

Present: Correa, Greenslade, Hirsch, Hollinshead, Kuhne - Birmingham
Borgon, Delaney, Pfeifer, Pinkos – Beverly Hills
Anderson – Franklin
Ettenson – Bingham Farms

Absent: Camp and Wilson – Birmingham
Woodard – Beverly Hills

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

Borgon called the meeting to order at 7:45 a.m. in the Village of Beverly Hills municipal building at 18500 W. Thirteen Mile Road.

APPROVE MINUTES

Motion by Pfeifer, seconded by Pinkos, that the minutes of the Birmingham Area Cable Board held on Wednesday, May 21, 2003 be approved as submitted.

Motion passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

PEG Committee

Hollinshead reported that the PEG Committee met on June 13 and discussed additional programming for municipal/library Channel 15. Progress has been made with the help of BCTV in developing a program about an issue of interest to our constituents. There is footage taped and resources collected to support a program on the plethora of issues that surround the Rouge River basin in this area. The next step is to package all of this into an issue-oriented program that the municipalities would endorse.

The Board and PEG Committee are structured in a way that they can take substantive programming concepts only up to a point at which time they need to use other resources such as writers and producers to put the program together. Much of the programming seen on both cable channels outside of municipal meetings is developed by people who create or host the shows with the help of BCTV. The PEG Committee will have to fill that role as it goes forward with issue-oriented programming.

The PEG Committee with the assistance of Hagaman also accomplished significant work at its last meeting on the Request for Proposal (RFP) for cable access management services. The programming contract with BCTV expires in December of 2003. Board members have received a copy of a draft RFP for its review and comment.

Hagaman proposes to advertise the Request for Proposal by the end of this month in order for the Board to accept bids by August and make a decision on a provider by September or October.

Borgon asked for Board discussion on the draft Request for Proposal for Cable Access Management.

Hollinshead outlined the differences from the previous contract. Language has been added to require the supplier to assist the PEG Committee in identifying writers, producers and others who can facilitate the creative development of programming for our channels. Other changes update the agreement and the relationship with the provider.

Comments and questions on the RFP were addressed by Hollinshead. The term of the contract is three years, but it was suggested that the Board could be flexible on the term of contract.

Borgon proposed that the ability to view and monitor our cable channels should be required in the RFP. BCTV can see the feed going out but cannot view what plays on the air to the consortium communities.

It was indicated that it would be a Comcast issue to provide that capability to our provider. DiMaria stated that he will investigate an opportunity to add additional fiber and supply that connection to BCTV this summer in conjunction with work on the wide area network.

Kuhne questioned whether it is reasonable to require a supplier to receive and monitor Birmingham area channels.

It was asked if there are policy guidelines for Channel 18. Currier responded that the Board has been operating under the guidelines defined by federal law without adopting separate guidelines. He recommends that the Board adopt guidelines for the public access channel as part of the Request for Proposal. BCTV has guidelines for the Channel 18 that could be considered for adoption by the Cable Board. In the event that the Board changes providers, the same guidelines as that provider could be adopted for administrative ease.

Modifications to the contract offered by Board members will be incorporated into a revised document. Borgon commended the PEG Committee and Hagaman on preparing a comprehensive Request for Proposal.

Motion by Kuhne, seconded by Ettenson, to approve the Request for Proposal for Cable Access Management as amended at this meeting.

Motion passed unanimously.

Cable Review and Liaison Committee Report

The Committee has contacted neighboring cable boards regarding the idea of joining with them in some fashion to gain a more powerful voice. A meeting with the executive director of the Western Oakland County Cable Communications Authority (WOCCCA) is scheduled. The Committee is working on developing an arrangement with the Intergovernmental Cable Communications Authority (ICCA).

Ettenson has provided a list of key legislative names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses at both the state and federal levels. The Committee's next step is to develop a communications strategy in cooperation with the other cable boards.

Communication with local government bodies where there is no liaison was discussed at the last Committee meeting. Birmingham and Franklin are not represented by a liaison at Cable Board meetings. Individuals at the Birmingham and Franklin governmental offices have been identified and will be contacted after the Committee arrives at a plan, which will probably involve a semi-annual report to each of the governing bodies.

Action reports will be used by the Committee to keep outstanding issues in the forefront. Members of the Committee will make notes at Cable Board meetings and track items that require follow up, noting who is responsible and a deadline.

It was questioned whether contacting legislators about issues of interest to cable boards could be misconstrued as lobbying.

Currier responded that the question is whether the cable boards are lobbying or just writing as a body to its legislators. The nature of the contact is something to consider. There is a public act in the state of Michigan regarding registration of lobbyists, with certain people being exempt. The act has been controversial and difficult to enforce.

Board members represent four different communities. It was questioned whether members have the authority to advocate specific positions within this industry considering that their respective commissions or councils may disagree with that position. Currier will review the Intergovernmental Agreement and respond to this question.

It was suggested that the goal of the Cable Review and Liaison Committee at this point is to gather information and ask questions.

APPOINT A BOARD DELEGATE TO THE NATOA CONFERENCE

The NATOA (National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors) Conference will be held September 10-13 in Denver, Colorado. Borgon stated that he attended the annual conference last year in Chicago with the Executive Director and found it to be informative and enlightening. It is an opportunity to communicate with people from other consortiums as well as Comcast representatives and to become educated on current topics and new technology.

Elizabeth Correa volunteered to attend the NATOA Conference this year as the Birmingham Area Cable Board delegate.

Motion by Ettenson, seconded by Pfeifer, to authorize Elizabeth Correa to attend the Annual NATOA Conference on behalf of the Birmingham Area Cable Board from September 10-13, 2003 in Denver, Colorado.

Motion passed unanimously.

COMCAST RELATED TOPICS

Subscriber Complaints

There were nine complaints received this month: four service related (picture quality), one billing problem, one audio problem on channel 22, one complaint about no live feed for a Beverly Hills Council meeting, and two problems with lines not being buried. All but one issue have been resolved, and that complaint (#46) will be held over until next month's meeting.

Hagaman thanked Comcast for its efforts in handling a complaint from Mr. Louis Trudell with respect to receiving interference on Channel 22. Comcast improved the channel's reception by taking the feed from a different Comcast head end. DiMaria added that the problem was a matter of the reception from the channel coming to Comcast, which was never stellar.

Board questions on a couple of the complaints were answered by Hagaman and DiMaria.

Birmingham Link

Attorney Tim Currier reported that, since the last Board meeting, Comcast has provided Birmingham engineer Paul O'meara with revised plans for installation of the Birmingham link. O'meara will have that review completed prior to a meeting scheduled for Friday with Mike DiMaria, Jon Kreucher, and a Comcast engineer for the purpose of finalizing Birmingham link issues.

Monthly Subscriber Statistics

The Board reviewed Comcast subscriber statistics for May, 2003.

Other Issues

Hagaman will be contacting Board members to schedule a date to meet with Ann Marie Patton, Vice-President of Customer Service for Michigan, at Comcast's Sterling Heights facility. This call center is a blueprint for the building under construction in Plymouth.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Hagaman stated that the Board has been receiving quarterly complaint log reports from Comcast. Unfortunately, complaint records were inadvertently deleted by Comcast information services staff and will have to be rebuilt from this point.

Board elections will be held next month in accordance with BACB Bylaws.

MLTV 15/PA 18 REPORT

Six regular municipal meetings have been produced this month plus one special Birmingham Commission meeting and one BACB meeting. The Beverly Hills Memorial Day Parade hosted by Andrew Aubrey and Bob Borgon has been airing, and the Birmingham Concerts in the Park series has begun.

BCTV has produced 19 programs for Channel 18. Helwig is adding a Statement of Compliance to its Policies and Procedures Manual for producers. BCTV has a similar statement for people submitting tapes of programs that have been produced elsewhere.

Helwig reported that BCTV has purchased a Canon XL1 camera that will be used for “on location” shoots. The new camera is compact and better suited than current equipment for shows requiring a “walking/talking” scenario and for shows that require the camera operator to work in a tight place. Helwig commented on the benefits realized by the use of their laptop for editing.

Construction work at BCTV studios should be complete by the end of next week.

Delaney stated that he watched the June 16 Beverly Hills Council meeting at which time the Southfield Township Clerk stated that Township Board meetings are not cablecast. He asked how a request from Southfield Township to televise or tape and replay its monthly Board meetings would be received.

It was explained that the Township of Southfield is a governmental unit comprised of the villages of Beverly Hills, Bingham Farms, and Franklin. The Township is responsible for assessing property, collecting taxes, conducting national and state elections, and issuing dog licenses. There are a handful of parcels that are located in the jurisdiction of Southfield Township because they are not incorporated into the villages. These include Acacia Park Cemetery, The Corners Shopping Center, and several residential parcels.

Hagaman stated that Comcast does not have a contract with Southfield Township. There are seven homes that comprise the Township. It is believed that the franchise fees are sent to Beverly Hills. Therefore, the Township itself provides no funding to the Board. It was suggested that, should Southfield Township wish to have its meetings cablecast, they submit a request to the Board. The Township could be assessed a charge for cablecasting the meetings.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

None

BOARD COMMENTS

Greenslade reported that the Birmingham Area Seniors Coordinating Council (BASCC) fund raising event held in April was one of their most successful fund raisers. She thanked Comcast for its generation contribution to the organization and commended the company for its community involvement.

Motion by Pfeifer, seconded by Ettenson, to go into closed session to discuss attorney/client privileged communication.

Roll Call Vote:

Motion passed unanimously.

Board members and Hagaman went into closed session with Attorney Currier at 8:55 a.m. and reconvened in open session at 9:24 a.m.

FRANCHISE FEE REVIEW

Currier requested that the Board consider a motion to direct the Chairman, Executive Director, and Board Attorney to proceed with the franchise fee review based on the Plante & Moran audit.

Motion by Pfeifer, seconded by Ettenson, to direct the Birmingham Area Cable Board Chairman, Executive Director, and Attorney to proceed with the franchise fee review based on the Plante & Moran audit.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Ettenson, seconded by Hirsch, to adjourn the meeting at 9:25 a.m.

Motion passed unanimously.