

BIRMINGHAM AREA CABLE BOARD MEETING MINUTES – August 19, 2020

Present: Abraham, Eick, Fenberg, Shand - Birmingham
 Burry (arrived at 7:47 AM), Delaney, Gugni, Henry – Beverly Hills
 Mydloski – Franklin

Absent: McLain - Birmingham

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

Gugni, Vice Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:45 AM via Remote Zoom.us meeting with closed captioning. He indicated that McLain was unable to attend this meeting.

APPROVE MINUTES OF CABLE BOARD MEETING HELD July 15, 2020.

Motion by Delaney, seconded by Henry to approve the minutes of the Cable Board Meeting on July 15, 2020, as presented.

Roll Call Vote:

Eick	Aye
Fenberg	Aye
Shand	Aye
Abraham	Aye
Delaney	Aye
Gugni	Aye
Henry	Aye
Mydloski	Aye

Absent: McLain, Burry
 Motion Passed. (8-0).

Burry arrived at 7:47 AM.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments at this time.

PEG GRANT REQUEST – BIRMINGHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Gugni referred to a letter from Dwight Levens, dated May 12, 2020 which was in the Board’s packet, addressed to the Public Education Government (PEG) Committee of the Birmingham Area Cable Board. It explained the request for \$85,455.00. Attached to the letter was a quote from Advanced Lighting & Sound. This had been discussed at a previous meeting. Gugni asked if there was any further discussion.

Motion by Eick, seconded by Fenberg to approve a PEG Grant request in the amount not to exceed \$85,455.00 to the Birmingham Public Schools for the cost of technical upgrades in the “Evergreen Room” in the Administration Building.

Roll Call Vote:

Eick	Aye
Fenberg	Aye
Shand	Aye
Abraham	Aye
Delaney	Aye
Burry	Aye
Gugni	Aye
Henry	Aye
Mydloski	Aye

Absent: McLain
Motion Passed. (9-0).

Gugni acknowledged Abraham’s research about the distribution of PEG Grants 2013-Present. Abraham explained that White had broken down the grants between PEG and Franchise Fee money. Within the PEG grants he further separated the grants for the public (Libraries, Museums), grants that went to education and the remaining to the government (Cities, Fire, Police). The break down was: 23% - Public, 34% - School System and 43% - Government.

Gugni reminded the Board of the “Birmingham Cable Grant Policy, dated January, 2012” which gives guidelines for the distribution of funds.

White confirmed that Abraham’s research has been sent to the entire Board and Gugni suggested that a copy of the Grant Policy be sent to the entire Board. Percentages per community differ from year-to-year and Fenberg stated that comparisons of year-by-year could be misleading. Mydloski pointed out that the “back story” of each disbursement was necessary and important.

White also said that a summary has been put on the website, breaking it down year-by-year. She complimented and thanked Abraham for his work.

PEG GRANT REQUEST – NEXT

Gugni referred to a letter from Cris Braun, Executive Director of NEXT, dated July 16, 2020. Braun explained this request of funds was similar to that in the past: expenses to maintain its internet, cable and registration software for the center in the amount of \$4,874.71.

Fenberg inquired if this should be a Municipal Support Services Grant since the request looked like it was for monthly services rather than a PEG Grant which was more for equipment upgrades. White explained the difference: if the request was coming from an entity that was not one of the BACB communities, it is allocated to the PEG Grant category.

Motion by Fenberg, seconded by Shand to approve the PEG Grant request in the amount not to exceed \$4,874.71 to NEXT for the cost to maintain the internet, cable and registration software for the center.

Roll Call Vote:

Fenberg	Aye
Shand	Aye
Abraham	Aye
Delaney	Aye
Burry	Aye
Henry	Aye
Mydloski	Aye
Eick	Aye
Gugni	Aye

Absent: McLain
Motion Passed. (9-0).

RATIFICATION OF COST TO UPGRADE TRI-CASTER – BIRMINGHAM PEG GRANT

White explained this was a request from BCTV to upgrade the Tri-Caster for remote access of filming from home rather than going to the studio. She has the authority to approve such expenditures under \$1,000 and was asking the Board to ratify the expense of \$360.00.

Motion by Fenberg, seconded by Mydloski to ratify the expenditure for an upgrade of the Birmingham Tri-Caster for the purpose of remote filming not to exceed \$360.00.

Roll Call Vote:

Shand	Aye
Abraham	Aye
Delaney	Aye
Burry	Aye
Henry	Aye
Mydloski	Aye
Eick	Aye
Fenberg	Aye
Gugni	Aye

Absent: McLain
Motion Passed. (9-0).

RATIFICATION OF COST TO REPAIR TRI-CASTER – BEVERLY HILLS PEG GRANT

White explained this was for a battery for the Beverly Hills Tri-Caster and cost \$139.00. She authorized the expenditure and was looking for ratification from BACB.

Motion by Shand, seconded by Burry to ratify the expenditure for the purchase of a battery for the Beverly Hills Tri-Caster not to exceed \$139.00.

Roll Call Vote:

Abraham	Aye
Delaney	Aye
Burry	Aye
Henry	Aye
Mydloski	Aye
Eick	Aye
Fenberg	Aye
Shand	Aye
Gugni	Aye

Absent: McLain
Motion Passed. (9-0).

COMMITTEE REPORTS**Cable Action Committee**

Abraham reported there had not been a meeting in August. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 3 at 4:30 P.M.

PEG Committee

Mydloski stated there was nothing to discuss as the committee had been working on the school grant.

White suggested having a discussion about fall sports. If they do continue, BCTV would be requesting funding for eight (8) sporting events at \$2,500 per event for a total of \$20,000. Rota stated that football has been moved to the spring and he thought volleyball, soccer, swim and dive and tennis were still scheduled for the fall; however, that could change. He was in contact with Aaron Frank, the Athletic Director, who would like BCTV to tape whatever fall sports MSHAA approved. It was anticipated that the season would be cancelled; however, if not, the season would start in the mid-September before the next BACB meeting. Therefore, he requested that the funding be approved at this meeting. Rota added that if only four (4) sporting events were scheduled, BACB would only be charged \$10,000.

Motion by Henry, seconded by Eick to approve the payment to BCTV in the amount not to exceed \$20,000 for filming up to eight (8) Fall Sporting events (\$2,500 per event) in the event sports were permitted to go forward in the fall.

Roll Call Vote:

Delaney	Aye
Burry	Aye
Henry	Aye
Mydloski	Aye
Eick	Aye

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Fenberg	Aye
Shand	Aye
Abraham	Aye
Gugni	Aye

Absent: McLain
 Motion Passed. (9-0).

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

White referred to her monthly report dated August 13, 2020. Last month's complaint about old cables being left on the back overhang of a resident's house and a low hanging wire has been resolved with the assistance of the escalation team.

There were twelve (12) complaints since her last report which was very unusual. She summarized several of them for the Board and the rest were detailed in her report. One involved a resident who had difficulties with Comcast when trying to transfer his service to his new house. It took the resident (a BACB member) four (4) separate service transactions with Comcast to correct all the transfer problems. His service was now working. This complaint was closed. A lot of the complaints this month were associated with cables and have been or were being addressed by the provider. A second (2nd) complaint concerned a resident's internet speed. Comcast's first service call did not completely solve the problem. Since the resident was difficult to reach to schedule another service visit, Comcast sent him a letter with their direct contact information if assistance was still required. This complaint was closed.

Frequent Comcast outages were problems and the Comcast representative sent letters with follow-up information to those residents who couldn't be reached.

One elderly Birmingham resident wanted to keep only her Comcast phone service and had returned the other equipment. Subsequent bills still reflected both phone and cable service. An escalation team representative worked with her on this issue and the complaint is closed. A 92 year old Birmingham resident who only has Comcast land line service was having problems, as it would periodically go out. Recognizing this was a safety issue, the escalation team immediately sent out a technician to correct the problem. This complaint was resolved. White complimented Comcast on its rapid response in fixing this particular problem. Another elderly Birmingham resident needed a more affordable Comcast package as she was financially struggling after the death of her husband. She requested help from the escalation team. This complaint is pending. A Birmingham resident had signed up for an upgraded Comcast package which requires new boxes and remotes. Those items did not arrive in the mail as promised. The escalation team sent out a technician with the equipment who was able to set up one for her. This complaint is closed.

FINANCIAL

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

Since the last Board meeting White has written seven (7) checks on behalf of the BACB; the biggest ones were for the quarterly contract payment to Bloomfield Township, liability insurance payments, and the grant payment to the Franklin-Bingham Fire Dept. for internet costs.

Mydloski thanked White for mitigating all those complaints. Shand personally wanted to thank White for her responsiveness in the initial contact with the Comcast team regarding his complaint. The rapid response he received from the written complaint that he had submitted on-line proved that the process works. It is a good service BACB provides to those residents who need a little assistance.

PROVIDER RELATED TOPICS

a. Comcast

There was no representative present. Mazurek sent some material which she forwarded to the Board. Even though he was not able to be at the meeting, he keeps the Board apprised of what was going on at Comcast.

b. AT&T/Uverse/Direct TV

There was no representative present.

c. WOW

There was no representative present.

White did not have any communication or updates from AT&T or WOW.

BAPA/BAMA REPORT

Rota referred to his July 7, 2020 report.

For the **BAMA** programs he listed all the regularly scheduled municipal meetings that were covered, the BACB meeting, the Parks and Rec Board meeting, Zoning Board meeting, Bingham Farms Council meeting, Baldwin Public Library meeting and the Village of Beverly Hills meetings. These can be watched on the Cable Board website Video on Demand or watched streaming on the Birmingham website. He thanked Eric Brunk and his team for helping with the meetings in the Birmingham City Hall. This was what had prompted the request for the upgrade of the Tri-Caster which allows Eric or himself to direct shows from remote locations (home) during the pandemic.

For the **BAPA** Programs, the producers have used Zoom to complete 12 programs, all of which he listed. Unfortunately, there were no recordings on location from the BACB area organizations due to the pandemic and social distancing. Hopefully, next month the studio might be open by appointment only and producers/hosts could come in and start doing shows in the studio or through Zoom.

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At the moment there have not been any one-on-one workshops; however, for those interested in producing a show or learning how to run the equipment, go to the Birmingham Area Cable Board website and/or the Bloomfield Township website at Bloomfieldtwp.org, click on “cable forms” and fill out a form. Your name would be put on a list and a date could be scheduled in the future.

The phone number for a workshop is (248)433-7790.

Rota added that a couple of days ago he received a call from Lauren Horton, the PEG Channel coordinator from WOW. Apparently, WOW might be putting Channel 10 or Channel 18 on HD which BCTV has been trying to do with Comcast and AT&T for a while. All this was in the planning stages. She might participate in the meeting next month when she has more information about the upgrade that WOW was offering. Rota added that when this is offered there might be a need for additional equipment to be purchased to allow WOW customers in the community to see programs in HD.

OLD BUSINESS

Dwight Levens thanked the Board for its support of the Birmingham Schools.

NEW BUSINESS.

There was none.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were none.

BOARD COMMENTS

Abraham, who has paperless billing, recently went online to look at his bill and realized his billing had changed. He was paying for a premium station which duplicated the same programming on Netflix and on Amazon Prime which he also subscribed to. By cancelling the premium station he was able to save some money. He reminded residents to check their bills.

Delaney referred to the PEG fund balance and wondered how BACB budgeted for expenditures, such as the one the Board had made today for the Birmingham Schools?

White stated that that would be under Grants; under the PEG expenditures. If projects arose in the next fiscal year, the budget could be amended to use some of the PEG fund balance for that purpose.

Delaney thought it might be advantageous to ask the various stakeholders what their anticipated needs might be. The reason for his questioning was that in Beverly Hills there had been discussions which might affect other communities and PEG Grants. He clarified that if grant requests came in and they exceeded the budgeted amount for the year, money would be transferred from the fund balance and the budget would be amended.

Fenberg addressed Delaney’s question about the PEG Grants. When looking at the application and PEG Grant, the grants are the fill-in number so the total PEG expenditures equal the anticipated PEG income. The budget at the beginning of the year was for a number of

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expenditures. Last year the dollar amount which was put in was needed to equal the PEG operations with the PEG income. Each request that comes in must be dealt with as the year progresses.

Delaney inquired as to whether BACB revenues are declining due to reduced PEG funding from the providers. Fenberg stated that looking at the budget, there was a slight decrease projected for the 2021 year end. Last year \$66,000 of the fund balance was actually used. Responding to Delaney, White stated that the percentages are down to the final stepdown level pursuant to the Franchise agreements and will stay there in terms of the percentages. Courier added that it's a percentage of what the total revenue is that comes in on your cable bill. Some of the revenue has stayed fairly close to where it was; it was 3% for PEG and now we're down to 2% for PEG. Instead of getting 3% of \$150, we're getting 2% of \$200 and thus because the baseline is going up, the percentage is not going down as fast as we thought it would go down.

Fenberg, on the Board's behalf wished McLain and her family the best on behalf of the Board. He also wanted to recognize Gugni on doing an excellent job running the meeting. The entire Board chimed in on that sentiment.

There would not be a PEG Committee meeting after this meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 AM.