

STATEMENT TO BE PLACED INTO THE RECORD  
BY THE  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN, TOWN OF STRATHAM

The Board of Selectmen, as the local franchising authority for cable matters in the Town of Stratham, wish to place the following statement into the record of this regular meeting regarding the proposed Verizon cable franchise agreement.

1. The Town of Stratham is very interested in having a competitive cable service provider in the Town.

2. The Town of Stratham is expecting to conduct ascertainment hearings, which are anticipated to be joint ascertainment hearings attended by representatives of Comcast and Verizon.

3. Donahue, Tucker & Ciandella, PLLC, Town's special counsel in these negotiations, had arranged for a meeting to be held in May with Verizon representatives. That meeting, at Verizon's request, was to be held prior to the Town receiving a proposal from Verizon. Verizon withdrew from that meeting.

4. There has recently been publicity regarding what New Hampshire towns seek in the cable franchise with Verizon, including parity on the number of PEG channels and franchise fees. This parity is an operation of New Hampshire law (RSA 53-C:3-b), which provides, in part:

"All franchises shall be nonexclusive. No municipality shall grant any additional franchises to cable service within its jurisdiction on terms or conditions more favorable or less burdensome than those in any existing franchise within such municipality."

In accordance with New Hampshire law, the Town must ensure that the cable franchise being negotiated with Verizon, taken as a whole, is not more favorable or less burdensome than the franchise to be negotiated with Comcast during the current renewal process.

5. The Board of Selectmen wants to bring Verizon to the Town as a competitive cable provider. The Board is committed to executing an efficient, expeditious negotiation to accomplish this; the Board needs a negotiating partner, however, and we urge Verizon to return to the negotiations with Stratham.