

BIRMINGHAM AREA CABLE BOARD MEETING MINUTES – October 16, 2019

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

Absent Shand – Birmingham
 Borgon – Beverly Hills

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

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

APPROVE MINUTES OF CABLE BOARD MEETING HELD September 18, 2019.

Motion by Delaney, seconded by Gugni to approve the minutes of the Regular Cable Board Meeting on September 18, 2019, as presented.

Motion Passed (8-0).

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Hildreth Buterbaugh, former BACB member, had two (2) items to discuss: 1) “Fast Connect” was a product of Comcast which allowed the storage of passwords and login IDs. “Fast Connect” disappeared several times over the years and at the beginning of this year it has disappeared permanently. After during some research and then contacting White, he finally received a call from Comcast which informed him that the company was no longer doing business with “Fast Connect”. Why hadn’t the customers been informed of this since this service was part of the customer’s bill? He was concerned about what had happened to all his passwords and login IDs and 2) He was not happy that Turner Classic Movies was no longer being carried by Comcast. Bottom line, Comcast has poor communication with the public and owes them an explanation. McLain explained that Turner had moved to a different package and she believed there was a notification in all subscribers’ bills. In White’s report which would be given later in the meeting, she has a further explanation. McLain advised that if subscribers have a problem with their bill to call the provider and ask to be connected with the Retention Dept. to discuss it. She also suggested that reviewing the bills on a quarterly basis would be very beneficial. White would research and find out what happened to his passwords and other information.

Fenberg suggested Buterbaugh go to a physical store to review his bill instead of calling and speaking with a representative.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Cable Action Committee

Abraham reported there was no meeting this month. The meetings are scheduled for the first Thursday of the month. The next meeting would be Thursday, November 7 at 4:30 PM. at the Baldwin Public Library in Birmingham.

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PEG Committee

Bob Borgon was not in attendance. White had no report as it was determined that there was no immediate need for a PEG Committee meeting last month.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

White referred to her monthly report dated October 9, 2019. There were five (5) complaints since the date of her last report. The first (1st) complaint came from a Beverly Hills resident who was having all the utility lines buried and received several quotes to do so: WOW- free; Comcast - \$1,700.00; AT&T – quote was even higher. White explained that the BACB had no control over the amount charged for this type of work; however, she advised the resident to discuss/negotiate the fee with the AT&T technical team. This complaint was closed. The second (2nd) complaint came from a Beverly Hills resident who was upset by the profanity used in a movie he was watching on WOW cable. After contacting WOW, the cable company provided information from the FCC regarding this topic. WOW also provided a link to an article with more information on the same subject. This complaint was closed. The third (3rd) and fourth (4th) complaints were from a property manager of the Williamsburg of Birmingham condos. The first complaint requested that Comcast bury a line which it did. This complaint was closed. The second complaint was for WOW to remove a line which was improperly attached to one of the buildings. This complaint is pending as a technical team was needed to address the concern. The fifth (5th) complaint came from a Beverly Hills resident concerning an old pole with WOW cable lines on his property that was leaning over. The resident wanted it removed. This complaint was pending.

FINANCIAL

The account balances for MBS, BBCU and Beverly Hills accounts as of September 30, 2019 were emailed to all Board members and she also provided hard copies for the Board at the meeting, as well as budget to actual figures.

Since the last Board meeting White has written several checks on behalf of the BACB, most of which were for the grants that had been awarded last month and the insurance bills. The largest one was the quarterly contract payment to BCTV.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

There is a new WOW escalation team representative based in Michigan and she provided his name and contact information.

She reported that some studies of cable TV bills had found hidden fees above the advertised rate. Based on these studies it was concluded that these hidden fees add as much as 24% to the cost of the bill. Consumer Reports has launched a website, “whatthefee.com” which highlights the fees and charges which may not be part of the advertised rate.

The change involving Turner Classic Movies being moved to the Sports Entertainment Package had already been discussed earlier in the meeting. This change took place on October 10, 2019.

Delaney had comments regarding the profanity rule in the past. Currier explained that the past rule had disappeared and McLain explained the BACB's policy regarding profanity.

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Abraham inquired if the parental controls related to channels or particular programs. Currier said they would block channels not programs.

PROVIDER RELATED TOPICS

a. Comcast

There was no representative present. However, White received a call from Mazurek who shared a news release that Comcast was bumping up its internet speeds for about 85% customers in Michigan. Those who lease a Gateway will automatically receive the new speeds without having to reset their modem. However, those customers who purchased their own modems should check on line to see if new devices were needed to handle the faster speeds. McLain described the difficulties which might occur if the equipment was not up-to-date.

McLain will follow up with Mazurek about the questions regarding security and passwords.

b. AT&T/Uverse/Direct TV

There was no representative present.

c. WOW

There was no representative present. McLain will reach out to the new contact person.

BAPA/BAMA REPORT

Rota referred to his memo to BACB dated October 9, 2019. He listed the completed **BAMA** Programs which were six (6) regularly scheduled municipal meetings, the BACB meeting, the Parks and Recreation meeting, the Zoning Board of Appeals meeting, and the Advisory Parking Committee meeting.

For the **BAPA** Programs, from the BACB area individual producers and organizations, twenty-two (22) programs were taped, all of which he listed.

PRODUCER WORKSHOP - BCTV is offering a one-on-one session for those who are interested in producing their own show and for those who want to volunteer and experience “behind the scenes”, as well as do some programming. Please call 248-433-7790 and BCTV will schedule a date and time for you.

The triax has arrived and has been installed in the truck. The equipment for Bingham Farms was currently being installed at their office and, hopefully, by the end of the month the first meeting would be taped.

McLain thanked Rota for assisting with all the infrastructure and presentation for Bingham Farms. This evening she would be doing a presentation on the guidelines on how to run, produce and “perform” on a televised municipal meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

McLain gave a brief overview of the NATOA meetings she attended. Before the meeting, the new FCC 621 order which impacts cable franchising had been announced and went into effect

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September 26. It was a fascinating discussion with a lot of information from those all over the United States. White would be sending out information to the Board members. McLain personally spent time with those who were actually doing the appeal. She gave a brief overview. On our behalf, Currier would be closely monitoring the situation. No one was sure when this Order would be in effect as it depended on the litigation and appeal process. Some believe that the cable providers would begin making changes on their side which could affect our revenue stream for the fourth (4th) quarter and not show up until February 2020. The four (4) municipalities, their Clerks, their staff, their managers and their Councils have been advised that a revenue stream change may be coming and any communication they receive from providers should be directed toward their attorney and ultimately to Currier. Currier added more details relating to the appeal process. He has also requested that the material he had shown McLain which was very good be distributed to the Board. White would be emailing McLain's and Currier's documents to the members.

Another interesting NATOA meeting concerned the Smart Pole designs which center around the engineering and fabrication of poles and delivery systems in municipalities for small cells. BACB does not actively handle such matters; however, it does have to do with telecommunications, keeping people informed and rights of way. She brought back a brochure from one vendor which appeared to be very interesting, showing some innovative designs.

NEW BUSINESS

None

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

BOARD COMMENTS

Burry had questions about which lines on the poles were necessary and which could be removed due to non-usage. McLain explained that the providers were the only ones aware of which lines were "live"; however, she defined the different provider lines according to the colors. Cable providers can check particular locations, such as your home. If requested, White could send such a request to the providers on your behalf.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:40 AM.