

Present: Correa, Fredrick, Frishman, Hirsch, Hollinshead - Birmingham
Delaney, Pfeifer – Beverly Hills
Ettenson – Bingham Farms
Gallasch – Franklin

Absent: Borgon, Woodard – Beverly Hills

Also Present: Hagaman - Executive Director
Christ - Attorney for Cable Board
Gillis – Bloomfield Community Television representative
Valentine – Birmingham Staff Liaison
Beller - Comcast representative

Vice-Chairperson Ettenson called the meeting to order at 7:45 a.m. in the Village of Beverly Hills municipal building at 18500 W. Thirteen Mile Road. On behalf of the Board, Ettenson offered condolences to Bob Borgon and his family on the loss of his father this past week.

APPROVE MINUTES

Motion by Pfeifer, second by Hirsch, that the minutes of a regular Cable Board meeting held on October 20, 2004 be approved as submitted.

Motion passed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

PEG Committee

Jim Gillis reported that shooting for the Rouge River program has been completed. Engineering consultants Hubbell, Roth & Clark have been contacted to begin work with BCTV on formulating a script. The project is on target in terms of the completion date.

Cable Action Committee

The Cable Action Committee did not meet in the last month. Hirsch remarked that several Board members toured Comcast's head end signal distribution center in Taylor. Following the technical tour, members spoke with several Comcast managers.

The TV Guide channel was a topic of discussion in terms of subscriber complaints about the limited space for program listings on the analog channel. The upper two-thirds of the TV guide channel is devoted to commercial messages, which does not give viewers ample viewing room for the program listing.

Comcast people explained that they have no control over content and that TV guide management decides the format of that channel. Board members understood that Comcast owns TV Guide and might be expected to have a say in the matter. Comcast representatives emphasized that all they could do was pass the subscribers' sentiments on to TV Guide management and report back to the Board.

Beller stated that, as a result of the Board's request for changes to the TV Guide Preview channel, a follow up discussion with TV Guide affiliate representatives indicated that there was not the ability to make a change to the size of the advertising portion of the Preview Guide at this time. Beller thanked members who took the time to attend the tour of the head end facility.

There were questions and comments from Board members on this topic. Hagaman clarified that there is no description or requirements for the TV guide channel in the franchise agreement. It was questioned why an improved TV guide channel with less advertising is received in certain cities. Beller responded that she could check into this.

It was suggested by a Board member that this is a marketing issue and not a technical issue with the motivation being to promote the Comcast digital tier. The matter has been dropped.

COMCAST RELATED TOPICS

Subscriber Complaints

Hagaman stated that there were three subscriber complaints this month, and all three have been resolved. There was a request to broadcast the Catholic channel all day. The channel is currently shared between C-SPAN and CTND. The subscriber was informed that their request would be forwarded to Comcast's marketing department. Hagaman believes that decisions are made based on the volume of requests received. Two service related problems in Beverly Hills were resolved to the satisfaction of the subscribers.

Two other complaints that came in after the Board packets were distributed will be included with next month's material. Hagaman remarked that one of those complaints involves a service related problem that raises an ongoing issue. It has been questioned why Comcast cannot automatically credit customers when they know there is an outage in an area. A customer must call and request a credit. With the technology available to Comcast, they should be able to generate a credit when there is an area-wide outage of over four hours.

Beller stated that she could look into whether Comcast has the technical ability to do this. However, it is not the practice of Comcast to monitor their customers' accounts and automatically provide a credit. She added that outages are often resolved prior to a customer knowing about them.

Monthly Subscriber Statistics

There were no comments on the Comcast system statistics for October.

Other Issues

Hollinshead asked for an update on the Comcast advertisement that was removed from this broadcast network but may have run again. Beller responded that she was informed by Comcast's local marketing department that the advertisement has been pulled from the schedule. There have been no further complaints about the controversial ad.

Ettenson understands that Comcast has sent a letter to municipalities in the consortium regarding changing their complimentary cable television service from full service to basic service.

Beller explained that the franchise requires Comcast to provide basic cable service to municipalities, police, and fire departments. After reviewing the municipal accounts, Comcast realized that there were police and fire departments that were incorrectly receiving courtesy premium or pay-per-view channels. A communication was sent to these departments to advise them that Comcast is obligated to follow the rules of the franchise agreement and will effect those changes on December 1.

Ettenson remarked that there may be an item on next month's agenda to discuss the possibility of the communities taking up the slack to provide premium cable television services for fire and police departments. Beller was asked to advise the Board of the costs involved.

Hollinshead asked if there are ramifications in terms of municipal audits related to providing entertainment to city or village departments. Attorney for the Board Dan Christ will take a look at this and comment at next month's meeting.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Hagaman stated that discussion of the meeting time for the Cable Board will be postponed until the December meeting at the request of Bob Borgon.

Hagaman is attempting to arrange for Granicus representatives to give a presentation to the Board on web streaming at the December or January meeting. Both Beverly Hills and Franklin have indicated an interest in being test candidates for web streaming of municipal meetings.

Board members have received a preliminary third quarter financial report for their review. An updated financial report will be provided next month.

Board members received a monthly report from Beller summarizing current Comcast activity and announcements.

MLTV15 /PA18 REPORT

During the last month BCTV completed the production of seven regularly scheduled municipal meetings and one BACB meeting. Zack completed a program with BASCC about home cooking for seniors and the Beverly Hills Halloween Hoot on October 24th. He also taped a poetry slam program jointly sponsored by our two libraries at the Community House on October 21st. The Veterans Day ceremony was taped and was aired on Veterans Day evening.

BCTV completed a total of 33 programs for playback on PA 18 for this time period. Of this total, BACB residents produced seven programs.

The new equipment install and repairs on the MLTV mobile van are complete, and the truck is parked back at the BCTV lot. The cameras are being stored inside for the winter. The next scheduled shoot for the truck is December 12th for the Birmingham Concert Band.

In answer to an inquiry, Gillis stated that there is no available area at the Birmingham DPW for storage of the mobile van. Dimensions were provided to Joe Valentine to determine if the truck would fit into another garage. Valentine reported that the truck cannot be accommodated in the Birmingham Historical Museum garage because of its size. He will explore other options that arise.

Hollinshead suggested that the Board investigate whether there are facilities in the area that might be readily accessible and large enough to house the vehicle. It may involve an expenditure. Gillis suggested the option of the municipalities building their own heated structure on city-owned property within the four communities. Hagaman was asked to contact Lisa Martinico about storage in a Birmingham School facility. Delaney commented that off-site storage may compromise the security of the vehicle.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

None

BOARD COMMENTS

Joe Valentine reported that Birmingham is in the process of developing specifications to request quotes for upgrading the equipment for the Birmingham Commission room. He is working with the Department of Public Services to incorporate some of its equipment needs. Valentine anticipates coming before the Cable Board in the coming months with proposals and quotes for new equipment.

Pfeifer announced that Beverly Hills is short one seat on the Cable Board. Two announcements of a vacancy have been made at Council meetings. Pfeifer encouraged any Beverly Hills residents who are interested in serving on the Cable Board to submit an application by November 24 at 5 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

W. A. Zimmerman of 22191 Camelot Court raised the question of whether digital cable television is better than analog. He considered this issue from the point of view of the cable provider and the subscriber.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:26 p.m.