

BIRMINGHAM AREA CABLE BOARD MEETING MINUTES – January 18, 2017

Present: Bozell, Eick, Heldt, McLain, Weller – Birmingham
 Borgon, Delaney (alternate), Gugni – Village of Beverly Hills
 Ettenson – Village of Bingham Farms
 Stakhiv – Village of Franklin

Absent: McAlear – Birmingham
 Maly, Verdi-Hus – Village of Beverly Hills

Also Present: White – Executive Director
 Currier – Attorney for Cable Board
 Rota – Bloomfield Community Television
 Black – Bloomfield Community Television

McLain called the meeting to order at 7:48 AM in the Birmingham Public Schools' Education & Administration Center, Evergreen Room, 31301 Evergreen Road, Beverly Hills, MI.

APPROVE MINUTES OF CABLE BOARD MEETING HELD December 21, 2016

Motion by Ettenson, seconded by Heldt to approve the minutes of the Regular Cable Board Meeting on December 21, 2016, as presented.

Motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Robert Ottaway is a Birmingham resident, Attorney and past President of Michigan Association of Broadcasters, related his frustrating experience with Comcast Customer Service when trying to cancel service at his advertising business in Troy and the confusion in the commercial billing. For these reasons he requested that BACB be more pro-active on behalf of the “little people” and make a difference. He had some suggestions which BACB might want to explore and consider, such as Comcast Customer Service providing a Reference Number to the customer and including the Board’s contact information printed on the bill.

Stakhiv has had a lot of experience with Comcast about many issues and had some suggestions. When speaking with someone at the cable company she always requests the employee’s ID number. If an issue is not resolved after her first call she will call the BACB Executive Director, Cathy White, for assistance. She noted that Comcast’s Customer Service is getting better but was still lacking. Recently she has been requesting a Claim Number for future references but has never been given one. Stakhiv knows and understands the process and is willing to help any and all residents through it. If need be, she will intercede with the Cable Board on the residents’ behalf.

Ettenson was curious as to the comparison of Comcast’s Customer Service and that of the area utility companies. Ottaway replied that the energy company was far superior.

For the public’s benefit, McLain noted that everyone on the Board is a volunteer with the exception of the Executive Director who is a paid employee. The members are passionate about “the little guy” as they are all “little guys”. Board members do not get preferential treatment when they call Customer Service. In fact, she will sometimes call her provider from a phone

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which cannot be associated with her name because she wants the exact same experience as everyone else. She admitted that half the time it's OK and half the time it's horrible. The area has three (3) providers: Comcast, AT&T, and WOW. There is a difference between home service and commercial service, but not all providers have the two (2) different services. The Board can't dictate how the providers do business but it can work to make the process better by educating and informing the consumers and that is the BACB's primary goal. She re-iterated that if a Board member has a complaint and it is not resolved, the Board member, like any resident, can submit it to the Executive Director for an escalation. Such problems can be and sometimes are shared at the monthly televised Board meetings, including the frustration regarding the return of equipment at certain locations. She agreed with Ottoway that she wished more of the public was aware that this Board existed and what it does. She feels that the best way to represent the citizens in the communities is to have an open dialogue with the providers and having them attend the Board meetings.

Kyle Mazurek, Comcast Representative, was in attendance. McLain confirmed that with the exception of the BACB's phone number, which is on the bottom of the bill, no other Cable Board information is allowed to be printed on the Comcast bill.

McLain explained the responsibilities and obligations the Cable Board has to the residents. She added that the Cable Board puts articles in the different community magazines and the public can always go to the Cable Board website.

Stakhiv added that Comcast has an agreement with UPS to ship equipment back to them at no charge and the customer would receive a tracking number.

ANNUAL ELECTION OF OFFICERS

White explained that due to a scheduling delay this election period would end in July 2017.

McLain opened the floor for nominations.

Stakhiv nominated Jeffrey Bozell, for Secretary of the Cable Board, seconded by Heldt. There were no other nominations. Bozell was elected Secretary by acclamation.

Ettenson nominated Jeffrey Heldt for Treasurer of the Cable Board, seconded by Eick. There were no other nominations. Heldt was elected Treasurer by acclamation.

Heldt nominated Mira Stakhiv for Vice Chairman of the Cable Board, seconded by Ettenson. There were no other nominations. Stakhiv was elected Vice Chairman by acclamation.

Ettenson nominated Elaine McLain for Chairman of the Cable Board, seconded by Eick. There were no other nominations. McLain was elected Chairman by acclamation.

AUTHORIZATION TO PURCHASE REPLACEMENT DAC OUTPUT BOARD

White gave a brief explanation of the immediate need to exchange the output board of one of the truck cameras. She reminded the Board that several years ago it had given her the authority to

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approve a repair or replacement under \$1,000. The total for this one was \$766.20 and she provided an invoice reflecting this cost.

Motion by Heldt, seconded by Bozell to ratify the purchase of a DAC Output Board from Grass Valley for the total of \$766.20.

Roll Call Vote:
Motion Passed (9-0)

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Cable Action Committee

White stated that there was a meeting on Thursday, January 5 with Verdi-Hus, McLain, Weller, Maly, and she in attendance. Part of the meeting was going over the New Member manual for Weller's benefit and answering any questions he might have had. They reviewed and drafted the Annual Report, the final version of which would be ready at the next meeting. The next Cable Action Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 2, 2017 at 5:30 PM in the Baldwin Library.

McLain commented that new member perspectives are greatly appreciated.

PEG Committee

McLain noted that McAlear, Chairman, was not able to attend the meeting this morning. She introduced Dwight Levens, Executive Director of Technology for Birmingham Public Schools and the Educational Representative of the PEG Committee. He reported on possible future projects for which the district schools would be requesting support. He thanked the Board for its continued support of the many different projects over the years. Over the course of this year and next there would be many construction projects being undertaken, especially around the Media Centers for Groves and Seaholm. At Groves, the TV Studio will be relocated to the Media Center which will be conducive to audio work, video editing, and other creative endeavors. This is still in the planning process so he would be coming back to the BACB with details. Other items needing attention include: cameras across the district (especially at the high schools) need to be updated and/or replaced and the current system used to run the channels is outdated and the district would like to invest in new software. Major concerns in the District are the complaints the OCR (Office of Civil Rights) has received regarding the district's website and the cable channel. As with other school districts across the United States, these OCR complaints center around some methods which the district uses to disseminate information to the public which are not ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant: those individuals with disabilities have a difficult time whether it is the closed captioning on the screen or a scanned document on the web site that needs to be able to be read by a text translator. He will be coming back to the Board with specific numbers and details making a request for such projects.

McLain thanked and complimented Levens on the overview. She advised him that the sooner he returns with the figures the better as the fiscal year ends June 30. For Levens' and the public's benefit, she further explained the grant process of balancing the grants between community organizations, schools, and the communities. Bozell requested that Levens document comparison pricing for the software, cameras, and systems.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

White referred to her monthly report dated January 9, 2017. There had been two complaints, both involving billing issues with Comcast. The first was a resident who was moving at the end of the month. She had been informed by Comcast that her service would be disconnected and she would only be responsible for two (2) days of that current month. However, her next month's bill reflected the entire month. An escalation team representative was able to correct the mistake and her account was corrected. (This complaint is closed). The second complaint was from a Birmingham resident and involved a billing error regarding an account for his deceased relative, as well as the poor Comcast customer service. The Comcast escalation team resolved the billing issue. (This complaint is closed). McLain inquired of Mazurek if it was still a requirement that in the event of a death where a family member was trying to handle the account, a death certificate must be presented at one of the Customer Service Centers. Mazurek will look into it.

The account balances for the MBS, BBCU, and Beverly Hills accounts were provided to the Board, in addition to the Revenue and Expense Budget reports for the month of December, 2016.

Since her last report, White has written eight (8) checks on behalf of the BACB including the PEG Grant to Village of Beverly Hills for \$15,000.00, the Administrative Grants to all four (4) communities, and the State of Michigan Truck License Renewal fee which has increased.

Additional Notes:

Comcast has notified us that the change to the channel line-up which was originally scheduled for November 17, 2016 has been delayed until January 24, 2017.

She distributed a new roster with a changed phone number which supersedes the one in the packet.

PROVIDER RELATED TOPICS**a. Comcast**

Kyle Mazurek, Comcast representative was in attendance. He passed around a press release about the Nineteen (19) Michigan Nonprofits benefiting from the Comcast Foundation Grants which totaled \$351,000.

McLain inquired if Mazurek had a recommendation for the handling of a question, complaint or problem with Comcast. He suggested that customers could install a self-service option app on their phones which would provide up-to-the-minute information. He, personally, has used this method. Ettenson noted the recurring complaints the BACB receives and wondered if there was a "chat service" available online which the customers could use. Mazurek noted it was on Comcast's website. Both Mazurek and McLain also reminded the public that conversations with Customer Service are recorded and a transcript can be requested.

b. AT&T/Uverse/Direct TV

There was no representative present. McLain stated that there was nothing new about the merger so far, but there had been a lot of media coverage for their new products.

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McLain noted that there have been some intermittent interruptions of the Channel 99 PEG service on Uverse. Rota will be working on it, as the problem is on our end, not AT&T.

c. WOW

There was no representative present.

BAPA/BAMA REPORT

Steve Rota acknowledged the problem and solution with the encoders. He asked that residents call 248-433-7790 if they experience problems on the PEG channels on Comcast, AT&T, and WOW.

Steve Rota referred to his memo to BACB, dated January 9, 2017, and pointed out the five (5) completed **BAMA** Programs which were regularly scheduled municipal meetings, Board of Zoning Appeals meeting, the BACB meeting, and Baldwin Public Library Board meeting.

For the **BAPA** Programs, from the BACB area individual producers and organizations, nineteen (19) programs were taped. He listed all the programs.

Regarding the **PRODUCER WORKSHOP**, Rota reminded the Board that one-on-one sessions are offered for those who are interested in producing their own show and to those who want to learn how to run the equipment. This change in format seems to be working out better. Residents can contact BCTV at 248-433-7790 to schedule a one-on-one appointment date and time. There is no fee for those living in one of the four BACB communities.

There are five (5) BACB Winter Sports Events on the upcoming schedule: Boys Swimming, Boys Basketball, and Boys Hockey. Rota reminded the Board that it is invoiced every month for only those events covered.

Rota gave background details relating to the purchase of the DAC Output Board replacement the Cable Board had discussed earlier in the meeting. The good news is that Black was able to eliminate the middle man and go directly to the source. The bad news is that he has received an email from our source stating that the parts for the four (4) cameras on the truck were declared “end of service” as of 12/31/16. Hopefully, parts from a newer camera might be compatible and available, if needed. In the meantime, Rota asked the Board if he should order another DAC board immediately so as to have it on hand in case another one goes out. Discussion ensued about the pros and cons of making such a purchase. Borgon was in favor of being pro-active on this issue even though the truck is able to cover sporting events and parades with only three (3) cameras. The production quality value is much better with four (4) cameras. He was in favor of purchasing a spare output board in anticipation of problems with another board.

Motion by Borgon, seconded by Stakhiv to approve the purchase of a new DAC Output Board for a camera in the BACB truck at a cost not to exceed \$750.00.

Roll Call Vote:
Motion Passed (9-0)

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Rota updated the Board on the equipment re-installation in the Beverly Hills Council Chambers. Hopefully, next month's meeting will go live from that location.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

McLain noted that Mr. Ottoway's comments about the lack of people knowing about the Cable Board are being taken very seriously. This was very disappointing to the entire Board. She suggested that the Board brain-storm about alleviating this problem and maybe talking about this issue in the Cable Action Committee meeting which follows this meeting. More "outreach" to the community is paramount.

Stakhiv suggested that for those communities which send out newsletters or the like to their residents, BACB should include an article about its relevance to the communities. She intends to do so for the Franklin residents. McLain asked that any and all suggestions be sent to White.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

BOARD COMMENTS

James Delaney introduced himself to the Board and the public as the alternate from Beverly Hills. He is a former member of the BACB, respects what the Board does, how the Board does it, and is looking forward to being involved again. On behalf of Beverly Hills, he thanked BACB for its financial help with the municipal building. He is concerned about the complaints he has heard about the providers and customer service. They appear to be worse now than in 2001 when he was first on the Cable Board. He asked on behalf of the citizens that the Board stay on top of the issues.

McLain expressed her appreciation to Mazurek for attending the meeting. Before the law changed, provider representatives had to come to every meeting and share, in some cases, confidential information. Now they don't have to participate with Cable Boards at all. Our providers send representatives to communicate directly with our Executive Director and the escalation team.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:52 AM.