

Present: Heldt, Lurie, McLain, Thorsby, Urcan - Birmingham
Briggs, Heyman, McFadden, Woodard – Beverly Hills

Absent: Armitage, Decker– Birmingham
Verdi-Hus – Beverly Hills
Ettenson – Bingham Farms
Eads – Franklin

Also Present: Borgon – Executive Director
Sommerfeld - Bloomfield Community Television representative
Martinico - Director of Technology, Birmingham Schools
Visperas – Comcast representative
Valentine and Glenn – Birmingham staff representatives

Chairperson McLain 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 REGULAR CABLE BOARD MEETING HELD FEBRUARY 17, 2010

A correction was made on Page 4, line 2 to correct the amount of the rebate to read '\$7,790.00'.

Motion by Woodard, second by Heldt, that the minutes of a regular Cable Board meeting held on February 17, 2010 be approved as amended.

Motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

W. A. Zimmerman of 22191 Camelot Court questioned whether AT&T has provided the Board with a recent statement defining the area in Beverly Hills where U-verse service is available.

McLain responded that AT&T has suggested that people interested in their service call an 800 number or go to their website to determine if the U-verse product is available at their residence.

Zimmerman said that it was his opinion after reviewing FCC rules and State Law that it is necessary under the state franchise agreement for AT&T to prove its coverage in an area in order to maintain its franchise. He requested that the Board legal counsel pursue the public rights and require AT&T to define where U-verse is available in Beverly Hills and throughout the franchise area.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Cable Action Committee

McFadden updated the Board on the viewership survey being circulated in the consortium communities. The last Board survey had 696 respondents. A total of 775 respondents were forecasted for the current survey; there were 1,065 surveys returned to date. It has over delivered by 37% with respect to total number of respondents. For this reason, a decision may be made to truncate the telephone interviews to save money.

Preliminary results show that there has been an excellent response across all four communities. No preliminary analysis has been done since the survey will run through Friday. McFadden believed that the survey will give us a picture of what is happening right now.

McLain stated that questionnaires are available to residents at the four municipal office sites, the Baldwin House, and at the BASCC center. People who did not receive a survey in the mail can also go to the Cable Board website to access and complete the survey. We are asking for one response per household.

McFadden commented on a number of occurrences in the last month that impact various issues that may affect the Cable Board. He referred to the digital transition that occurred last year when Congress mandated the conversion to all-digital television broadcasting. According to Nielsen ratings, there were approximately 114,900,000 television households in the U.S. Approximately 71,770,000 use cable connections. Direct TV has 18.5 million homes on their system. Dish says it serves about 14.1 million homes. AT&T has 2 million customers throughout the United States. This means that there are approximately 8.7 million homes that do not have some sort of alternative delivery system other than “over the airwaves” broadcast. The Federal government spent \$650,000,000 trying to convince 8.7 million people that they should get a transition device; approximately 2.2 million people did not do this.

McFadden provided each member with a copy of the Federal Communication Commission’s (FCC) National Broadband Plan, which hopes to have 100 million U.S. homes equipped with 100 Mbps Internet access by 2020.

McFadden related that Google has come up with a plan to build and test ultra-high speed broadband networks in a small number of trial locations across the country. It will deliver Internet speeds more than 100 times faster than what most Americans have access to today with 1 gigabit per second, fiber-to-the-home connections. Google intends to offer service at a competitive price to at least 50,000, and potentially up to 500,000 people. The City of Birmingham’s information technology department has submitted an application to become a trial community.

McFadden commented on other items of interest: 1) Cisco has come out with a high speed router that will completely change the infrastructure of the Internet; 2) the NBC/Universal merger and its affect on content; and 3) DVR and Tivo technology. An alternate satellite company has been providing time shifting on its network for customers. A judge ruled that they violated the Tivo trademark. This means that Dish TV has lost the ability to provide time shifting on satellite programs. McFadden concluded that it is a complex world that will make the job of this Board infinitely more difficult, certainly with respect to PEG programming.

McLain mentioned the upcoming NATOA (National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors) conference in September. She commented on the importance of networking on a national level. Cable Board members did not attend the conference last year due to the economic climate and other restrictions suggested by the municipalities. She emphasized that there are events occurring that are beyond the community and go to the State and national level.

The next meeting of the Cable Action Committee will be on Tuesday, April 8 at 5:30 p.m. at the Baldwin Public Library.

PEG Committee

Heldt reported that the Cable Board entered into a two-year contract with BCTV with an option to renew for a third year starting July 1, 2010. The PEG committee is discussing the possibility of a longer term extension of the contact rather than exercising the one-year renewal option. Discussions are ongoing and the Committee will come back to the Board with a proposal for its consideration. This will be discussed further at the PEG Committee meeting following today's Board meeting.

Progress is being made in terms of getting the production truck fixed on a permanent basis. Heldt noted that the truck has been operational from the outset and able to provide remote programming as required.

It was mentioned that PEG Committee members are in preliminary discussions regarding the possibility of significantly expanded programming involving school athletics in the upcoming year.

GRANT REQUEST – BIRMINGHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Lisa Martinico, Executive Director of Technology for Birmingham Public Schools, requested a grant from the Cable Board in the amount of \$50,000. The School District would use this grant to provide the infrastructure to complete connections from its two high school pools to its television studio and from its two high school gyms to the television studio, which would allow students to produce sporting events from the television studio with a direct connection. Should there be any funds remaining, Martinico would use it to reestablish a connection to the Seaholm field. The School District would put this out for public bid as required by law.

Martinico commented that the Cable Board has been generous to the School District in the past in approving grants from PEG funds. She is here because it is getting more and more difficult to fund capital projects in the school system due to reduced funding from the State. This will be something wonderful the Board could do for the students at both Groves and Seaholm High Schools, which all four of the communities feed into.

Questions from Board members on previous grant requests were addressed by Martinico.

Motion by Woodard, second by Heldt, that the Birmingham Area Cable Board approve up to \$50,000 for a Birmingham Public Schools grant request for infrastructure and connections at the Groves and Seaholm High School pools and gymnasiums to the television studios as outlined in the March 11, 2010 letter from Lisa Martinico, Executive Director of Technology, for Birmingham Public Schools.

Woodard asked Martinico to provide the Board with an itemized list of expenses, and she agreed.

Roll Call Vote:

Motion passed unanimously.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Borgon reported that five new complaints were received this month with resolutions on all of them provided by the Comcast escalation team.

Board members have received a monthly financial report showing income and expenses budget vs. actual and the fund balance as of February 28, 2010. Before the Board for review and approval today are amendments to the 2009/2010 budget. The budget was adjusted to include those items approved by the Board after its adoption. Questions from members on the proposed budget amendments were addressed by Borgon.

Motion by Heldt, second by Urcan, to approve the proposed 2009/2010 budget amendments.

Roll Call Vote:

Motion passed unanimously.

Borgon stated that his new office equipment was received and was installed by Urcan. He explained that there was an oversight in that the printer ordered should have been an all-in-one unit that will print, scan, fax and copy. These are necessary functions to carry out the work of the Board. It is proposed to send the purchased printer back and purchase an all-in-one style unit.

Motion by Heldt, second by McFadden, to authorize the expenditure of another \$100 to purchase an all-in-one printer for the Executive Director.

Motion passed.

NATOA has announced that its Annual Conference will be held in Washington DC on September 29-October 1, 2010. Borgon thought that it was important for representatives of the Cable Board to attend the conference this year. It provides Board members with an opportunity to exchange information and ideas with their peers nationwide as well as with industry representatives. Borgon will recommend that the Cable Board chairperson put on a presentation at the NATOA conference this year concerning PEG issues from a local perspective. Attendance at the NATOA Conference will be an agenda item for next month's meeting at which time Borgon will discuss projected costs and other details.

Borgon reported that he and Chairperson McLain have been working with Roscor and BCTV staff to address existing problems with the new production truck. McLain has made it clear that the BACB would not be responsible for any additional costs for repair of electrical problems that have existed since the truck was received. Borgon reported that the truck is now fully operational. McLain commented further on the process.

Borgon stated that he will be working with BCTV staff on entering programming for the 2010 Hometown Video Awards. A tour of the Comcast phone center is scheduled for March 24 at 9 a.m. Borgon congratulated Steve Rota and his wife on the birth of their new baby boy, Matteo Steven.

COMCAST RELATED TOPICS

Olivia Visperas, Comcast Affairs Manager, stated that Board members have received notification from Comcast on the launch of a new Hispanic service tier that includes 50 channels that will be available by subscription to customers in this area. Visperas related that CBS College Sports is running a free preview period for NCAA March Madness until April 5 on Channel 255 in this area.

Visperas welcomed Board members to attend a tour of the Plymouth Call Center on March 24 at 9 a.m. She talked about the operation of that call center.

McLain commented on two complaints regarding billing issues. She encouraged subscribers to follow up with Comcast if they have problems with their bill. Visperas addressed one of the complaints noting that there will be a follow up and resolution.

AT&T RELATED TOPICS

Lori Doughty representing AT&T stated that she had no official comment from AT&T on the FCC National Broadband Plan.

McLain referred to a question raised earlier in the meeting by Mr. Zimmerman from Beverly Hills. He asked whether AT&T would make a statement disclosing where its U-verse product is available in Beverly Hills as required by Public Act 480.

Mr. Zimmerman restated his position that AT&T is in violation of its franchise agreement because it refuses to state where in the franchise area U-verse service is available. A person wishing to purchase a residential property in the franchise area is deprived of that opportunity by AT&T's refusal to reveal where U-verse service is available.

Lori Doughty responded that AT&T maintains a website that shows availability of its U-verse product at specific addresses. An individual can also contact AT&T by phone. She would be happy to help Mr. Zimmerman research an address.

MLTV15/ PA18 REPORT

David Sommerfeld presented the Bloomfield Community Television report on programming taped for Municipal Channel 15 (BAMA), PA Channel 18 (BAPA), and programming from BACB area organizations during the last month (information included in BCTV monthly report for February 18, 2010 – March 16, 2010).

A lecture scheduled at Baldwin Library with Jack Torry, author of "Henderson's Light" will be taped in April along with a Birmingham Concert Band. The next volunteer workshop will be held on Tuesday, April 13.

Sommerfeld announced that the Bloomfield Township website now features video on demand where people can access the series programs. It is in the rollout period and only includes programs produced in 2010. The programming can be accessed by clicking on the Township Video on Demand link at www.bloomfieldtwp.org.

It was noted that Zack Florance attended the Michigan Association of Broadcasters Annual Conference on March 13.

In answer to an inquiry, Borgon commented on the bid opening for infrastructure work at Shain Park in Birmingham. Joe Valentine commented that Shain Park renovations will be completed this year; however, road improvements will limit the use of the park. The park will be complete and ready for use next year.

OLD BUSINESS

Borgon welcomed the new clerk for the city of Birmingham Laura Broski and thanked her for her assistance.

NEW BUSINESS

McLain commented that she spent some time with Birmingham's information technology staff listening to an online NATOA presentation on the topic of becoming a Google Fiber test community.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Margaret Betts from Birmingham commented that she was impressed with the Cable Board and the assistance they offer to area residents. She hoped that people were aware that they can obtain information about Birmingham Area Cable Board activities on their website.

McLain remarked that Margaret Betts has started her own blog. Woodard noted that Baldwin Library offers a class on how to blog.

Kathleen Berwick from Beverly Hills stated that she was impressed with the professionalism of the Cable Board and its chairperson. Berwick mentioned that she was a disgruntled Comcast subscriber who is experiencing pixilation on her televisions and who has had poor experiences in terms of service calls. McLain urged Berwick to register a formal complaint through the Cable Board.

Hildreth Buterbaugh informed the Board that the MoviePlex channel has returned to Comcast and can be found in the OnDemand menu. Buterbaugh made the comment that people can change the system by joining, working their way up, and becoming the head of the system. He thanked the Cable Board for the job it is doing.

BOARD COMMENTS

None

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 a.m.