

Present: Decker, Fredrick, Jones, McLain - Birmingham
Borgon, Verdi-Hus, Woodard – Beverly Hills
Gallasch – Franklin

Absent: Correa, Frishman and Tarini – Birmingham
Mach – Beverly Hills
Ettenson – Bingham Farms

Also Present: Hanson - Executive Director
Currier - Attorney for Cable Board
Antuna - Bloomfield Community Television representatives
Martinico - Director of Technology, Birmingham Schools
Beller - Comcast representative
Valentine - Birmingham staff liaison
Pfeifer – Beverly Hills Council 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 MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 15, 2006 CABLE BOARD MEETING

A correction was made on page 4, second paragraph from the bottom of the page, last sentence, to omit ‘or local network’.

Motion by Decker, second by Woodard, that the minutes of a Birmingham Area Cable Board meeting held on Wednesday, February 15, 2006 be approved as amended.

Motion passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

PEG Committee

Fredrick stated that his term on the Board will end this month due to family obligations. He remarked that it has been a terrific experience and that this Board provides an important service to the community. Fredrick believes that the biggest achievement of the PEG Committee over the past year has been to create a distinct identify for the Birmingham Area Public Access Channel 18. Equipment was purchased to create our own Channel 18 community bulletin board. A channel 18 logo appears in the lower right corner of the screen. Further, BCTV has moderated its use of the Channel 15 logo.

Another achievement of the PEG Committee was to make municipal channel 15 a 24-hour station. The question is “What’s next?” There is a concern about national franchising. Fredrick thinks that it is reasonable to assume that some form of income will continue; he does not think it is likely that Legislation will result in PEG channels going off the air.

At the last PEG meeting, Chairman Borgon brought forth a proposal to hire a full-time producer for BACB to work in conjunction with BCTV to create programming specifically related to the four consortium communities. Other tasks would include writing content for the community bulletin board, acting as an arbiter on content for our stations, and trouble shooting

cable glitches. Fredrick thinks that this is the kind of investment that could result in increased station visibility and viewing. He recommended that the PEG Committee consider this proposal.

Cable Action Committee

McLain reported that the Cable Action Committee emphasizes continued communication with the public on the essential role of local control. She referred people to the BACB web site and urged the public to follow what is happening in the news regarding pending revisions to the Telecommunications Act in Washington and in Lansing that would do away with local video franchise agreements between local municipalities and video providers.

Jones stated that he has urged individuals to contact their local representatives and representatives in Washington. He has received a reply from Senator Carl Levin.

GRANT REQUEST – BIRMINGHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Lisa Martinico, Executive Director of Technology for Birmingham Public Schools, requested a grant of the Cable Board in the amount of \$25,000 to be used for cable related production equipment at both Seaholm and Groves High Schools and also for district-wide cable production. This is one way that the Cable Board can use money to benefit students who live in the four consortium communities.

Martinico stated that the School District continues to put money into cable production. The School District runs its cable channel 17 and has television production classes at both high schools. They do mentorship with students at the middle schools as well as video production on an individual basis. If granted, this money would be spent according to BPS purchasing laws, which require going out to bid for any item over \$2,000. Martinico's letter to the Board dated March 8, 2006 lists the equipment requested and approximate costs.

The Cable Board budget includes a budget item for Birmingham Schools. It was noted that the Board receives PEG money for public, education and government access.

Motion by Fredrick, second by Woodard, to approve a grant request from Birmingham Public Schools in the amount of \$25,000 for the purchase of cable production equipment for Groves High School, Seaholm High School, and for district-level cable production.

Motion passed unanimously.

APPROVE REWRITE TO PROPOSED RESOLUTION #2006-02 TO ADOPT BACB INVESTMENT POLICY

Decker outlined changes made to the draft Investment Policy to reflect discussion at last month's Cable Board meeting and a review of the BACB Bylaws. He read a section of the Bylaws referring to the duties and responsibilities of the Treasurer indicating that it is the ultimate authority of the Treasurer in terms of how the Board's money is paid out, invested, and deposited. The proposed policy is consistent with the Bylaws in terms of checks and

balances. Comments from the Board were taken into account in terms of establishing internal controls.

The Treasurer makes decisions with any change in the control requiring the advice and consent of the chairperson. The Treasurer is the ultimate decision maker but can delegate authority to the Executive Director of the BACB or to other persons constituting administrative staff, including the Beverly Hills Finance Director. This works as a control because the Treasurer is not involved in day to day transactions. The Board as a whole can override a decision of the Treasurer.

Motion by Decker, second by Gallasch, to adopt the Birmingham Area Cable Board Investment Policy to comply with Act 20 PA 1943, as amended.

Motion passed unanimously.

INVESTMENT PRESENTATION BY CHARLES KIPP

Charles Kipp, representing Multi-Bank Securities, Inc., stated that MBS is a fixed income securities broker-dealer that works with institutions exclusively. Certificates of Deposits and government bonds are 95% of what they do with the other 5% being a mixture of corporate and municipal bonds. Kipp stated that he has looked over the Board's investment policy and will agree to abide by it.

Kipp related that the service provided by MBS as an underwriter of CDs and working in government bonds is to look at banks across the state and seek out the best rate for the term that the Board is seeking. He will keep the Treasurer and the Board updated on different types of investments than are offered at local banks. This will be a means for the Cable Board to invest money prudently, diversity funds, and gain a higher rate of return on investments. It is done electronically without fees.

Questions from the Board were addressed by Kipp. The Board will receive a consolidated statement at the end of each month. Kipp stated that MBS has five offices nationwide with its headquarters in Pleasant Ridge. He invited Board members to visit the office.

Decker stated that the Bylaws require the Board to approve any financial or broker deal with whom its funds are to be deposited. It is the Treasurer's responsibility to approve the movement between investments and the amount of money to be invested. Decker asked the Board to approve all FDIC insured banks that are consistent with this policy and receive investments through Multi-Bank Securities.

Motion by Decker, second by Gallasch, to approve Multi-Bank Securities Inc. as a financial institution where the Birmingham Area Cable Board may deposit funds in any such banks or financial institutions invested through Multi-Bank Securities.

Motion passed unanimously.

COMCAST RELATED TOPICS

Subscriber Complaints

Hanson stated that 14 new complaints have been received this month and seven were carried over from previous months. Nine complaints have been reconciled and closed. The majority of new complaints are related to the recent Comcast rate increase.

Board members commented on a few specific complaints. McLain affirmed that the Board reads every complaint. She reminded subscribers that complaints should be formally submitted to Comcast so that the cable company can respond. McLain remarked that a general complaint is that people are tired of paying the high price for cable television. People also ask about a senior citizen discount, which is still unavailable. She asked if it would be helpful for the Birmingham Area Seniors Coordinating Council organization to submit a formal request to Comcast asking for senior discounts. Pfeifer will bring this up to the BASCC Board at its meeting next month.

Decker referred to a complaint about continued rate increases from a basic cable subscriber. Basic cable users who want only a signal feed and some basic channels are seeing continuous increases, yet they are not able to take advantage of value-added features, which has been the justification for Comcast pricing. Decker emphasized that the BACB is the authority established to deal with customer issues. However, its authority is limited by franchising laws and the lack of its ability to handle rate increases. The public should know that this Board is aware of their concerns.

Currier stated that each of the city and village clerks has received a copy of the Comcast filing with the FCC regarding their basic tier rate increase. The document is intended to help understand the rate increases.

Monthly Subscriber Statistics

Board members have copies of subscriber statistics for January/February 2006. Woodard questioned the decrease in Internet subscribers in Franklin from January to February. Beller responded that she would talk about this with Woodard off line. She reminded members that numbers provided to the Cable Board in this report are confidential. She added that the Board is not responsible for overseeing Comcast high speed Internet service.

Other Issues

Because there have been very few comments on the monthly system statistics, Beller proposed continuing to provide the report on a quarterly basis to the Executive Director and the Chairman of the Cable Board only. It would not be distributed to members in the monthly packet.

Beller stated that there was incorrect information included in an email from Bingham Farms Clerk Kathryn Hagaman to the Cable Board regarding the cost of subscribing to the Comcast Family Tier. Beller provided information on how the family tier is provided and its cost. She listed the channels included in the tier.

Beller stated that Comcast supports and works closely with BASCC and provides the senior center with courtesy cable service and high speed Internet. Comcast is supporting the Birmingham Bloomfield Coalition Summit this Friday. Comcast kicked off its literacy campaign in conjunction with the State of Michigan and various literary councils. Beller commented on Comcast's support of March of Dimes programs. Comcast will support the Birmingham Bloomfield Chamber with its April Legislative Lunch and Forum.

Borgon requested that Beller continue to provide Comcast system statistics on a monthly basis to all members rather than on a quarterly basis. It was noted that Comcast Latino is available through Comcast.net.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Hanson updated that Board and viewers on what is happening in Washington with respect to revisions to the Telecommunications Act. He referred people to visit the Board's web site, www.birminghamareacableboard.org to find more information on the state and federal challenge to your local government's ability to authorize and enforce best practices with television content providers. Sample letters are available on the site that can be forwarded by individuals to their congressional leadership.

Hanson stated that Channel 18 will be airing a 15-minute promotional video produced by NATOA, which offers a representation of the quality broadcasting that is taking place across the country on PEG channels. Antuna stated that the MI-NATO Pro group is organizing an educational video that addresses the question, "What is PEG?". The group has collected video footage from the Detroit Metropolitan area and is in the post production phase.

Hanson has been corresponding with Zack Florance regarding work on the production van. The truck will be going to Roscor for upgrades and repairs in preparation for spring productions. Hanson reminded subscribers to correctly insert their bill payments into the envelopes so that they go to Comcast and not the Cable Board office.

Tim Currier stated that village administrators and city managers have probably received an email late Monday from AT&T with respect to its Project Lightspeed. The correspondence is a spin to promote Internet Protocol (IP) television introduced at the state level. Project Lightspeed is a venture by AT&T to run fiber-based cable into neighborhoods allowing for television, voice and high-speed Internet service.

Currier stated that their project includes a change in the state-wide franchise arrangement to have a state-wide franchise fee where "a fair share of revenue would still come to your community". It would also support local control oversight of the rights-of-way and would still require all wire line video providers to offer PEG channels. There is nothing in proposed legislation that says a Board like this could handle subscriber complaints. With regard to the statement "fair share of revenue", the debate has been what that fair share will be.

AT&T is spinning this venture to appear that cities are not losing anything. However, there appears to be a drop in income. Franchise authorities that currently receive 3% PEG and 5% franchise fee revenue would probably take a good hit.

Currier compared state franchising bills with national franchise policy under discussion by lawmakers. SBC and AT&T are trying to make the proposal look better to local municipalities. The national bill puts PEG operations in severe jeopardy – there are no provisions for its continuation. Although the national bill would give cities 6% of revenue, the question is how that revenue is defined. There is no provision in the national bill for local control of any kind.

Provisions of a proposed national cable franchise agreement would subject cable operators to continued local franchising requirements until phone rivals have reached 15% local-video-market penetration when everyone would have a national franchise fee and uniform rate structure. There appears to be no provision for senior citizen discounts.

Currier commented that companies like Comcast and Wide Open West and local authorities that have been operating on a cooperative basis for a number of years are in jeopardy. The letter writing campaign and efforts to contact local representative in Lansing and Federal legislators has had an effect to some degree. There have been modifications to this legislation. However, the legislation has been to spin the language to placate boards like this or citizens as to what is going on. Continued vigilance is required.

Currier thanked Tom Hanson and Mike Salhaney for their work on preparing the FCC filings on behalf of the Birmingham Area Cable Board and other communities.

MLTV 15/PA18 REPORT

Lisa Antuna reported that BCTV taped eight municipal meetings and one BACB meeting this month. A special meeting of the Franklin Village Council regarding the hiring of a new police chief was taped. Birmingham is getting ready to do its annual budget program. County Commissioner Chuck Moss produced three *Eye on Oakland* programs and will produce three more this Friday. BCTV has worked on the problem of meetings being clipped short at the end and believe it is no longer occurring.

Twenty programs were produced for PA 18. Of special interest to the BACB communities: *Metro Art and Book* by Beverly Hills producer Mary Ann Verdi-Hus; the Birmingham Bloomfield Symphony Orchestra; *In Season* by the Community House chef; and *The Senior Women's Club* at The Community House.

BCTV is currently working on the Birmingham YMCA mini-documentary. Birmingham resident Tara Kachaturoff's new program, *Michigan Entrepreneur* has completed eight programs and the series debut is scheduled for the first week of April. Birmingham resident Greg Thrasher's new program is in active pre-production. Two new *Everyday People* tapings are scheduled for the fourth week of March and *Talk of the Town* is also scheduled for that week.

BCTV is recommending that the Cable Board approve the purchase of two DVD recorders/burners. One would be used for surveillance of M 15 playback and to troubleshoot on-air issues. Staff would record the entire days on-air activity so that it can be reviewed and we can find the source and exact time of any problems. Another burner would be used to

expedite the process of making dubs of commission and council meetings. The cost for two professional capability DVD recorders/burners would not exceed \$1,500. Antuna answered questions from Board members regarding this purchase.

Motion by Woodard, second by Gallasch, that the Birmingham Area Cable Board authorize BCTV to purchase two DVD recorder/burners in an amount not to exceed \$1,500.

Motion passed unanimously.

Borgon referred to an article that appeared in the recent edition of the Beverly Hills newsletter regarding the BCTV volunteer workshops. The piece included misinformation, which was clarified by Antuna. Workshops conducted by BCTV staff are designed to encourage community members to come in and produce shows that get their message out to the community. The workshops emphasize the relationship between Bloomfield Community Television and the BACB; they teach basic camera and audio techniques for studio and van shoots. The workshops do not focus on how to use another community's control room or qualify participants for that operation. Borgon added that the workshops generally result in volunteers that come out to assist BCTV with productions.

Beverly Hills Council member Pfeifer apologized for the article being printed in the *Villager* newsletter without a clear understanding of BCTV workshops on the part of the author and without further research on the part of the Village. As liaison to the Cable Board, she had informed the Council on the responsibilities, function, and authority of Bloomfield Community Television and the Cable Board.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

None

BOARD COMMENTS

Borgon stated that the Board will present a resolution of appreciation to Ron Fredrick at the April meeting. The enthusiasm, participation, and professionalism that he brought to this group will be sincerely missed. Borgon extended an invitation to Fredrick to return to this Board at any time.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

The meeting was adjourned at 9:02 a.m.