

## BIRMINGHAM AREA CABLE BOARD MEETING MINUTES – April 22, 2020

Present: Abraham, Eick, Fenberg, McLain, Shand - Birmingham  
 Burry, Delaney, Gugni, Henry – Beverly Hills  
 Mydloski – Franklin

Absent: None

Also Present: White - BACB Executive Director  
 Currier – Attorney for Cable Board  
 Rota – Bloomfield Community Television  
 Brunk – IT Manager, City of Birmingham

McLain called the meeting to order at 7:45 AM via Remote Zoom.us meeting.

Happy Earth Day!

**APPROVE MINUTES OF CABLE BOARD MEETING HELD February 19, 2020.**

Motion by Eick, seconded by Delaney to approve the minutes of the Cable Board Meeting on February 19, 2020, as presented.

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

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Eric Brunk, IT Manager, City of Birmingham, was the host for this meeting and checked if there were any members from the public who wanted to be heard. There were none.

**TREASURER’S REPORT**

Fenberg reported on the Multi Bank Securities maturities. Because of a huge improvement over the money market, Chas recommended a transfer of funds to purchase a one-year CD. The next maturity would be coming in this April.

**APPROVAL OF BUDGET AMENDMENTS FOR FY 2019-20**

White explained this was a yearly request from the Auditors. If any of the budget categories were at or slightly over the budgeted amounts the Auditors liked to see a budget amendment. There were a few categories which needed to be increased: Administrative Grants awarded to the four communities would be increased from \$105,740.00 to \$379,168.00; Equipment would be increased from \$20,000.00 to \$65,000.00 for purchases recently authorized by the Board; and PEG Grants would be increased from \$103,800.00 to \$150,000.00 to reflect the Grants awarded this year and in anticipation of receiving requests between now and June 30, 2020 (the end of the Budget year).

Motion by Fenberg, seconded by Burry that the Birmingham Area Cable Board does hereby authorize the following amendments to the FY 2019-2020 BACB Budget:

Administrative Grants – Increase the annual amount from \$105,740.00 to \$379,168.00.

Equipment Expenses – Increase from \$20,000.00 to \$65,000.00.

PEG Grants – Increase from \$103,800.00 to \$150,000.00.

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

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### **Cable Action Committee**

Abraham reported that the committee did not have a meeting last month, as there was nothing to discuss.

Due to the “Stay at Home” order, he anticipated the next CAC meeting would be May 7 at 4:30 PM (virtual).

McLean inquired of Currier about subcommittees. Currier responded that subcommittees were required to have a Zoom meeting just like a regular body subcommittee and would follow the same procedures.

#### **PEG Committee**

Mydoski reported there had been a meeting following the last Board meeting in February with Rota, McLain, White, and herself. There had been discussions about the Board-approved playback and server process, White sending Advance Lighting and Sound half of the deposit for the approved truck expense, sporting events and other events BCTV facilitates and the average cost of BCTV facilitating local programming. McLain had mentioned that the “White Board” was still in disrepair, so that was also discussed.

Rota reported that due to the closure of the schools, BCTV would not be covering any spring sports this year. Hopefully in July or August there would be word as to whether schools would resume in the fall, which would mean that BCTV would be covering fall sports. Replying to McLain’s inquiry, Rota stated that all the meetings and some of the Baldwin library lectures had been replaying on the government channel and on the public side reruns of the 20+ series had been playing. He has reached out to producers to see if any wanted to start doing shows on Zoom. Some have taken him up on the offer. As of yet he has not rerun any of the last spring’s sporting events but would consider the idea.

McLain thanked Rota for performing multiple tasks during this unusual period and expressed her appreciation for his efforts in keeping the channels connected and informed.

#### **Personnel Committee**

Several weeks ago Gugni sent out forms for the annual evaluation of the Executive Director. So far he has received only three (3) back. He encouraged the Board to look at them, fill them out, and send them back. If members wished to add a narrative, please do so. The format of the form has changed; he felt it was much better.

McLean requested they be sent to Gugni by Friday of this week. She felt this was simpler and a more objective way to give feedback on the one part-time employee.

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Burry inquired if he could scan his evaluation and send it to Gugni.

McLean questioned Currier if it was possible to do White's evaluation on Zoom. Currier answered in the positive and pointed out that it would be just like a regular meeting, but in this case it would be an open subcommittee meeting. The evaluation meeting would be a closed session and held in a virtual separate "room", after which it would return to a regular subcommittee meeting.

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

White referred to her monthly report dated April 16, 2020. This had been a quiet month due to the nation experiencing the Covid-19 pandemic; however, Comcast has assured her that they were doing business as usual. On the BACB website there were statements by all three (3) providers responding to this unusual situation regarding complaints and people who couldn't pay their bills. There had been two (2) complaints since her last report. The first (1<sup>st</sup>) complaint came from a Beverly Hills resident, who was not a WOW customer; however, had a WOW line laying on the ground in his back yard. His neighbors were WOW customers and the wire was to be buried in the spring. The escalation team has since decided the wire would be run overhead. The resident was satisfied and this complaint was closed. The second (2<sup>nd</sup>) complaint was from a Franklin resident and had been submitted on BACB's website. The resident initially wanted to cancel his service with Comcast but had been convinced to continue and upgrade under a promotional plan. Comcast had agreed to send him internet-extending pods at no charge; however, they never arrived. After another call the customer was instructed to go to a Comcast store and pick up the free pods. The store told him he could not have them for free. After speaking with several people at Comcast and being given several different stories he spoke with a supervisor. She told him she would send him the pods if he paid for them and he might get credit afterwards. The customer felt he had been defrauded and wanted Comcast to resolve this issue by giving him what he had been promised. This complaint is pending. McLain added that she had taken some complaint calls and assisted some subscribers. She reminded the public that at the beginning of all calls to a provider to take down the name and ID numbers of the people with whom he or she speaks and take detailed notes about the conversations.

### **FINANCIAL**

Financial information for MBS, BBCU and Beverly Hills accounts as of March 31, 2020 was emailed to all Board members.

Since the last Board meeting White has written eleven (11) checks on behalf of the BACB. Of those were the Administrative Grants which were the excess franchise fees going back to the four (4) communities, the PEG Grant to Advanced Lighting & Sound for equipment for the Village of Franklin, and the quarterly contract payment (January to March 2020) for BCTV. The remaining checks were for smaller items.

### **ADDITIONAL NOTES:**

Comcast has notified BACB about the opening of a new Xfinity store on Telegraph Rd. in Southfield. The FCC NET Neutrality Docket was heating up again. She detailed the issues. Comcast has made some programing changes which she included in her written report. BACB received a report that Comcast's CEO and other top executives were donating 100% of their

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salaries to a charity supporting Covid-19 relief efforts. Additionally, a \$500 million employee fund had been set up to support their employees with continued pay and benefits when the operations had been paused or impacted during these challenging times. Comcast reported that voice over-internet (voIP) and video conferencing was up 228% and due to the Covid-19 pandemic there was a 37% increase in streaming and video consumption. Those spikes in usage were within their capabilities. The Annual Report had been completed and was submitted in the Board's packet. Due to revisions, she sent out a newer version yesterday.

McLain thanked and applauded White for all her behind the scenes efforts to keep BACB moving in the right direction.

**PROVIDER RELATED TOPICS**

No representatives from the providers were available to call in; however, all three (3) communicated with BACB as could be seen on the BACB web site. All three (3) were doing their best to provide service to all who needed it and to provide free service to those who would have no access at all. As McLain said in the Annual Report, this was an unprecedented partnership in many ways.

**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.

McLain reminded residents that this would be a good time to review their bill and understand what they had in terms of equipment and that all three (3) providers would exchange it if necessary. She further explained the new streaming services launched by AT&T which do not contribute to the cable TV franchise and PEG fees. As people transfer over to streaming, the Cable Board understands this would impact the revenue stream and has planned for this.

Abraham brought to McLain's attention that on the front page of the BACB website under News and Announcements there was a message only from Comcast. She would look into that and further mentioned that the providers could send information about new services which could be put on the BACB site or provide a link. However, she emphasized that the website was not an advertising arm.

**BAPA/BAMA REPORT**

Rota clarified that his report goes back to February 20, 2020 since the March meeting had been cancelled.

Rota referred to his memo to BACB dated March 10, 2020. All regularly scheduled **BAMA** meetings were covered. For the **BAPA** Programs, from the BACB area individual producers and organizations, twenty (20) programs were taped, all of which he listed. These included studio

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shows and those on-location lectures. When Covid-19 began a lot of the lectures and other events during the last half of March and April were cancelled; therefore, no other shows were taped. However, BCTV has allowed producers to do shows through Zoom. Within the last three (3) weeks, ten (10) shows have been done. He predicted that those numbers would grow if the social distancing requirement continues.

**PRODUCER and/or VOLUNTEER WORKSHOP** – The studio was closed to the public but workshops will be offered when it reopens. People can call now to make appointments, especially for June and later in the year. Please call 248-433-7790 and BCTV will schedule a date and time for you.

No spring sports will be covered due to the school closures. Hopefully, in the fall BCTV will get back to covering those sports.

Even though this is a tough time the studio and staff are working hard. The four communities are still doing their monthly or bi-monthly meetings through Zoom. Eric Brunk, IT Manager for Birmingham has been a big help setting up Zoom for the live City of Birmingham Commission, Zoning Board and Planning Board meetings and he makes sure that the live feed is operational so those meetings can be seen live or when they are scheduled. Those files are put up on the BCTV website to keep it current. Rota has been working from home. He has set up a portable switcher so that those few meetings that have been cancelled, those meetings that are not going live or for residents who want to do a show, can be worked on from his home. BCTV was teaming up with West Bloomfield Cable Communications Commission which does 2-hour live podcasts Monday through Friday, 10 AM – 12 Noon. There is a live feed on BAPA and BAMA between 10 and Noon. There is also a direct link from the BACB website with Covid-19 updates.

McLain thanked Rota for coordinating with Dave Scott and Dave Alberty of the West Bloomfield Cable Commission. She added that there are not only interviews with local officials and international officials and news, but also what was happening in the local municipalities.

Delaney mentioned he watched the Beverly Hills Council meeting last night. He thinks that the Memorial Day parade has been cancelled. Rota might want to clarify this issue with the Village. Rota was not sure if the Celebrate Birmingham parade was also cancelled.

Eick thanked Rota for volunteering at the Seaholm Career Day to host a number of students at the studio. Unfortunately, that too has been cancelled but it is a big event every year.

**OLD BUSINESS**

McLain thanked Bingham Farms which decided to put their meetings on cable TV and now online. The Village is very thankful they started this process six (6) months ago (with BCTV's help) so residents had access to the decision-making process during this critical time. They are very appreciative of what Rota has done.

**NEW BUSINESS**

McLain stated that the next meeting would be on Zoom unless something dramatically changes.

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White would keep the Board posted. She also thanked White and the Treasurer for keeping a watchful eye on investments during these uncertain times.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

McLain thanked Eric Brunk.

**BOARD COMMENTS**

White also expressed her appreciation to Brunk, IT Manager from Birmingham.

McLain welcomed Shane Henry, the newest member of the Board. He thanked Rota for giving Mydloski and him a tour of the studio facilities. He further commented that the Board has never had a more important job than keeping TVs on.

McLain stressed the importance of reaching out, especially in times like this during the Covid-19 pandemic.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:25 AM.