

CABLECASTING BOARD MEETING MINUTES - MARCH 17, 1999 - PAGE 1

Present: Abbott, Doctoroff, Fleischer, Hall, Kuhne, Spivak - Birmingham
Borgon and Janks - Beverly Hills
Leckie - Bingham Farms
DiSessa - Franklin

Absent: Devereaux - Birmingham
Saunders - Beverly Hills

Also present: Hagaman - Cablecasting Board Administrator
Gillis - Attorney for Cablecasting Board
Martinico - Director of Technology, Birmingham Schools
DiMaria - MediaOne representative
Buterbaugh - Beverly Hills Council representative
Currier - Birmingham City Attorney

Hall presided and called the meeting to order at 7:55 a.m. in the Rotary Room of the Baldwin Public Library at 300 W. Merrill Street.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION by Spivak, supported by Fleischer, that the minutes of a regular Cablecasting Board meeting held on Wednesday, February 17, 1999 be approved as submitted.

Motion passes unanimously.

FRANCHISE RENEWAL

Gillis stated that he made several attempts since the last Board meeting to call Jon Kreucher in Miami and resume the momentum both parties had achieved with franchise renewal and which was reported at the February meeting. He heard from Kreucher yesterday. Gillis described the situation that MediaOne is experiencing in Miami relative to taking over a number of TCI franchises. Kreucher will be coming into town to meet with Gillis on March 31 and the following two days in order to continue negotiations and attempt to reach a final resolution of all outstanding issues.

Gillis informed the Board that the Southfield City Council formally approved its franchise agreement with MediaOne this past Monday. DiMaria furnished him with a copy of the agreement in its final form which will be used as a model for the Birmingham consortium renewal agreement.

Gillis remarked that he was not able to present in writing what was orally presented at the last meeting for the reason that the document has not been reviewed by the cable company. At the end of the last meeting, Gillis delivered a copy of his summary of the agreement in principle. He also forwarded a copy of the revised ordinance to Kreucher for his review.

Hall added that there is a summary of the oral report on the status of informal negotiations in the minutes of the last Cablecasting Board meeting as well as being reported in the local newspapers.

MEDIAONE RELATED TOPICS

Update on Rebuild

DiMaria spoke with MediaOne's engineering staff yesterday and was informed that main line construction is about 75% completed with turn over of the new system anticipated sometime in April. Problems with the converter boxes have been rectified and box swaps have continued on pace. The call center staff is being prepared to handle an increased call volume due to the delays in turning subscribers on to the new system. Now MediaOne will have to turn over a much larger node area than originally anticipated. The engineering staff is aware of the June 30 deadline for turning over the new system.

Hagaman commented that she has received quite a few phone calls from people who are frustrated that they were given 30 days notice and the new system still is not turned on three months later. She thinks that MediaOne's marketing staff should work closely with its engineering department to avoid these problems in the future.

Hagaman received a question from a subscriber about how long it will be before MediaOne offers MediaOne Express once the new system is operational.

DiMaria responded that providing Internet service is an issue of making sure that the nodes are certified which means that the connections can handle a digital product. He expects the process to go quickly. DiMaria answered a question on what is involved internally in the home to provide a connection to the Internet.

Price Increase

Board members have received a copy of a letter from MediaOne dated February 26, 1999 regarding price increases for cable service. Also distributed to the Board members is a spreadsheet comparing cable rates in surrounding communities.

DiMaria stated that a rebuild price increase will be prorated based on when customers receive the new channel line up. There is a regular price increase for programming services which takes it from \$24.50 to \$25.43, and an additional \$.30 increase when the system is turned over to the rebuilt line up.

DiMaria clarified that MediaOne is not discontinuing premium packages but that packages will change with the rebuild due to new packages offered in the tiering. The supervisor of the customer service representatives is following up on phone calls to inform people that packages have not been discontinued.

Janks suggested that providing the Board on a regular basis with a list of the promotional packages that MediaOne offers could alleviate some of these questions.

Subscriber Correspondence

A customer complaint from Robert Bryant regarding price increases was addressed during the above discussion on premium packages. DiMaria will follow up on this complaint.

Jim Cutler of Birmingham questions when the History channel will be available. The Board suggested that it is safe to say that the new channel line up will be available by the end of June.

Mr. Jukes of Birmingham thinks that the new tiers in the programming alignment will result in increased rates. Hall suggested that it would be helpful if MediaOne's marketing department informed people that the three tiers in the new channel line up are the same as the two tiers in the old line up.

Mark Knollenby of Beverly Hills complains that there is little children's programming in the first and second tiers, and suggests that children's programming be represented in all three tiers.

John McCormick of Birmingham has problems with scheduling repairs with cable repair people. DiMaria will follow up on this.

Y2K Readiness

Hall referred to a three-page letter to the Board from MediaOne dated March 2, 1999 regarding the Year 2000. Board members asked that the Director of Legal Affairs for MediaOne join the Board at an upcoming meeting to discuss Year 2000 readiness.

Gillis remarked that companies are required by the FCC to report their assessment of the impact of Year 2000 activities on their operation. It is a matter of public information.

Monthly Subscriber Statistics

At the Board's request, DiMaria will show the number of people who watch the Pay Per View channel.

DiMaria commented on a new format for subscriber connection information. Service statistics are in the process of being compiled for the April report.

Monthly Access Report

The Board reviewed local origination programming for March 1999.

MEDIAONE UPDATE TOPICS

Charges - Extra Outlets

DiMaria will have tentative information at the next meeting.

Direct Debit

DiMaria stated that a mailing will go out with the May bills to initiate the direct debit service.

Education Link - Americast/MediaOne

There has been no update from Ameritech.

MLAC 9 REPORT

Colgan presented highlights of the March production report. Inquiries about Channel 9 programming will be recorded on the bottom of the report.

Colgan reported that MLAC-9 staff was able to access the bulletin board within eight hours after it was reported as being down at last month's meeting. He thanked MediaOne staff for their assistance.

Fleischer questioned the age of the character generator equipment. Colgan indicated that it is one of the original pieces of equipment from the origination of the franchise over fifteen years ago. It is owned by the four communities. Colgan will obtain a cost on replacing this equipment.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 a.m.