

Belmont Cable Access Committee (CAC)
Minutes 12/17/2002
7:30PM, BCTV Channel 8 Studio

Present

Committee: John Verrilli, Todd Bloniarz, Bob Blakelock, Maryann Scali, Larry Kutner
AT&T Broadband: Mark Ventola, Abiodun Shobowale

Call to Order: John Verrilli officially called the meeting to order at 7:45.

Future Meeting Schedule

It was agreed by the CAC to continue meeting on the third Tuesday of each month.

Review of 11/17/02 Minutes

Minutes were received and approved. No changes needed to be made although topics from the 11/17 meeting were briefly discussed. Possible candidates for CAC membership are still being considered with the thought that the Belmont selectmen officially appoint new members annually in June. The idea for a Ch. 8 'open house' with members of Belmont organizations will take place sometime in early 2003. Regarding audio issues at selectmen and school committee meetings: placing a microphone and stand in the middle of the town hall room will be suggested to selectman chair Brownsberger; as for school committee, Larry Kutner is willing to lend an audio mixer to Ch. 8 in order to provide extra audio input capability at meetings, especially having a mic placed at the overhead projector for audio/visual presentations.

Issues from the Community/Complaints/Concerns

No major issues to discuss from the community.

Report on Studio Operations

Mark reported there was a station-related power outage during last week's live coverage of the school committee meeting. The meeting was recorded and aired in its entirety at a later date. A larger problem of late has been the inability to update information on the station's bulletin board due to problems with the Alphagen character generator. It will be sent out for repairs once the temporary backup character generator (Videotronics) returns to the studio. Larry suggested using a PC/Windows-based character generator down the road; Bob recalled that had been suggested several years ago. Finally, one of the newer (456) field camcorders has a faulty power pack and needs to be repaired; the studio still has six other working camcorders available for use.

Public Meetings Coverage

It was suggested Ch. 8 cover the upcoming Planning Board meetings on 12/18/02 and 1/28/03. Mark said he would be available both nights, although it was uncertain whether the 12/18 meeting would actually be covered due to a short scheduled agenda.

Update on Cable Access Corporation/Public Information and Communication Committees

No further updates on the formation of these committees. Bob pointed out the current license renewal process with the town is underway, the next step being the scheduling of a hearing to obtain public input. Mark mentioned an agreement was in place for digital broadband cable to be available in Belmont sometime in 2003.

Possible Amendment of Political Guidelines

In-depth discussion on this topic was postponed until the next CAC meeting.

Review of Finances and Capital Equipment

The topic of the actual agreement in place with the town of Belmont was discussed. Bob noted that when the Belmont studio first opened in 1989-90, the agreement stated there would be a \$60K annual capital budget that would be increased annually based on the CPI. Of that total, \$5K would be directed to the Belmont school system and \$10K directed to the 'Belmont Community Television Fund'. An underspend account developed during the Nashoba/Cablevision ownership years; the funds are currently comingled with other town monetary funds. With the AT&T/Comcast merger becoming official last month, John thought it would be a good time to determine how much money is in the town's account that is allocated to the CAC. This is important to know because any studio equipment purchased with these specific funds would be owned by the town, while any capital bought through budgetary expenditures would be owned by AT&T/Comcast.

Questions were raised regarding the 2002 Belmont studio budget given to us by AT&T prior to the Comcast merger. What is the actual end-of-year budget and remaining balance? Also, what would the 2003 budget would look like with Comcast now involved? Following discussion of this topic, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00pm.

Next Meeting

Tuesday January 21, 2003, 7:30 pm at the studio.

Respectfully submitted,
Todd Bloniarz