

Present: Decker, Fredrick, Hirsch, Jones - Birmingham  
Borgon, Mach, Pfeifer, Woodard – Beverly Hills  
Ettenson – Bingham Farms  
Gallasch – Franklin

Absent: Correa, Frishman and Tarini – Birmingham  
Verdi-Hus – Beverly Hills

Also Present: Hanson, Executive Director  
Salhaney, Attorney for Cable Board  
Antuna, Bloomfield Community Television representative  
Martinico - Director of Technology, Birmingham Schools  
Beller, Comcast representative  
Valentine, Birmingham staff liaison

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 MEETING MINUTES**

Motion by Jones, second by Fredrick, that the minutes of a Birmingham Area Cable Board meeting held on Wednesday, November 16, 2005 be approved as submitted.

Motion passed unanimously.

#### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

##### **PEG Committee**

Fredrick reported that, starting next month, municipal channel 15 will expand its playback of governmental meetings to provide 24-hour programming with meetings repeated at varying times each day. Channel 15 will run a streamlined bulletin board that is organized by community. The Committee will be publicizing the improved channel 15 in the Birmingham Eagle newspaper and hopes to develop other means of getting the news out.

With regard to public access channel 18, it is anticipated that the newly purchased bulletin board equipment will be up and running next month. It will allow BACB to have its own content separate from Bloomfield Township. The PEG Committee welcomes comments and suggestions, and Fredrick said that viewers can phone him at 248/644-5802.

##### **Cable Action Committee**

Hirsch stated that the Cable Action Committee's November meeting was devoted to drafting a sample message that residents can mail to federal legislators to express their opposition to proposed changes to the telecommunication laws. Mel Ettenson and Brian Jones took the lead in preparing the message, a copy of which was distributed the Board.

Hirsch remarked that the effectiveness of a writing campaign can be measured by the mail it generates in the offices of those we are trying to influence. He thinks that Cable Board members should dedicate themselves to sending postcards or letters using this sample as a prototype and urge their friends and neighbors to write as well. The Board should make sure

that its local government officials make themselves heard individually or collectively. Municipal government officials should understand that there will be a negative impact on the municipalities if the proposed federal changes are adopted.

Hirsch stated that he has been a City of Birmingham representative on the Cable Board since August of 2002, and today he is bowing out. He said that it has been an honor and a privilege working with the Board.

Ettenson suggested that Board members should be prepared to explain to subscribers why they should oppose changes to the telecommunications laws being proposed. It is being publicized that changes to the Telecommunications Act are designed to add more competition to the cable scenario, which is a strong motivator to the public. The proposed changes involve much more than this. The sample letter will be available to print out from the Board's web site.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

John Decker, Secretary/Treasurer of the Board, presented a report on how Cable Board funds are managed. Cable Board funds are located in two places. The Board keeps some of its money in a money market account at Franklin Bank in Southfield. Funds are also held in the Village of Beverly Hills General Fund account for the reason that Beverly Hills handles the Board's checking account. Decker noted that those funds are kept separate on an accounting basis.

Each member community receives 5% franchise fees from Comcast, keeps 60% of that amount and sends 40% to Beverly Hills. The municipalities also forward the 3% PEG fees they receive to Beverly Hills. Beverly Hills writes a check to BACB once a quarter for the amount they received from the municipalities less 90 days expenses.

Internal controls consist of the Village's yearly audit. Decker indicated that he plans to review the statements monthly or quarterly and will suggest that quarterly statements be distributed to the Board.

Decker met with Executive Director Hanson last month and also had an opportunity to discuss treasurer issues with the City of Birmingham Treasurer, who shared her thoughts on how investments are handled in Birmingham. Decker had a meeting with the individual who handles the BACB account at Franklin Bank. He noted that Hanson had met with this person recently, which resulted in raising the interest rates on the Board's money market account from 0.9% to 2.75 percent. The Board does not receive interest on the money held in the Beverly Hills account.

There are legal limitations in terms of the Board's investments. The Cable Board investments are regulated under the public acts that govern the investment of municipal funds. Decker will look into whether the Board has adopted an investment policy. He will determine whether some of the Board's money can be placed in Certificates of Deposit in order to increase interest income. Money placed in a Certificate of Deposit would not be liquid, but consideration could be given to a 30, 60, or 90-day CD. Decker will do more research and analysis on the Board's budget and investment options and report back to the members.

Decker and Hanson addressed questions from Board members about how Board revenue is managed and the current balances in the money market and Beverly Hills managed accounts. Board members were in agreement that interest income should be maximized particularly in light of the proposed telecommunications legislation and its impact on funding that will be available to the Cable Board. It was suggested that Decker attempt to meet with the treasurer for each member municipality. Hanson is working with Beverly Hills Finance Director Bob Wiszowaty on preparing a report on Board finances for the Board's review.

## **COMCAST RELATED TOPICS**

### **Subscriber Complaints**

Hanson reported that there were 12 new complaints received since the last meeting, eight of which have been reconciled. New complaints involve reception problems, a couple of missed appointments, complaints about lack of customer service, poor signal quality and reception, and one promotional dispute. Of the seven carry-over complaints, three have been resolved and four remain pending.

Comcast representative Louise Beller pointed out that many of the complaints listed as pending have been resolved. She highlighted the status of the complaints listed as pending and addressed questions from Board members.

Hanson asked Beller to comment on the contingencies faced by Comcast in terms of addressing pending complaints. Beller explained that, when a customer complaint involves intermittent issues, Comcast sets up a direct communication line with their technical supervisors in the field. If customers experiences an issue, they can directly contact a supervisor who will attempt to capture the problem. Unfortunately, that communication does not always occur, and two or more weeks may pass. Comcast shows the complaint as pending even it has not heard from the subscriber as to whether it is still an issue. Beller has discussed this with Hanson and they agree that an assumption could be made that the customer is satisfied and the intermittent problem is resolved if Comcast does not hear from that individual after a certain amount of time. Comcast will follow up by sending that subscriber a letter.

Elaine McLain of 528 Pilgrim in Birmingham reported that she experienced a pixilation and service interruption issue with her cable television service last month. Her phone call to Comcast was answered promptly, a service call was made, and her cable television problems appeared to be addressed by the technicians. She received a phone call from Comcast apologizing that the technicians were slightly late for the service call.

McLain related that she attempted to watch a movie on HBO the evening of the appointment and again experienced pixilation and a high pitched sound. She called Comcast back at 8 p.m. and was told that she lives in an area of Birmingham where this problem is likely to occur. The CSR offered to have a service person come out again. McLain remarked that there appears to be a glitch in her cable arrangement, but she will make another appointment with Comcast to address the HBO problem. McLain stated that she does see some improvement in Comcast service.

McLain noted that she was the recipient of a phone call from Comcast asking her to subscribe to Comcast high speed Internet. She does not understand why she is receiving these calls when she is on the no-call list.

Borgon encouraged McLain to apply for a position as a Birmingham representative to the Cable Board.

### **Monthly Subscriber Statistics**

There were no comments on the Comcast system statistics for October and November. Beller was asked to comment on trends during the past year. She remarked that more people are going with the digital service. Other than that, statistics are fairly consistent in this area.

### **Other Issues**

Mach recalled that the Board asked Beller to provide numbers on calls going to the overflow call center. Beller commented that she will look through her notes and try to provide the Board with that percentage later in the meeting.

Beller pointed out new developments in Comcast's technical operations department. One positive outcome of issues and problems that have arisen over the last few months is that an individual Technician Scorecard has been created to identify specific areas of improvement, including outside contractors. Another organizational change that has taken place is that engineering, construction and technical operations management has been streamlined to include cross-department reporting structures. Beller pointed out a few highlights related to Comcast in the Community.

Beller has submitted an updated complaint log from the last quarter. She indicated that customers will be notified of channel lineup changes. An updated channel lineup card is mailed to all subscribers annually.

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Hanson stated that the BACB website was updated last month and the domain was renewed ([www.birminghamareacableboard.org](http://www.birminghamareacableboard.org)). Webmaster Geoff O'Connor recommended that the Board purchase software called "Contribute" by Macromedia in order to provide greater flexibility and control over its website content. The Board authorized Hanson to purchase this software at a cost of approximately \$149.00.

Hanson related that the Board's answering machine was down for three days and has been replaced with a backup. He apologized to anyone who attempted to call the Cable office during that time.

Hanson referred to a memo from Zack Florence from BCTV and listed the items in the production van in need of repair or replacement. He will schedule a walk through of the truck with BCTV within the next couple of weeks. Borgon questioned the status of efforts to locate garage space for the van. It was noted that efforts have been exhausted in that regard. Renting space at a storage facility convenient to the BCTV crew has been suggested but not located. Hanson will continue to pursue this matter.

Hanson provided a brief legislative update on developments that have occurred with respect to proposed legislation that would effect the rights of local government to maintain and manage its rights-of-way and to eliminate local franchise requirements and related compensation. He outlined material being gathered by NATOA and other organizations.

### **MLTV15/PA18 REPORT**

Lisa Antuna reported that BCTV taped eight regular municipal meetings and a BACB meeting for Channel 15 in the last month. County Commissioner Chuck Moss produced three *Eye on Oakland* programs. Steve Rota has begun shooting the Birmingham 2005/06 budget program with Joe Valentine. Twenty-eight programs for PA 18 have been taped during the month. BCTV is producing 11 *Time Out for Opera* programs this week in conjunction with the Michigan Opera Theatre.

Antuna stated that there are several new programs to look forward to in 2006, three new series and one mini-documentary. BCTV is working with the YMCA to produce a five-minute program featuring what they offer to the area. The National Association of Investors Corporation, a national nonprofit active in this area, will do a limited series about “Better Investing”. The Oakland Pet Fund will do a series about placements for homeless pets. BCTV is working with Bloomfield Township resident Diane Bert along with Noreen Keating to produce a series based on volunteerism in Oakland County.

Ron Fredrick met with Steve Rota on December 19 to discuss a revised playback schedule. The Scala bulletin board system is being installed at BCTV, and staff is creating the new bulletin board pages for PA 18 to be launched next month. Repairs to equipment in the production van have been discussed.

Antuna stated that the language in the BCTV Policies and Procedures manual has been clarified and reissued. A form has been created to be signed by a producer who receives this packet in order that they may be held accountable. Antuna asked that the Board review the revised Policies and Procedures document for consideration and adoption at a future BACB meeting.

Borgon asked if the changes to the BCTV Policies and Procedures Manual have been highlighted. Antuna responded that the document includes the same information in a reorganized and clarified format with no policy changes. Borgon encouraged Board members to review the document before next month’s meeting. Legal counsel Salhaney asked for a redlined copy of the document. It was noted that a copy of the Policies and Procedures Manual is attached to the Board’s contract with BCTV. It is appropriate for the Board to review and accept the revised document.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Jones referred to the Cable Action Committee and acknowledged that members Tarini and Frishman are assisting with the letter campaign to get the word out.

Borgon stated that Hirsch, who is chair of the Cable Action Committee, will be leaving the Board this month. Jones volunteered to take over as the chair of the Cable Action Committee and combine the work of the legislative action subcommittee with that body.

Borgon observed that member Elizabeth Correa has not been in attendance at a Board meeting for a number of months. He received a voice mail from her about two months ago indicating that her work schedule is keeping her from attending meetings. Borgon questioned her status as a Board member.

Valentine stated that he has talked to Correa, who indicated that she was interested in continuing on the Board although her schedule has not permitted her to attend meetings over the last few months. It was noted that Ms. Correa's position is up for reappointment by Birmingham in March and that she would most likely not seek reappointment if she could not attend meetings. There was agreement that this issue would be worked out at that time.

**NEW BUSINESS**

None

**BOARD COMMENTS**

Woodard expressed her disappointment with the resignation of Arnold Hirsch from the Cable Board. He has been a valuable member and his input was appreciated. Borgon added that Hirsch will be missed on the Board.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.