



Agenda Date: 12/1/21
Agenda Item: IIIC

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
Board of Public Utilities
44 South Clinton Avenue, 1st Floor
Post Office Box 350
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0350
www.nj.gov/bpu/

OFFICE OF CABLE TELEVISION
AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION OF COMCAST)
OF GARDEN STATE L.P., FOR A RENEWAL)
CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL TO CONTINUE TO)
CONSTRUCT, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN A)
CABLE TELEVISION SYSTEM IN AND FOR THE)
BOROUGH OF WRIGHTSTOWN, COUNTY OF)
BURLINGTON, STATE OF NEW JERSEY)

AUTOMATIC RENEWAL
CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

DOCKET NO. CE20010069

Parties of Record:

Dennis C. Linken, Esq., Scarinci Hollenbeck, LLC, on behalf of Comcast of Garden State, L.P.
Freda H. Gorman, Clerk, Borough of Wrightstown, New Jersey

BY THE BOARD:

On November 7, 1979, the Board of Public Utilities ("Board") granted Audubon Electronics, Inc. ("Audubon") a Certificate of Approval ("Certificate") in Docket No. 798C-6537 for the construction, operation and maintenance of a cable television system in the Borough of Wrightstown ("Borough"). On November 6, 1980, the Board approved the transfer of the Certificate from Audubon to New York Times Cable Company of New Jersey ("NYT"), in Docket No. 8010C-6721. On July 26, 1989, in Docket No. CM89030342, the Board approved the transfer of the Certificate from NYT to Garden State Cablevision, L.P. ("Garden State"). On September 8, 1995, the Board issued a Renewal Certificate of Approval ("Renewal Certificate") to Garden State, in Docket No. CE95010050.

On January 5, 2000, in Docket No. CM99110855, the Board authorized the merger of Lenfest Communications, Inc., which owned a 50% interest in Garden State, with and into a wholly owned indirect subsidiary of Comcast Corporation, which owned the remaining 50% interest. Subsequent to the merger, Garden State was renamed Comcast Cablevision of Garden State, L.P. ("Comcast Cablevision"). On September 9, 2003, Comcast Cablevision informed the Board that it would now be known as Comcast of Garden State, L.P. ("Petitioner"). On May 5, 2005, the Board issued a Renewal Certificate to the Petitioner in Docket No. CE04091045. Although the Petitioner's above referenced Renewal Certificate expired on November 7, 2019, it is authorized

to continue to provide cable television service to the Borough pursuant to N.J.S.A. 48:5A-25, pending disposition of proceedings regarding the renewal of its Renewal Certificate.

On October 7, 2019, the Petitioner notified the Borough of its intention to exercise its right under the automatic renewal provision of the Borough's municipal consent and the Renewal Certificate. On January 24, 2020, the Petitioner filed with the Board for Automatic Renewal of its Renewal Certificate for the Borough, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 48:5A-16, 19, and 25 and N.J.A.C. 14:17-6.9 and 14:18-13.6 ("Petition"). The Petition indicates that the Borough's ordinance granting municipal consent to the Petitioner provided for an initial term of fifteen (15) years with an automatic renewal term of ten (10) years.

The Petition is based on the Borough's ordinance adopted on August 11, 2004 granting renewal municipal consent to the Petitioner. On August 20, 2004, the Petitioner accepted the ordinance, which provided in part, for an automatic renewal term of ten (10) years.

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

The Board has reviewed the Petition and the application filed therein by the Petitioner. Based upon this review and the recommendation of the Office of Cable Television and Telecommunications, the Board **HEREBY FINDS** the following:

1. The Petitioner possesses the requisite legal, character, financial, and technical qualifications for the awarding of a Renewal Certificate, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 48:5A-22 to 29, N.J.A.C. 14:18-13.1 to .9.
2. The design and technical specifications of the system shall ensure that the Petitioner provides safe, adequate, and proper service.
3. The Petitioner has represented that all previously required construction within the franchise territory is complete.
4. The franchise period as stated in the ordinance is 10 years, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 48:5A-19 and 25. The Board finds this franchise period reasonable.
5. The Borough has reserved the right to review the performance of the Petitioner with regard to the ordinance, and seek redress administratively through the Board. If the Borough determines that the Petitioner has failed to substantially comply with the material terms and conditions of the ordinance, the Borough shall provide written notice to the Petitioner of such alleged instances of non-compliance and shall grant the Petitioner ninety (90) days to cure such deficiency. If the Petitioner does not cure the deficiency, the Borough may petition the Board for appropriate administrative action, including revocation of the franchise or reduction of the franchise term.
6. The Petitioner shall utilize the line extension policy ("LEP") attached to the Certificate (Appendix "I"). The minimum homes per mile ("HPM") figure is thirty-five (35).

7. The Petitioner shall maintain informational tariffs for unregulated service rates, and promptly file any revisions thereto.
8. Pursuant to statutory requirements, the ordinance specifies a complaint officer to receive and act upon complaints filed by subscribers in the Borough. In this case, it is the Office of Cable Television and Telecommunications. All complaints shall be received and processed in accordance with the applicable rules.
9. The Petitioner shall maintain a local business office or agent for the purpose of receiving, investigating and resolving complaints. The Petitioner currently maintains the local office located at 42 Centerton Road, Mount Laurel, New Jersey.
10. The franchise fee to be paid to the Borough is specified to be 2% of the Petitioner's gross revenues from all recurring charges in the nature of subscription fees paid by subscribers for its cable television reception service in the Borough or any additional amount required by N.J.S.A. 48:5A-30. Additional regulatory fees shall be paid to the State in an amount not to exceed 2% of Petitioner's gross operating revenues derived from intrastate operations. The Board finds these fees to be reasonable.
11. The Petitioner shall provide public, educational, and governmental access services, equipment and facilities as described in the application. The Petitioner currently offers a system-wide shared educational and governmental access channel and a community bulletin board.
12. The Petitioner shall provide standard installation and Total Preferred cable television service, free of charge, to one (1) outlet to each: police, fire, emergency management facility, and public library in the Borough, provided that each facility is within 175 feet of active cable distribution plant. Each additional outlet installed, if any, shall be paid for on a materials plus labor basis by the Borough. Monthly service charges shall be waived on all additional outlets.
13. The Petitioner shall provide Total Preferred cable television service, free of charge, to one (1) outlet in the existing Municipal Administration Building at 21 Saylor's Pond Road, in the Borough. The Petitioner shall provide standard installation and total preferred cable television service, free of charge, to one (1) outlet in any qualified future Municipal Administration Building, provided that the facility is within 250 feet of active cable distribution plant. Each additional outlet installed, if any, shall be paid for on a materials plus labor basis by the Borough. Monthly service charges shall be waived on all additional outlets.
14. The Petitioner shall provide or continue to provide standard installation and Total Preferred cable television service, free of charge, to one (1) outlet into each school in the Borough, public and private, elementary, intermediate and secondary, provided that each facility is within 175 feet of active cable distribution plant. Each additional outlet installed, if any, shall be paid for on a materials plus labor basis by the school requesting service. Monthly service charges shall be waived on all additional outlets.

15. The Petitioner shall provide free basic Internet service via high-speed cable modem on one (1) non-networked personal computer in each qualified existing and future school in the Borough, public and private, elementary, intermediate and secondary, at no charge, provided each facility is within 175 feet of active cable distribution plant. The Internet service shall be installed on a personal computer that is accessible to the students and shall not be used for administrative purposes only.

Based upon these findings, the Board **HEREBY CONCLUDES**, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 48:5A-17(a) and 28(c), that the Petitioner has the municipal consent necessary to support the Petition. Furthermore, that such consent and issuance thereof are in conformity with the requirements of N.J.S.A. 48:5A-1 to -64 and that the Petitioner has complied or is ready, willing, and able to comply with all applicable rules and regulations imposed by or pursuant to State and federal law as preconditions for engaging in the proposed cable television operations. The Board also **FINDS** that the Petitioner has sufficient financial and technical capacity; that the Petitioner meets the legal, character, and other qualifications necessary to construct, maintain, and operate the necessary installations, lines, and equipment; and that the Petitioner is capable of providing the proposed service in a safe, adequate, and proper manner.

Therefore, the Petitioner is **HEREBY ISSUED** this Automatic Renewal Certificate of Approval as evidence of the Petitioner's authority to construct and operate a cable television system within the entirety of the Borough.

This Automatic Renewal Certificate of Approval is subject to all applicable State and federal laws, the rules and regulations of the Office of Cable Television and Telecommunications, and any such lawful terms, conditions, and limitations as currently exist or may hereafter be attached to the exercise of the privileges granted herein. The Petitioner shall adhere to the operating standards set forth by the Federal Communications Commission's rules and regulations, 47 C.F.R. § 76.1 et seq., including but not limited to the technical standards 47 C.F.R. § 76.601 through § 76.630. Any modifications to the provisions thereof shall be incorporated into this Certificate of Approval.

Failure to comply with all applicable laws, rules, regulations, and orders of the Board or the Office of Cable Television and Telecommunications or the terms, conditions, and limitations set forth herein may constitute sufficient grounds for the suspension or revocation of this Certificate.


The Board **HEREBY ORDERS** the Automatic Renewal Certificate of Approval be issued on the representation that the statements contained in the Petitioner's applications are true, and the undertakings therein contained shall be adhered to and be enforceable unless specific waiver is granted by the Office of Cable Television and Telecommunications pursuant to the authority contained in N.J.S.A. 48:5A-1 to 64.

This Certificate shall expire on November 7, 2029.

This Order shall be effective on December 8, 2021.

DATED: December 1, 2021

BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES
BY:



JOSEPH L. FIORDALISO
PRESIDENT



MARY-ANNA HOLDEN
COMMISSIONER



DIANNE SOLOMON
COMMISSIONER



UPENDRA J. CHIVUKULA
COMMISSIONER



ROBERT M. GORDON
COMMISSIONER

ATTEST: 

AIDA CAMACHO-WELCH
SECRETARY

APPENDIX "I"
Office of Cable Television and Telecommunications
Line Extension Policy

Company: Comcast of Garden State, L.P.
Municipality: Borough of Wrightstown

A cable operator is required to absorb the cost of extensions to the system in the same proportion that the extension is to the remainder of the system.

Actual subscribers served by the extension are required to absorb the remainder of the cost.

If new subscribers are added to the extension, the cost is adjusted and those who previously paid receive an appropriate rebate.

1. $\frac{\text{\# of homes in extension}}{\text{mileage of extension}}$ = homes per mile ("HPM") of extension
2. $\frac{\text{HPM of extension}}{\text{Minimum HPM that company actually constructs in the system*}}$ = ratio of the density of the extension to the minimum density that the company constructs in the system ("A")
3. Total cost of building the extension times "A" = company's share of extension cost
4. Total cost of building extension less company's share of extension cost = total amount to be recovered from subscribers
5. $\frac{\text{Total amount to be recovered from subs}}{\text{Total subscribers in extension}}$ = each subscriber's share

In any case, the company shall extend its plant along public rights of way to:

1. All residences and businesses within 150 aerial feet of the operator's existing plant at no cost beyond the normal installation rate.
2. All residences and businesses within 100 underground feet of the operator's plant at no cost beyond the normal installation rate.

* The minimum HPM that the company actually constructs in the system or municipality is the minimum number of homes that the company has historically constructed at its own cost. This is a function of the operator's breakeven point and its rate of return. Unbuilt systems will use the primary service area rather than construction.

The operator's installation policies shall apply to construction beyond the public right of way.

Detailed accounting or financial information to support the minimum HPM shall be supplied to the Office for its approval in such form as required. The minimum HPM shall be updated as appropriate.

When a request for service is received, and unless good cause is shown, cable companies shall:

1. Provide a written estimate within 30 days of such a request.
2. Begin construction within 60 days of receipt of any deposit monies from potential subscribers.
3. Complete construction within 6 months of receipt of any deposit monies from potential subscribers.
4. Inform each home passed along the extension of the potential costs for subscribers.

Subscribers who pay for an extension shall be entitled to rebates in the following manner:

1. If the company acquires new subscribers subsequent to the initial calculation of step 5 above, the formula will be adjusted and those who have previously paid for the extension will be entitled to an appropriate rebate. In no event shall the amount of the rebate exceed the subscriber's contribution.
2. The company shall keep accurate records of the cost of the extension, the amounts paid by subscribers, and any appropriate adjustments.
3. The company shall notify subscribers in the extension of their rights and responsibilities concerning the extension.
4. Once an individual dwelling has paid its share of the extension cost, future reconnections or installations shall be made at the company's standard rates.
5. After a period of 5 years from the installation of the first dwelling unit in the extension, no further adjustments shall be made. Installations after 5 years shall be at the company's standard rate.
6. Once a subscriber is installed, that person shall not normally be entitled to a refund of any monies paid for the installations, except in accordance with the rebate procedure outlined in this policy.

Definitions

Primary Service Area

The Primary Service Area ("PSA") can be an entire municipality, but in many instances the PSA is a limited area within a community outside of which a line extension policy may apply. The PSA is depicted by a franchise map and narrative, presented and recorded during the franchise proceedings. It normally remains a fixed geographic area throughout the life of the franchise.

Line Extension Survey

Potential subscribers residing outside the PSA who request service are entitled to an estimate of their share of the cost to secure service. When conducting a survey and estimating costs, a cable company should factor in all potential subscribers who could practicably be included in the extension and give consideration to apparent residential construction in areas contiguous to the proposed extension.

IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION OF COMCAST OF GARDEN STATE, L.P. FOR A RENEWAL CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL TO CONTINUE TO CONSTRUCT, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN A CABLE TELEVISION SYSTEM AND CABLE COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM IN AND FOR THE BOROUGH OF WRIGHTSTOWN, COUNTY OF BURLINGTON, STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DOCKET NO. CE20010069

SERVICE LIST

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