

Present: Brower, Devereaux, Kokubo, Laidlaw, Lane and Spivak – Birmingham  
Borgon, Lacroix and Pfeifer – Beverly Hills  
Leckie – Bingham Farms  
DiSessa – Franklin

Absent: Kuhne

Also Present: Hagaman - Executive Director  
Currier – Attorney for Cable Board  
Martinico – Director of Technology, Birmingham Schools  
DiMaria - MediaOne representative  
Colgan – Create Tech representative  
Helwig – Bloomfield Community Television representative

Vice-Chairperson Borgon called the meeting to order at 7:48 am in the Rotary Room of the Baldwin Public Library at 300 W. Merrill.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

MOTION by Laidlaw, supported by Brower, that the minutes of a regular Cable Board meeting held on January 17, 2001 be approved as submitted.

Motion passes unanimously.

#### **PEG ACCESS COMMITTEE REPORT**

##### **Policy Guidelines**

Devereaux, chair of the PEG Access Committee, reported on a committee meeting that was held on Monday, February 12 to look at programming on Channels 15 and 18 and develop guidelines to assist BCTV in determining which municipal programs are cablecast. The contract with BCTV specifies that up to five municipal meetings are to be covered each month. The committee would like to provide guidance to BCTV as to which programs those are.

The PEG Access Committee recommends that programming for the public access channel be managed by BCTV. All requests to produce a public access program should be submitted to Leslie Helwig.

Devereaux stated that the PEG Committee would like to review and update the policy guidelines that exist for the municipal and library access channel. It was agreed that the PEG committee should probably be the funnel for municipal requests for programming on Channel 15. A letter from Hagaman has been mailed to the city and village managers of the consortium communities asking them to submit by March 1 a list of those programs or activities that they wish to be covered during the next year. The PEG committee will review that list and make recommendations to BCTV. A production calendar of the events to be covered will be prepared. Any future requests by a member municipality to cablecast an event should come first to Executive Director Hagaman, Chairperson Kuhne, or Devereaux.

Devereaux commented that the PEG committee feels that the transition is going smoothly. He thanked Bob Colgan for his cooperation in the process. The PEG Committee looks forward to having more programming that reflects the activities and interests of our communities.

### **School District Grant Request**

Borgon reviewed that the Birmingham Area Cable Board received a one-time capital improvement grant in the amount of \$400,000 from MediaOne as a result of negotiations for a renewed franchise agreement. Part of the money has been reserved to be used for cable-related equipment for the Birmingham Public Schools.

Martinico, Director of Technology for Birmingham Public Schools, has requested a one-time grant in the amount of \$145,000 to upgrade cable related equipment as listed in a memo to the board dated October 18, 2000. She noted that it is customary for a cable company to grant funds when it negotiates an agreement with a community as part of doing business in that community. This Cable Board negotiated a one-time grant from the cable company as part of franchise negotiations. Martinico is asking for a portion of this grant to put to use in our school community.

In addition to this grant, Martinico is asking the board to consider an annual grant for the school system for the life of the franchise. This would allow the school district to procure equipment, arrange for the timely repair and replacement of equipment, and assure that the schools have the proper equipment to technically remain state of the art. If funds are generated through revenues and are available to this board, the school system always has a place where it could put funds to use for cable related equipment.

Martinico is asking for approximately \$100,000 as a one year grant this year for equipment to be used for the benefit of cable related activities with students. Martinico distributed a list of expenditures for the board to consider for this year's request for an annual grant. She understands that the board may not anticipate that kind of revenue on an annual basis, but she is interested in an annual grant to the school system as the years progress.

Martinico answered questions from board members on the proposed equipment and its use.

As a new member of the board, Lacroix asked for clarification with respect to the annual revenue and expenditures of the Cable Board. He maintains that knowledge of the board's financial status and responsibilities is necessary in order to consider the needs in the community.

Borgon stated that Brower and Hagaman will be preparing financial statements and budget projections for the board's review. Borgon proposed considering the School District's proposal as two requests. He recommends acting on the school system's request for a one-time grant of \$145,000. The board will need additional information with respect to the board's revenues and expenditures on an annual basis before it can consider an annual grant to Birmingham Schools.

There were questions on the proposed allocation of the \$400,000 grant from the cable company. Devereaux outlined three main projects earmarked to receive grant funds for capital projects. He indicated that \$80,000 was reserved to upgrade the Beverly Hills council chamber with

audio/visual equipment for cable broadcasts. The Birmingham Public Schools are requesting \$145,000 for cable related equipment. Approximately \$100,000 is needed to re-equip the mobile van. The remainder of the grant money could be reserved for future capital expenditures.

DiSessa reminded the board that the Village of Franklin has requested funds in the amount of \$20,000-\$23,000 to improve the sound system and cameras in its council chambers. DiMaria recalled discussion about adding a new microphone system and a camera for televised council meetings to update the Franklin Village Hall. DiSessa requested the assistance of Devereaux and possibly Jim Gillis from BCTV to assist Franklin with proposing an audio/visual system for Franklin.

Brower stated that he and Hagaman met to review the total capital of the Birmingham Area Cable Board and look at revenue projections on an annual basis. Hagaman prepared a balance sheet that shows a current balance of \$576,000. Under the new franchise, the municipalities receive an additional \$150,000 annually to support PEG access. Those monies are then forwarded to the board, which now oversees PEG operations. The board receives an additional \$100,000 to support board operations and the government channel. It is estimated that the board will have approximately \$100,000 a year that will be reserved for future equipment needs. Brower asked that the board appoint a finance subcommittee to prepare a budget and financial forecast for the Cable Board.

Lacroix stated that he assumes that the Birmingham School District has an annual budget for its technology department. He asked Martinico if she would provide the board with information on the school district's budget in order to obtain an overall picture of how much is being invested in technology and how much is expected from the Cable Board. Martinico commented that the school system will continue to make a significant ongoing commitment toward the use of cable television/cable production. She will work with the board on providing the information requested.

MOTION by DiSessa, supported by Laidlaw, that the Birmingham Area Cable Board confer \$145,000 to the Birmingham Public Schools as a one-time grant for cable related equipment. Because the funds are reserved for capital investments, the School District is requested to provide the Cable Board with a report on the expenditure of these funds.

Motion passes unanimously.

Borgon stated that the board will revisit the request for an annual grant to the school district after reviewing financial data requested by board members. Spivak and DiSessa volunteered to work with Brower and Hagaman to prepare financial statements for the board's review.

## **COMCAST RELATED TOPICS**

### **Link BCTV/BACB**

DiMaria reported that the end of March is the anticipated time frame for completing the configuration of the system to send live programming from BCTV through existing fiber to MLAC-15. An Edison permit is needed before work can be started. DiMaria will keep the board updated.

### **Subscriber Complaints/Requests**

The Cable Board received a request from Paul Barrett of Birmingham to add *TV Land* to the channel line-up. The cable company has informed him that a channel is not added until enough people call in to request that channel.

DiMaria commented that about 85% of the channel line up of Comcast and MediaOne overlap. Comcast is in the process of evaluating channel changes to its recently acquired systems. This process should be complete in the near future. DiMaria commented on the combination of factors that are involved in making a decision on the channel line-up.

DiSessa stated that a Franklin resident, Mr. Fenton, called a few days ago about a problem with his cable line. DiMaria responded that he put a rush on the repair and will follow up on this complaint.

### **Update on Rebuild – Internet**

DiMaria announced that the rebuild of the system has been completed with the certification of the final node in downtown Birmingham.

### **Emergency Alert System**

DiMaria stated that nothing has changed with respect to equipment on back order that will rectify problems with the Emergency Alert System. Everything possible has been done in terms of software fixes to limit the amount of alerts. The National Weather Service public relations people have requested a meeting with Comcast representatives to see if there is something that can be done in the interim. DiMaria continues to follow up on this and hopes to have the problem resolved before the start of the upcoming storm season.

### **Monthly Subscriber Statistics**

DiMaria related problems with preparation of the system statistics report due to the transition to Comcast. He will provide the board with two reports at the next meeting.

### **UPDATE - INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT**

Currier suggested that a committee be appointed to revise the Interlocal Agreement between the City of Birmingham and the Villages of Beverly Hills, Bingham Farms, and Franklin. This is a necessary follow up to the By-Laws recently adopted by this board. Currier noted that there are State law changes that require the board to update the document and submit a copy to the County and State for approval.

Currier mentioned that he could furnish the board with a working model of an updated interlocal agreement. The Cable Board would then recommend adoption of a revised intergovernmental agreement to its member communities.

The board agreed to reorganize the By-Laws Committee to work on a revised Interlocal Agreement. Committee members Borgon, Laidlaw, Spivak, and DiSessa will be joined by Pfeifer and Lane. Hagaman will schedule a meeting.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT**

The mechanical condition of the mobile van has been checked, and no repairs were needed at this time. The van is stored at the Village of Beverly Hills municipal site.

Hagaman has received several phone calls about the increase in the percentage of the franchise fees shown on subscriber bills. Franchise fees have increased from five percent to eight percent. She suggested that the board draft an informational statement that could be sent to the Eccentric newspaper and the Oakland Press explaining franchise fees and where the money goes. Board members agreed that it would be helpful to have a policy statement regarding franchise fees that could be used to inform subscribers. Devereaux volunteered to work on statement to be reviewed by the board's legal counsel.

Hagaman stated that she and Brower are working on revisions to the financial statements that are necessary due to the PEG financial contributions from the cable company in addition to the usual franchise fees.

The resolution adopted by the member communities approving the Transfer of Franchise included a provision that the Cable Board and the municipalities would be reimbursed for any expenses relating to the transfer. A letter with documentation of Cable Board expenses has been forwarded to Comcast for reimbursement. Hagaman reminded representatives from each of the communities to forward information on any costs incurred as part of the Request for Transfer to Mike DiMaria for reimbursement.

## **MLAC15 REPORT**

### **Create-Tech**

Colgan reported that Create-Tech has been airing programs as per BCTV's cable guide. He related that Create-Tech experienced a failure with Comcast's character generator earlier this month. The bulletin board was switched to a backup Textscan unit. Comcast was notified of this failure, and the unit was repaired within four days.

Create-Tech was contacted by Jack Harmon of the Beverly Hills Parks and Recreation Board with a request to post a message on the bulletin board informing Beverly Hills citizens of the upcoming March 12<sup>th</sup> millage vote. Colgan contacted the Village of Beverly Hills and is waiting for a response with regard to posting this message. Pfeifer will follow up on this.

Laidlaw expressed the view that Create-Tech is not doing an acceptable job of displaying information on the electronic bulletin board. The weekly program guide is no longer posted. Borgon asked Hagaman to work with Colgan and Helwig to air the program schedule on the bulletin board.

### **BCTV**

Helwig stated that BCTV taped the last five Council meetings. Her memo dated February 16, 2001 reports on staffing at BCTV, production of the MLAC-15 monthly schedule, and Channel 18 programming.

The BCTV Program Development Committee met on January 20 with representation from this board. Public Access is reaching out into the Birmingham Area communities. BCTV has two program proposals from people from the Birmingham area.

In answer to an inquiry, Helwig stated that two volunteer workshops were held and attended by nine people. BCTV held a special workshop for a Cub Scout Troop from Beverly Hills.

Laidlaw commented that the picture was unacceptable on the broadcast of the Beverly Hills Council meeting last night. Helwig responded that she believes that the grainy picture for the first 20 minutes of a cablecast will be rectified when BCTV can air directly from its studio. DiMaria added that thawing and freezing of the old cable lines has been causing transmission problems.

Laidlaw remarked that he is impressed with some of the programming from BCTV and commends the organization for its work.

Pfeifer commented that BCTV will be covering the Beverly Hills Candidates Night sponsored by the League of Women Voters. The forum will take place on Monday, February 26 but will not be broadcast live due to a conflict with the live airing of the Birmingham Commission meeting. The candidate's night will be replayed several times before the March 12 Beverly Hills Election.

Lacroix thanked Helwig for giving him a tour of the BCTV facility. Lacroix mentioned that he was involved in arranging the workshop for the Beverly Hills Cub Scout Troop and affirmed that it was a remarkable experience for the scouts.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

Borgon asked Martinico if she has located someone in the school district that could work with the board on developing a web site for the Birmingham Area Cable Board. Martinico responded that more direction is needed from the board on this topic. Hagaman was asked to work with Martinico on this project.

Borgon commented that the board's contract with Create-Tech will terminate soon. He requested a report on the status of the equipment in the Create-Tech studio that is owned by the board. Devereaux will look at the equipment. Martinico stated that some of the equipment will have to be disposed of with proper environmental procedures. She will provide Hagaman with the name of a company that provides that service.

Laidlaw remarked that a board member expressed concern last month about the length of the Cable Board meetings. Laidlaw proposed changing the time of the meetings from mornings to evenings. There was no support for meeting in the evening.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:04 am.