

Present: Jones and Mancini - Birmingham
Borgon, Pfeifer, Verdi-Hus, Woodard – Beverly Hills
Gallasch – Franklin
Ettenson – Bingham Farms

Absent: Decker, Frishman, McLain and Tarini – Birmingham

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

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. Borgon welcomed new member Bob Mancini representing Birmingham. He informed the Board that Elizabeth Correa did not renew her term on the Board, which expired on March 31, 2006.

APPROVE MINUTES OF MARCH 15, 2006 CABLE BOARD MEETING

A correction was made on page 4, paragraph 2, last line, to change ‘week’ to ‘month’.

Motion by Woodard, second by Gallasch, that the minutes of a regular Cable Board meeting held on March 15, 2006 be approved as amended.

Motion passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

PEG Committee

Borgon commented that former PEG Committee chair Ron Fredrick has resigned from the Board. He appointed Bob Mancini to the position of PEG chair based on his background and qualifications. Mancini accepted the appointment.

Cable Action Committee

Brian Jones reported that Dorothy Pfeifer talked to the Birmingham Seniors Coordinating Council (BASCC) Board regarding Comcast’s recent rate increase. Pfeifer related that she attended the BASCC Board meeting yesterday, April 18, and asked members if they would be willing to support an initiative to recover the senior discount previously offered by the cable provider. They were interested in submitting letters to Comcast and will look to the Board for direction in terms of a sample letter. Jones stated that the committee will draft a letter.

PROCLAMATION FOR RON FREDRICK

Borgon read a resolution of appreciation recognizing Ron Fredrick for his years of dedication and extraordinary accomplishments while serving as City of Birmingham representative on the Birmingham Area Cable Board. The proclamation will be signed by the Board members and presented to Ron Fredrick.

GRANT REQUEST – CITY OF BIRMINGHAM

The Board is in receipt of a memo dated April 11, 2006 from Joe Valentine, Birmingham staff liaison, outlining a programming grant request. At its April 10, 2006 meeting, the Birmingham City Commission authorized a grant request to the Birmingham Area Cable Board for consideration of funding for taping of Planning Board meetings on MLTV 15. There are 15 scheduled Planning Board meetings for the remainder of the 2006 calendar year. At a cost \$75.00 per meeting, this equates to a total cost of \$1,125.

It was reviewed that Bloomfield Community Television accommodated a request from the Birmingham City Commission in 2002 to air its Planning Board meetings on MLTV 15 at a cost of \$75.00 per meeting. There are approximately 24 Planning Board meetings taped each year with an annual cost to the City of about \$1,800. In recent discussions by the PEG Committee and Chairman Borgon about enhancing local programming, Valentine recognized that there may be an opportunity to utilize a grant from the Cable Board to cover the costs associated with this additional programming on the municipal channel. The City of Birmingham is interested in pursuing this grant opportunity.

Borgon stated that member communities can come before the Board and request to have additional municipal meetings taped. The BACB has a contract with BCTV that will be renegotiated in the near future, at which time the taping and airing of municipal meetings will be a topic of discussion.

Motion by Ettenson, second by Mancini, to award a grant in an amount not to exceed \$1,200 to the City of Birmingham to fund the broadcasting of Birmingham Planning Board meetings for the remainder of the 2006 calendar year.

Motion passed unanimously.

COMCAST RELATED TOPICS

Subscriber Complaints

Borgon affirmed that subscriber complaints are an important subject to this Board. The Executive Director addresses complaints on a regular basis and the chairperson becomes involved several times a month. The Board reviews complaints and discusses specific incidents; members are diligent and take every complaint seriously. The Cable Board looks into the complaints and makes sure the subscribers are satisfied with the resolution before they are closed.

Hanson reported that there were 17 new complaints received this month. There have been billing disputes as a result of subscribers coming to the end of special discount offers from Comcast. He encouraged customers to be aware of when their discount ends. Borgon added that the customer will automatically receive an increase in their bill for that service when a promotion ends unless they call Comcast and cancel the specific service.

Hanson received six new complaints yesterday dealing with field service problems, customer service, reception, and HD audio problem. Two of those complaints are resolved and closed.

There were comments and questions on a few specific complaints. In answer to an inquiry, Comcast representative Louise Beller stated that a la carte package alternatives are not something that Comcast is pursuing. She described the family tier package, which is a new option.

Hanson received an email from Board member McLain who asked him to mention that she heard from a subscriber (06-31) who was upset about the Comcast price increase and also reported a service issue. The individual was credited in the amount of \$25 in the interest of good customer service. McLain did not see that same remedy applied to other price increase complaints.

Beller clarified that the \$25 credit was customer service related and was not offered in response to a subscriber calling about a recent price increase. The complaint and credit had to do with reception issues.

It was noted that the Board received copies of a letter dated March 25, 2006 from Comcast informing the BACB of a service charge reduction effective April 1 for Digital Video Recorder installations and High Definition installations.

OTHER ISSUES

Beller highlighted news of the Comcast and NBC Video on Demand agreement. She provided the Board with a Michigan Region Overview of Comcast focusing on the company's economic impact on the state, service improvements, and investment in the community.

In the community, Comcast has established a partnership with The Community House and is evaluating programs serving southeast Michigan. Comcast supported the Birmingham Bloomfield Chamber luncheon on April 12th and plans to sponsor the April 24th Legislative Reception. March of Dimes Walk America Events will be held on April 29 and 30. The Birmingham payment center will be accepting donations from the public in support of the March of Dimes.

Board members are in receipt of Comcast subscriber statistics from February and March. Beller will address any questions on system statistics after the meeting.

Borgon requested a current report on call center statistics that address the percentage of busy signals, calls answered in 30 seconds, and service levels. Beller will provide the report next month. She stated that Comcast met its NCTA (National Cable and Telecommunications Association) call center statistics for the quarter.

In response to an inquiry from Borgon, Beller stated that Michael Brady was recently promoted to Comcast division vice president of government and regulatory affairs.

Ettenson suggested that Comcast send a copy of its Michigan Region Overview report to the House Commerce and Energy Committee while they are holding hearings regarding Comcast's competitors.

Borgon noted that the Board has received a report that tracks cable television rates from the year 2000 through 2006.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Hanson commented that there has been a flurry of activity in the past four weeks with respect to telecommunications legislation taking place in Michigan, Washington D.C., and many other states. He related recent information with respect to both state and federal legislation. Borgon suggested engaging the BASCC group in a phone campaign to set forward the Cable Board's agenda in response to the telephone company's course of action.

Hanson reviewed an action alert issued by the Michigan Municipal League that outlined major issues including: 1) Preserve PEG fees and franchise fees; 2) No "build out" requirements guarantee discrimination; 3) Elimination of local control of the cable franchise process and consumer protection; 4) Elimination of local enforcement authority over the management of local rights-of-ways.

Currier stated that Executive Director Tom Hanson contributed to a comprehensive and informative article that appeared in the Birmingham Eccentric newspaper entitled, "Cable wars heating up in area towns".

Currier stated that he has been a recipient of emails including legislative updates, which he has forwarded to other clients. Currier referred to a matter pending before the Federal Communications Commission regarding the implementation of a new section of the Cable Communications Policy Act. Currier commented on this Act before the FCC on behalf of the Cable Board. AT&T responded to the comment.

Currier stated that AT&T made specific reference to something that occurred before the Cable Board about seven years ago asserting to the FCC that the City of Birmingham demanded a 10% franchise fee for Ameritech New Media to enter the market in this area. Currier was present at Cable Board meetings at that time and provided the Board with the background as to what really occurred and the basis for his response.

Currier filed a response to the FCC on behalf of the BACB in reply to the comments of AT&T. The response indicates that the Birmingham Area Cable Authority vehemently denies the blatant mischaracterization of the truth in relation to its allegations that the BACB demanded Ameritech New Media to pay franchise fees in excess of 5 percent. The BACB can only surmise that the false and baseless claim by AT&T Inc. is an attempt by AT&T to prejudice these proceedings and bias this Commission in favor of AT&T's attempt to create new legislation and erode local control.

Currier and Hanson both expressed the view that the Cable Board is not a barrier for another cable provider entering the market. Any cable television providers can seek a non-exclusive franchise agreement with the Cable Board and its member communities on the same level as the Comcast franchise agreement.

As a new member of the Board, Mancini commended the efforts of the executive director to keep apprised of telecommunication legislation and to be an advocate of the Cable Board's position. Mancini and other residents are concerned about the increasing cost of cable television service. The public looks at bringing in competition to lower costs and may not be aware of underlying factors. He questioned if there is more that the Board can do through the PEG channels to inform residents of the impact of proposed legislation.

Ettenson commented that people would be surprised at how close the rates are in the communities where there are competitive cable companies.

MLTV/PA18 REPORT

Lisa Antuna representing Bloomfield Community Television reported that BCTV taped and aired six municipal meetings and one BACB meeting during the last month, including one special meeting for the City of Birmingham. The nationally distributed *Keep it Local* program produced by NATOA, which points out the importance of PEG channels, has been airing and is noted in the program guide. A public service announcement produced by Mi-NATOA PRO featuring locally produced PEG programs has been airing. It was produced cooperatively with local access studios for the purpose of demonstrating the importance of PEG programming.

Hanson encouraged everyone to turn on channel 18 and look for this PSA, which was edited and scripted by Antuna. The piece does a great job of showcasing the quality of what PEG programming provides to local communities.

Five *Eye on Oakland* programs were produced by County Commissioner Chuck Moss. Of special interest is the Birmingham Bloomfield Coalition 2006 Summit taped on March 17, which presents important information about substance abuse trends in the BACB and Bloomfield communities.

Twenty-seven programs were produced for PA 18, including nine specifically from the BACB communities. They include two *Spectacles*, one *Metro Art and Book Talk*, two *Everyday People*, two *Talk of the Town*, one *Birmingham Bloomfield Symphony Orchestra* and one *Senior Women*. A total of 13 episodes of *Michigan Entrepreneur*, produced by Birmingham resident Tara Kachaturoff, have been taped and began airing on April 13. The mini-documentary for the Birmingham YMCA is nearing completion.

BCTV will be holding two volunteer workshops on Tuesday, April 25. Antuna reported that two DVD recorders approved at the last BACB meeting have been ordered. They will be used to monitor channel M-15 in case of a playback issue or any problems.

Antuna outlined the quote for labor from Roscor and equipment for production van repairs. A total of \$2,112.75 will need to be approved by the Board to make this repair.

Motion by Woodard, second by Pfeifer, that the Birmingham Area Cable Board approve the quote in the amount of \$2,112.75 for repair and equipment for the production van.

Motion passed unanimously.

Borgon asked Antuna to place information promoting the Beverly Hills Memorial Day parade on the billboard. He asked BCTV to contact Southfield Township for information on a date for free shredding of documents offered to Township residents. Antuna encouraged Board members to forward information to BCTV via fax or email if they are aware of events that will be occurring in the consortium communities.

Borgon stated that it was mentioned at a recent Council meeting that the Beverly Hills Public Safety Department Detective Bureau has developed a program on crime prevention and property identification. Borgon suggested to the PEG Committee that this would be an excellent topic for a cable program. Detectives from member municipalities could provide crime prevention tips for the benefit of area residents.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Pfeifer stated that the Beverly Hills Council accepted the resignation of Georgeann Mach from the Cable Board and made the first and second announcements to fill the vacancy. Pfeifer clarified that applications for Beverly Hills representative to the Cable Board should be obtained from and submitted to the Beverly Hills Village office.

BOARD COMMENTS

Pfeifer announced that the Beverly Hills Village Council adopted a Resolution on April 4, 2006 relative to Retaining Local Control of Cable Franchising. Pfeifer commented that the seniors she spoke with at a recent BASCC Board meeting were enthusiastic about lending their support to a campaign to reinstate a senior rate for cable television. Pfeifer advised against involving the seniors with letter writing regarding pending telecommunications legislation at this point.

Pfeifer commended Tom Hanson on the articles he interviewed for and authored for the Eccentric newspaper.

Borgon mentioned that Lisa Martinico could arrange a tour of the two high schools for new Board members who would like to see how the schools are using the cable production equipment provided through a grant from the Cable Board. Borgon reminded the Beverly Hills Council to work with the Cable Board if it needs an additional meeting taped and aired by BCTV.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Elwood Hovermale on Buckingham in Beverly Hills stated that he does not want a senior discount. He thinks that seniors need Comcast to offer a senior citizen package that includes the type of programs that interest seniors. Borgon thanked him for his input.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 a.m.