

**Belmont Cable Access Committee**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of November 18, 2003**

Attendance: Mark Apostolon, Todd Bloniarz, Pam Curtis, Frank Foss, Maryann Scali, Fred Skoler, John Verrilli, Mark Ventola

The meeting was called to order by chair, John Verrilli at 7:40 p.m.

**Contact List:** A contact list of committee members was passed around. Additions were made

**Minutes of September and October meetings:** The minutes of the September and October meetings were passed out for review. Both were accepted with minor corrections.

**Issues from the Community:** Mark V. reported that channel 8 was off the air from Wed., 11/12 through the weekend. Everything was fine by the time of Town Meeting on Monday. The cause of the trouble has not been determined. Both CMS and the studio were out of commission. Town Hall was not affected. John noted that the audience microphones at Town Meeting were unintelligible. Mark said that there was one recorded complaint about the audio at Town Meeting. Maryann said that the bulletin board was not always up-to-date. Mark V. replied that it was checked everyday. Frank explained that the system had just had a major upgrade, and Comcast was still "fine-tuning" things out in the field. For this reason, they could not concentrate on the institutional network (i.e., how signals get between CMS, the studio and town hall) at the present time. He suggested that committee members let Comcast know of problems. Several committee members discussed problems that they had been having with broadcast quality.

**Report on Studio Operations:** The 9<sup>th</sup> annual Foundation for Belmont Education spelling bee was broadcast on Friday, 11/14. There was discussion about whether the channel 8 program schedule and bulletin board could be put online. It may be possible to create a website using the Comcast server.

**Finances and Capital Equipment:** Mark A. reported on the status of the equipment order. The total cost of the order will be 22,192.80, and the vendor is Crimson Camera of Boston. He said that Crimson is likely to wait until the entire order is in before shipping anything. There is currently 2,555.10 left in the Belmont Community Television capital budget. Mark A. will be gone next week, but said that he would have an equipment arrival update by the first week in December. There was a question about installation of the new equipment. This has not been arranged by Comcast.

Mark A. and Frank explained the Comcast purchasing cycle to the committee. Frank took questions from committee members. He explained that the committee needed to plan purchases 3 months in advance of when the equipment was needed. The last quarter of the fiscal year is used to complete purchases requested in the prior quarter. Any new requests would have to be made for the next fiscal year.

The budget was passed out. There was a question about the budget allocation for the coming fiscal year. Frank explained that as things stand now, the budget for 2004 would be for 3/4 of a year, since the license is expiring September 30, 2004. This means that Belmont Community Television will have 7500.00 allocated to it for 2004, rather than 10,000.00. John reviewed the equipment purchases for the committee. Future major purchases may include non-linear editing equipment a tape deck set-up for future broadcast and portable intercom headphones. Mark A. suggested purchasing an AV leveler to raise and lower audio/video levels.

After Mark A. and Frank left the meeting, the committee discussed the budget.

**Media Center Task Force:** Todd and Maryann updated the committee on the work of the Media Center Task Force. There was a meeting on November 4 that was an orientation with the consultant to arrange future focus groups. Another meeting is planned for 11/24. The focus groups, which will represent different segments of the community that might use a media center, are planned for January, 2004. Current thinking on the task force is that a new media center would be more than just a television studio. Part of the job of the focus groups is to determine what the community wants from a media center, what the needs

are, what people would use. This information will be used in contract negotiations with Comcast during the license renewal process. The task force is exploring whether it is feasible to have the media center run by a non-profit corporation, independent of Comcast, rather than as something that is run by Comcast, as Channel 8 is now. Current thinking is that Comcast does not want to run public access channels. Major issues for negotiation with Comcast involved the degree of financial support that Comcast would provide for a media center. The other major issue for the task force is where a new media center would be located. The future of the television studio in Belmont High School is uncertain, since BHS may need to reclaim the space for classrooms. Town meeting has recently allocated 90,000.00 to study renovating BHS.

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 16, 2003 at 7:30 p.m. at the Channel 8 studio in Belmont High School. The meeting was adjourned by John Verrilli.

Respectfully submitted

Pam Curtis  
Acting Secretary for November 18, 2003