

## BIRMINGHAM AREA CABLE BOARD MEETING MINUTES – December 20, 2017

Present: Abraham (alternate), Bozell, Eick, Fenberg, Heldt, McLain –  
Birmingham  
Bayer, Borgon, Gugni, Delaney (non-voting liaison) – Beverly Hills  
Ettenson – Bingham Farms

Absent: McAlear – Birmingham  
Maly – Beverly Hills  
Stakhiv - Franklin

Also Present: Currier – Attorney for Cable Board  
Rota – Bloomfield Community Television  
Cris Braun – Executive Director of NEXT  
Doug Koschik – Baldwin Public Library Director  
Rebekah Craft – Baldwin Public Library Associate Director

McLain called the meeting to order at 7:45 AM in the Village of Beverly Hills Municipal Building at 18500 W. Thirteen Mile Road.

**APPROVE MINUTES OF CABLE BOARD MEETING HELD November 15, 2017**

Motion by Bozell, seconded by Ettenson to approve the minutes of the Regular Cable Board Meeting on November 15, 2017, as presented.

McLain requested that on page 7 the minutes reflect that she did not “magically“ change the policy at Comcast nor re-create their records in any way or intervene inappropriately. She, in fact, did make a three-way call with the provider and the subscriber on the phone and they talked through some of the other options. A creative solution was reached. As she said at last month’s meeting, the representative began the phone call by saying that Comcast was changing the way it does business and she and the resident were going to resolve this matter today on this call, no matter what it took (which they did). McLain wanted to personally make a comment about this because it was very important to emphasize that Board Members cannot direct the cable providers on how they do business. But the BACB is the public’s voice when stumbling blocks like this arise. She was very encouraged when this particular three-way call and another one with an AT&T representative and another customer went as well as it did. When calling a provider, she encouraged residents to introduce themselves, get the name and ID number with whom they speak and take notes about an issue and the conversation. Explain that it was your understanding that the provider was doing business in a different way and problems would be resolved the first time, not after four or five attempts and not until it got to the BACB.

Motion by Bozell, seconded by Ettenson to approve the minutes of the Regular Cable Board Meeting on November 15, 2017, as amended.

Motion Passed.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

**PEG GRANT REQUEST – BEVERLY HILLS PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENT**

Bob Borgon, representing the Public Safety Department, recently met with Director Torongeau who explained that the current monitor in the Patrol Division Supervisor's Office did not have the ability to monitor all the security closed-circuit building cameras, as well as function as a TV.

Motion by Gugni, seconded by Fenberg to approve the PEG Grant request in an amount not to exceed \$249.99 to the Beverly Hills Public Safety Department for the purchase of a Samsung TV monitor from Micro Center.

McLain noted that such a grant was in keeping with BACB's responsibility to all communities to make sure Police and Fire are always connected. In fact, it is BACB's desire to do more once FirstNet, which is America's First Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network dedicated to First Responders, is built.

White confirmed that this was a regular line item and clarified that it was considered a "PEG Grant" as it was not a recurring item.

Roll Call Vote:  
Motion Passed (10-0).

**PEG GRANT REQUEST – NEXT**

Cris Braun, Executive Director of NEXT, presented its financial request for technology needs to maintain its internet, cable and registration software for the center. The 2016-2017 fiscal year request totaled \$4,725.42, as represented on the spreadsheet budget each Board Member received. She detailed some of the services NEXT currently provides to the community.

McLain noted that she would recuse herself from the vote as she is on the Board of NEXT.

Motion by Borgon, seconded by Bozell and Heldt to approve the PEG Grant request in an amount not to exceed \$4,725.42 to NEXT for FY 2016-2017 expenses associated with the costs to maintain its internet, cable and registration software for the center.

Roll Call Vote:  
Motion Passed (9-0).  
McLain recused herself.

**PEG GRANT REQUEST – BAIDWIN PUBLIC LIBRARY**

Doug Koschik, Library Director, requested a grant for the redesign, hosting and support of a new Library website. He provided historical details of the current website which had been designed in 2015, but had proven not to be flexible enough for the library's needs as well as being expensive to edit and customize. After much research, an RFP was issued in March 2017. The competitive bidding process included six (6) firms, three of which were interviewed. Additionally, Koschik

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provided comparison information of its site to other websites in the area and a graph of the submitted bids. The Library's web team and the Library Board's Communications Committee selected MARKIT (Auburn Hills), the third lowest bidder, for the project.

Motion by Borgon, seconded by Heldt to approve the PEG Grant request from the Baldwin Public Library in an amount not to exceed \$24,524 for a complete redesign of its website, including a digital tour of the building.

McLain recognized all the work PEG Chairman McAlear had done on this subject but was unable to be here this morning due to a business commitment.

Due to the expense of the project, Bayer expressed her concern that the same failed efforts would happen again. Koschik assured Bayer that the new website has been operational for a month and there had been no problems. He felt that this time the Library achieved its goals. Craft also addressed this matter and elaborated more on the staff training on the site. Bayer had further questions comparing the different companies. Ettenson also asked about the decision to go with a company that did not use a template even though Revise had experience with municipalities, to which Craft stated that the template did not fit the needs of the Library. She also noted that the chosen company had never designed a library website before but had designed one for a Parks and Rec Department and it had been very responsive to its needs. Eick inquired about the locations of the other companies which bid on the project. Bozell was interested in the public's opinion in terms of ease of usage. Craft answered that the patron feedback had been very positive.

McLain had two (2) comments: 1. The original grant in 2015 was for \$24,050 not \$22,050 as stated in the "Answers to Questions..." sheet. This was the largest grant BACB had given to a partner. Because this was given two (2) years ago, she was of the opinion that resources needed to be balanced with respect to how monies were allocated. 2. Since the website was already up and running how was it funded and who was paying for it now? Koschik stated that payment came out of regular Library funds, i.e. tax money, and was part of its budget.

Abraham identified some current problems with the mobile catalogue which Craft noted would be addressed in January, 2018.

McLain commented on the Grant Policy Guidelines for amount allocated to partners and communities. She inquired as to the current line item amount for PEG Grants. White said that for the current budget year, which ends June 30, 2018, BACB had budgeted \$120,000. As of the end of November 2017, almost \$100,000 had been spent. If BACB were to go over \$120,000, a budget amendment would be required. McLain's concern was the availability of funds to the partners and communities for the remainder of the 2017/18 budget year.

## Roll Call Vote:

Heldt	-yes
Borgon	-yes
Gugni	-yes
Ettenson	-yes

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Abraham	-yes
McLain	-no
Bayer	-yes
Fenberg	-yes
Bozell	-yes
Eick	-yes

Motion Passed (9-1).

McLain had positive and congratulatory comments about the new website and requested the Library keep BACB posted.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### **Cable Action Committee**

Eick, Chairman, reported that the committee plus several BACB Board members met two (2) weeks ago to discuss what should be included in the request for quote for the new BACB website redesign. He added that shortly this would be put out for bids. Suggestions that came out of the meeting were that BACB would either hire a company to: a) either coach us on building a website, or b) would do the actual building. Bayer clarified they would be looking at it from a marketing point of view regarding what BACB needed. McLain and White would be meeting to finalize an outline of needs which would be utilized when looking for the appropriate firm. White added that the primary focus and need was to start with a definition of who the stakeholders are (those who come to our website and our partners) and then formulating goals for those stakeholders. The marketing factor was very important in accomplishing this, as Bayer had suggested. Outreach was another important aspect and McLain has already made initial steps in this regard.

Borgon revisited the suggestion from an earlier meeting concerning the revision of the hold back percentage of the municipal rebates. It was his impression that the subject was to be discussed at a CAC committee meeting and was wondering if there had been any discussion. McLain stated that this issue would be included in White's report.

The next Cable Action Committee meeting will be January 4, 2018.

#### **PEG Committee**

McAlear was unable to attend this meeting. There would not be a PEG meeting following this one.

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

White referred to her monthly report dated December 13, 2017. One pending complaint from last month which involved AT&T not honoring the rate the resident had initially been quoted has been resolved and is now closed.

There have been four (4) new complaints filed since her last report in November. The first one was submitted by a Beverly Hills resident who was having frequent problems with her Wi-Fi service. Comcast advised her that there was a signal issue in her area. When an escalation team

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member contacted her, she was not having any further problems. The escalation team member with whom she spoke gave the resident her name and contact information if further issues arose. The complaint is closed. The second complaint is similar to one that was discussed at a previous meeting. This involved a Birmingham resident who attempted to upgrade her service with Comcast and was advised that they could not discuss the issue with her because the last four (4) digits of her Social Security number did not match their records. She was advised to visit a Comcast service center with her photo ID and Social Security card. Due to medical issues, this was not feasible. A representative from the escalation team advised her to send copies of her photo ID and Social Security card with the first four (4) digits blacked out but this too was not feasible as she did not have access to a fax machine or scanner. The BACB Chairperson offered to do this for her and the complaint is now closed. The third complaint was from a Beverly Hills resident who was having problems with her phone service. This senior citizen was told that it would take a couple of days for a technician to come out. This was unacceptable to her as she felt that seniors and handicapped residents rely on the phone service in the event of a medical emergency. At the request of the resident, this issue was shared with Comcast. Her service was fixed and she received a credit. The direct contact information of the escalation team representative was provided to her if she needed further assistance in the future. This complaint is closed. The fourth complaint was from the same Birmingham resident which McLain referred to in her “minutes corrections”. The subscriber had a follow-up complaint with Comcast about being billed for 411 information calls that were allegedly not disclosed. Comcast applied a credit to her account and in a letter to the resident explained the Directory Assistance charges and additional information to help prevent such occurrences in the future. This complaint is closed.

McLain mentioned that White would be contacting all three providers to verify how much Directory Assistance calls cost. She also reminded residents that there were ways to obtain the similar information free of charge. Ettenson commented that Directory Assistance calls on landline phones and cell phones cost the same.

The account balances for the MBS, BBCU and Beverly Hills accounts were provided to the Board, in addition to the monthly Revenue and Expense Budget Reports, as of November 30, 2017.

Since the last meeting White has written eleven (11) checks on behalf of the BACB, including one for the filming of the October sports events, four for the Administrative Grants to the communities and three for the purchase of equipment for the Birmingham Control Room which was billed separately but part of the authorization. The Board Members were given a copy of the Venture magazine with the BACB ad on page 37. Information will be on its website for 3 months and there is an ad in the Birmingham Bloomfield Chamber of Commerce magazine.

#### Additional Notes

The FCC has a new On-Line Dashboard which will provide more transparency to the public. It will provide information and access to reports and graphics on many issues, as well as provide access to Freedom of Information Act materials. It is available on [fcc.org](http://fcc.org). The Net Neutrality rules have been repealed.

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Eick shared an article from the Free Press that the cable companies might spike broadband prices due to lost revenues from “cord-cutting”. Because of the increased broadband-only prices, providers are encouraging bundle packaging and are offering discounts as an avenue to control the lost revenues.

Comcast has notified BACB that the prices for certain services and fees would increase as of January 1, 2018. It appeared that monthly rates for every package would increase by approximately \$5.00.

McLain shared an article from the Motley Fool that Amazon Prime has nearly as many subscribers as the cable companies. She read some statistics supporting this trend.

In a November 28, 2017 article in TV Technology, Comcast stated that now that net neutrality rules have been repealed, it “...won’t discriminate against lawful content...” or impose “...anti-competitive paid prioritization...”. Even though this leaves open the possibility that it may offer paid fast lanes to websites or other online services, a Comcast spokesperson said that it still has “...no plans...” to enter into paid prioritization. The company’s public Open Internet Commitment says only that, “We do not block, slow down or discriminate against lawful content...” without making any statement about whether it would engage in paid prioritization. McLain added that the comments on the corporate website had been changed which prompted the article in TV Technology.

Comcast was launching up to 42 international channels and 30 new international packages beginning on or around December 6, 2017.

A new Board Member roster was provided to all Board members. White also corrected the date for the November Cable Action Committee. It is on Nov. 1, 2018, not Nov. 8.

White had a conversation with BCTV about some additional equipment needed for the Birmingham City Hall upgrade (Memo dated December 19, 2017 from Steve Rota to BACB). The equipment was under \$1000 which was under the amount for which she has the authority to approve. With the additional purchase the total was still under the \$65,000 maximum that the Board had approved.

McLain pointed out that a new member from Birmingham had been appointed to fill the vacancy but was unable to attend this meeting.

White stated that there was still an on-going discussion about how to change the policy concerning the dollar or percentage amount that would be reserved from the municipal rebate allocations. The issue would be brought back to the Board at either the January or the February meeting. McLain clarified for the public what the current policy is. The Cable Action Committee will take the lead on this matter.

Ettenson relayed his experience with Comcast Business attempting to and successfully correcting a problem for his business in Bingham Farms.

(Heldt left the meeting at 8:34 AM)

Eick commented that he personally preferred the earlier meeting time for the Cable Action committee and noted that it might be advantageous as there are many things to discuss.

(Borgon left the meeting at 8:35 AM).

### **PROVIDER RELATED TOPICS**

#### **a. Comcast**

There was no representative present.

#### **b. AT&T/Uverse/Direct TV**

There was no representative present.

#### **c. WOW**

There was no representative present.

As an overview, McLain mentioned that either she and/or White are always in contact with the provider representatives, inquiring about policy and billing questions and getting the updates on citizen complaints. The providers are very responsive but she is frustrated that they are not here at these meetings. In the early years of the Cable Board, they would attend fairly regularly. However, when the laws changed in 2006 and 2007 they were not held to that same standard and their business models changed. They are accessible to us and two of them do come at least once a quarter. If Board Members and residents have questions for them, please send them to White and she will get them answered.

Currier brought two (2) items to the attention of the Board. 1. The DAS antennas have been introduced in southeast Michigan. Birmingham and Bloomfield Township have been approached to install such antennas but locations for them have not been identified. Revenues generated to the communities would be much less based on this DAS system. At the moment there is litigation in Grand Rapids. AT&T had approached Birmingham and Bloomfield Hills has stopped them from deploying this system until some details regarding compensation and locations could be worked out. This will be an important issue during 2018. Relevant to this subject, McLain relayed some information she gathered from the NATOA conference which she attended, stressing that NATOA is cognizant of and is watching what is going on and the many factors which will affect the communities. 2. This item involves all three (3) providers and it is something BACB may have to keep an eye on. It involves the audits of the Intergovernmental Cable Communications Authority (ICCA) which is comprised of the eleven (11) communities to our east. Currier explained the circumstances around some of the cable provider audit reviews which were unable to be performed in a timely manner and the legal action currently being taken.

White mentioned that Plante Moran which usually presents its main audit at the December meeting has rescheduled it for the January, 2018 meeting.

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### **BAPA/BAMA REPORT**

Steve Rota referred to his memo to BACB dated December 11, 2017. He listed the completed **BAMA** Programs which were the eight (8) regularly scheduled municipal meetings, the BACB Meeting, the Parks and Rec Board Meeting, the Advisory Board Meeting, the Multi Modal Meeting and two (2) Baldwin Public Library Board Meetings.

For the **BAPA** Programs, from the BACB area individual producers and organizations, thirty-five (35) programs were taped. He listed all the programs.

**EQUIPMENT** – BACB approved the upgrade for the Birmingham City Hall for the Commission Room. The installation happened last week and everything is up and running. The first meeting will be the Advisory Parking Committee on Wednesday, January 3, 2018 with all new equipment.

He commented on his working with Advanced Lighting to resolve the audio problem in the Beverly Hills Council Chambers. This situation has been ongoing for about three (3) months. Because BACB has spent a lot of money on the equipment upgrade for this particular room, McLain asked that she be included in a three-way phone call to Advanced Lighting to discuss subjects, such as warranties, credit back or something to compensate Rota and staff for the endless aggravation they have had to endure and the interruption of the message that BACB is sending to the communities.

Regarding **PRODUCER WORKSHOPS**, they are offering a one-on-one session for those who are interested in producing their own show and to those who want to volunteer and experience behind the scenes. Please call 248-433-7790 to schedule a date and time for you.

The Upcoming **WINTER SPORTS VIDEO COVERAGE** schedule was provided.

He hoped that those Board Members who came by BCTV last month for the Open House and tour had a good experience. He encouraged any new Board Member to come tour the facilities. Give him a call or email him to set it up. Etnenson, a Board Member of many years, had his 1<sup>st</sup> visit and stated it was very enlightening. McLain thanked White for coordinating the event.

McLain also added that Rota has been assigned to produce her new show about nonprofits in the area. When the weather gets better she will be going out into the community showcasing municipal employees and all their hard work.

McLain thanked the entire staff at BCTV for all the work they do. They are appreciated very much.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

None

### **NEW BUSINESS**

McLain recommended that everyone call their cable provider or internet provider, telling them you are seeing all the ads and discuss all the services you have with them. Make sure you know



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what you have. Make sure you write everything down. If you want to change it or negotiate it, this would be a very good opportunity to do so. Technology is changing as we speak and the providers want to keep your business.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

**BOARD COMMENTS**

None

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:53 AM.