting and Storage Fees and Subscriptions	1,000.00	1,500.00	50.00%
5850 Livestream	6,000.00	6,000.00	0.00%
6100 Travel	500.00	500.00	0.00%
6200 Business Meetings/Open House	700.00	1,000.00	42.86%
6300 Marketing	750.00	750.00	0.00%
6400 Equipment Repair	1,000.00	500.00	-50.00%
6500 Accounting	1,000.00	1,500.00	50.00%
Freelance Services			
6733 Freelance MBTV	10,750.00	10,050.00	-6.51%
Total 6700 Freelance Services	\$ 10,750.00	\$ 10,050.00	-6.51%
7600 Director of Development Commission	6,000.00	7,000.00	16.67%
Total Expenditures	\$ 124,640.00	\$ 118,750.00	-4.73%



131 Lakewood Road
PO Box 2276
Skowhegan, Maine 04976-8276
Fax 207-474-0966
207-474-2727
www.getbeeline.com

December 23, 2024

Chairperson
Board of Selectmen
Town of Wilton
158 Weld Road
Wilton ME 04294

Dear Chairperson,

Enclosed please find a letter from the accounting firm of Chester Kearney concerning franchise fees along with a check in the amount of \$ 23,257.20.

Bee Line only collected ad sales revenue from October 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023 and that amount is included on the letter.

Spectrum controlled the revenue for the other 3 quarters of January 1, 2024 – September 30, 2024 and will have to be the one to figure your percentage of ad sales for that time.

Bee Line's annual contribution to the Public Access Channel of \$7,500.00 is also included in this payment. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me.

Happy Holidays!

Sincerely,

George C. Allen
Vice President, General Manager



Chester M. Kearney
Certified Public Accountants

P.O. Box 1550
12 Dyer Street, Presque Isle, Maine 04769-1550
207-764-3171 Fax 207-764-6362

P.O. Box 744
166 Bangor Street, Houlton, Maine 04730-0744
207-532-4271 Fax 207-532-4589

Barbara E. McGuire, CPA, CGMA
Timothy P. Poitras, CPA, CGMA

Michael J. Beardsley, CPA
Felicia R. Cowger, CPA

Please Reply to
Houlton

December 22, 2024

Chairperson, Board of Selectmen
Town of Wilton
158 Weld Road
Wilton, ME 04294

Re: Bee Line, Inc. Franchise

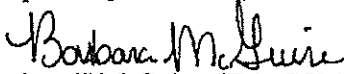
To Whom It May Concern:

In accordance with Section 14 of the Franchise Agreement dated May 1, 2007, the franchise fee shall be paid as follows:

FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2024

Broadcast Service & OTC	\$ 138,141.83
Basic Service	146,795.65
Premium Channels	20,920.72
Advertising	9,285.76
	<u>\$ 315,143.96</u>
Rate	.05
Franchise Fee	<u>15,757.20</u>
Public Access Contribution	<u>7,500.00</u>
Total	<u>\$ 23,257.20</u>

Respectfully Submitted,


Barbara E McGuire, CPA, CGMA

BEM/srg