

TOWN OF BEDFORD
BCTV - WBNH Board of Overseers
May 9, 2019
MEETING MINUTES

Present: Dick Rawlings (Acting Chair), Melissa Stevens (Town Council Representative), Bill Foote (School Board Representative), Bill Duschatko (Town Council Alternate), Bob Thomas, Andrew Hanson, Joel Schwelling, Dave Danielson, Bill Jennings (BCTV Station Manager), Coleen Richardson (BCTV Assistant Station Manager), Harry Kozlowski (WBNH Program Director).

Absent: Pete Macdonald, Julio Nunez,

I. Call to Order:

Mr. Rawlings acting as Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm

II. Public Input – (For items not on the agenda) – Limited to 3 minutes per individual

None.

III. Old Business:

A. Approval (Acceptance) of minutes from previous meetings:

- BCTV – January 10, 2019
- WBNH – January 17, 2019

MOTION by Mr. Thomas to accept the BCTV Board of Overseers minutes of January 10, 2019 and the WBNH Board of Overseers minutes of January 17, 2019. The motion was seconded by Mr. Duschatko. Vote taken – all in favor.

IV. New Business

A. Election of Officers (Chair and Vice Chair)

MOTION to elect Mr. Rawlings as Chair by Mr. Thomas. The motion was seconded by Mr. Foote. Vote taken – all in favor. Motion carried.

MOTION to elect Mr. Thomas as Vice Chair by Mr. Foote. The motion was seconded by Chairman Rawlings. Vote taken – all in favor. Motion carried.

B. BCTV Manager’s Report

Mr. Jennings provided the BCTV – WBNH Board of Overseers with 3 months of Station Manager’s Reports (February, March and April 2019) for review prior to this meeting. There was talk there would be a decision in late-April/May on the FCC proposed cable “In-Kind” services rules change that could significantly impact our franchise fee funding, but it has been pushed out to June/July as a result of support we are getting nationally and at the Congressional and Senatorial level.

As a point of review for the viewing public and new board members: There was a Franchise Cable Act passed in 1984 that allowed Public, Educational and Government (PEG) access stations to exist. Money was provided for communities to use as they saw fit primarily for the objective of establishing communications/media centers. That has been challenged over time. At one time broadband was part of that process, but it has been removed, and now it is strictly a video service agreement the council has franchising authority over.

Staff completed a new 10-year agreement last fall which was activated December 2, 2018 and will expire in 2028. Franchise Fee Support is a fee collected from cable subscribers that goes to the communities to fund operations. The cable companies feel there is some competitive edge for non-cable providers who provide video over IP environment or over the air and are saying that they need money to compete despite the fact that they already pull in billions of dollars in profit. We feel they are trying to use their authority to eventually take control of right of ways use from local municipality governance.

The cable companies are challenging the Franchise Cable Act by using the FCC (which is not unheard of, given net-neutrality). When you don’t like the laws that came out of D.C. and the legislature you try and use the FCC when it comes to matters of this nature.

The in-kind services that were proposed after years of deliberation have made it to the FCC and would allow the cable companies to assign an In-Kind

Service figure without any municipality negotiation whatsoever and without any municipality input. They are seeking to assign ridiculous values (ex. - If you have an HD channel they will charge you for 2 channels). To use in-kind services, they could charge \$X for each channel (numbers as high as \$10K have been proposed). BCTV had plans to implement an HD channel. Based on our agreement within 12 months they could potentially start charging us for this. They could also charge a value for any drops to any of our schools or any of our municipality buildings. While Mr. Jennings does not begrudge a vendor like Comcast or any other cable company charging us for support; there is a 10-year agreement already in place that we negotiated along with our counsel.

If the cable companies begin charging us for in-kind services the impact could be anywhere from 30-50%. This is the number counsel has advised us to prepare for. This would reduce the amount of money that we receive and more money would go to the cable providers.

There has been a national surge of support to the FCC with letters coming from citizens, municipal governments, and representative from the Senate and Congress. New Hampshire is the only State that has full D.C. support from both of our 2 Senators and both of our 2 Congressional representatives. Mr. Jennings provided the BCTV – WBNH Board of Overseers with some copies of the letters of support for review.

We now await the ruling in June or July. If the Republican majority makes any rule changes, the expectation is for at least 90 days of implementing the rules along with some back-and-forth. There might be some litigation that would go on for quite a while. Mr. Jennings has contacted Brian Christiansen at Comcast but was told that they do not comment on policy.

Chairman Rawlings asked how this all got started. Mr. Jennings explained that there are lobbyists working for the corporate world. There are laws to protect the public, organizations and net-neutrality; however, protection of net-neutrality did not go well and there are heavily funded lobbyists in Washington D.C. working against it. Everything is also politically driven. He feels if Democrats got back to having the majority in the House and the Senate everything would change and flip. When there is a Democratic President or a Democratic majority they are more likely to see the need for local community communications and to open up low power FM licenses and be more supportive of free-speech and open communications.

Since lobbyists are involved Mr. Schwelling extrapolates that certain campaign donations have been made to members of the House and Senate

who might be more favorable to a change in the rules. Mr. Jennings is all for free enterprise, but in a challenging oligarchy environment he feels this is a first step to do away with any responsibility of dealing with municipalities because of right of way use. Mr. Schwelling asked if the cable companies are looking for additional revenue on top of the individual line item franchise fee that cable subscribers already pay. Mr. Jennings explained it is not additional revenue on top of what subscribers are paying. If, for example, \$1.00 is slated to come to the Town of Bedford, but in-kind services takes place at 25% - the cable subscriber still pays \$1.00, but the cable companies are taking \$0.25 of that dollar and Bedford only receives \$0.75.

Moving on, Mr. Jennings stated that BCTV's whole approach to providing content is using any venue (live, streaming, YouTube, or video-on-demand) and providing a great variety of programming. Statistics show that our Sports programming numbers were huge (especially in March with hockey and basketball), and numbers were also high during elections and for government and school related programming. We are not able to measure who is watching on television because it would be very expensive to do so; but our online programming allows us to monitor the number of hits we receive from people watching online. These metrics help us to prioritize what programming people are looking at and what to focus on.

Mr. Jennings reviewed how to navigate the BCTV website for members of the board as well as the viewing public. There is also a mobile phone application (Civic Plus Bedford) that people can use to get BCTV and Town website content on their phones. BCTV also has a YouTube channel (Bedford Community Television NH) devoted to sporting and educational information. Viewers can subscribe and be notified (if they set notification in their settings) when new content is downloaded to the YouTube channel. It is a great way for people who do not have cable television to still be able to watch BCTV programming online. Over 1,200 people viewed the 2018 Bedford High School graduation on the YouTube channel.

Ms. Richardson shared a recent collaborative campaign between Police, Fire, radio and television departments to produce public service announcements (PSA's) about safety. So far 3 PSA's have been produced about choking, the file of life, and distracted driving. Ms. Richardson will email links to the PSA's to the Board so that they may view them, but the PSA's can also be viewed on Facebook and YouTube. People have been really receptive to them so far. The participants from the Police and Fire departments have also been very creative with ways to get dry information out in an entertaining way. A logo has also been created to tie it all together.

C. WBNH Program Director's Report

Mr. Kozlowski reported that the radio station is in its 4th year of operation and has been on-air since February 2016. People volunteer their time to help create quality programming that is very compelling. Sports programming has been very well-received. We are in the process of preparing for lacrosse and baseball play-offs, and in the summer we plan to air some little league programming, and programming for soccer and football in the Fall.

The shows we produce are available for listening on the Podbean website. We have produced 994 programs since the radio station went on-air which have been downloaded 9,300 times, so it's amazing the number of people who are consuming our content and finding it compelling. Listeners can access content on their mobile phones by downloading an app through WBNH webpage (which is embedded on the town website), or by going directly to the Podbean website: Podbean.com and entering "WBNH LP" in the search box.

Mr. Schwelling wouldn't necessarily think to go to Podbean to listen to a podcast and asked if there is a way to expand where the podcasts are made available (perhaps iTunes)? Mr. Kozlowski said that all of the show producers use the WBNH facilities but own their programs and promote on other platforms outside of Podbean. For example, shows like Suburban Underground and New Wave Flashback make their shows available via iTunes and Facebook. The station currently only maintains a page on Podbean (<http://wbnh1051.podbean.com/>), but Mr. Kozlowski will take it under advisement and look to see what else we can do to expand the reach. Ms. Richardson shared that programming can also be accessed directly from the WBNH website: <https://www.bedfordnh.org/436/WBNH-LP> and noted that each service charges us a subscription fee to use them as our on-demand radio service.

Mr. Kozlowski said that all the show producers put a lot of time and effort into creating shows week after week. Back and Forth with Bill Ingalls has produced 140 shows to date, Foxx on Sports show has produced 79 shows, and Suburban Underground has produced 158 shows. Hats off to the producers who volunteer and do quality work. They have even won Statewide awards. It is a labor of love for them, and we are fortunate to have people that talented and that committed helping us out.

D. Review of both BCTV and WBNH Policies

The BCTV and WBNH policies are still separate, but their bylaws now tie in and explain the responsibilities of each station. Mr. Jennings indicated that we have lost Chris Bandazian as a legal representative and member of the BCTV – WBNH Board of Overseers but have gained new member Andrew Hanson who is also an attorney and knowledgeable in legal matters. The differentiation between BCTV and WBNH is spelled out in the bylaws and the policies. The radio station is FCC controlled so it is a little more stringent. There are more liberties with the BCTV side since they are not controlled by the FCC, but the policies of the station can always be reviewed. There are sensitive areas in regard to political programming that have been tightened up to be sure we are not giving anyone unfair advantage. We have been challenged from time to time about some of our PSA's. The Board was provided with key points to differentiate between the organizations and the differences in their policies.

E. Discussion of policies sub-committee

About one year ago the policies for WBNH were reviewed and the policies for BCTV were reviewed in 2015. A sub-committee could be formed to look at updating the policies and report back to the Board, or else we could forego a sub-committee and the Board could just review the policies and speak out if they see anything questionable.

Mr. Jennings indicated that the policies have been updated to allow non-profits more flexibility when commercial companies are backing them at an event. We used to be restrictive if we thought a commercial company was, for example, taking \$0.50 out of every \$1.00 made at a non-profit event. We have opened up our way of thinking about this. If, for example, the Bedford Little League is having an event in conjunction with a restaurant that is taking \$0.50 on the dollar; the Little League still gets its \$0.50 out of the deal and so we are now allowing this to occur and publicize that the organization is having a fundraiser and for every \$1.00 spent, \$0.50 will go to the organization. In the past this was not allowed, but we have opened up our way of thinking over the years and revised policies and have discussed loosening them even further.

Mr. Hanson read through the policies and feels this topic is the only one that warrants further definition, specifically the language: "The intent or substantial effect of benefitting a profit-making enterprise". He feels it would be helpful if this language was clarified and would happy to work on this more. Other than this he didn't see anything in the policies that needed to be expanded or revised so he doesn't think there would be much work a sub-

committee could do. The Board could probably just go through the policies and review them because there probably wouldn't be many issues.

There was much discussion on whether a subcommittee should be formed to discuss and address nuances of the policies. In the end it was determined that there was no interest in forming a sub-committee; however, board members should review both BCTV and WBNH policies for next meeting and discuss anything that jumps out at them or that they have a question about.

The next meeting of the will be July 18, 2019.

Mr. Danielson shared that during the first week of June the Statehouse is celebrating its 200th Anniversary. It is the only continuously operating Statehouse in the nation. He wondered if BCTV would be interested in filming the celebrations. For the first time ever there will be a real State Supreme Court hearing will be taking place in the Statehouse legislative hall. This has never been done before. Mr. Jennings is interested in receiving more information from Mr. Danielson on this and may also share it with our sister-station, Concord Community in Concord, NH.

V. Adjournment

MOTION to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Thomas and seconded by Mr. Schwelling. Meeting was adjourned by Chairman Rawlings at 8:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Tiffany Lewis

MONTHLY REPORT



To: Town Manager and Town Council
From: Bill Jennings, BCTV-WBNH Station Manager
Date: March 4, 2019
Dept.: Bedford Community TV / WBNH Radio
Period: February 2019

Total Number of BCTV Programs All Channels: 71

Channel 16 - Public: 52

Channel 22 – Government: 5 Live First Time Runs; 105 Re-Runs

Channel 23 – Education: 15

BCTV Video on Demand Views: 526

BCTV Website Page Views: 727 WBNH Website Page Views: 270

BCTV Program Streaming Users: 5,469 WBNH Unique Listeners: 802

WBNH Podcast Downloads: 382

BCTV Public Service Announcements: 56 WBNH Public Service Announcements: 64

BCTV – WBNH Points of Interest

Future cable franchise fees could be significantly impacted with a proposed FCC rules change currently under consideration. The proposed change goes directly against the Franchise Cable Act of 1984. The change would allow cable companies to start charging for “In-Kind” services. They could conceivably charge a value for each channel, as well as any municipality cable drops to each of the town and school buildings. The charge is not negotiable with the towns and set by the cable company. What is also unfair is that cable subscribers would not see a reduction in their franchise fee which supports BCTV and WBNH. Instead of the money coming to the town to support station operations, Comcast would now be taking those portion of the fees for themselves. Even our local Comcast state representative isn’t sure how this would all work either. Our national, regional and state board community media alliances are working hard to fight this change.

We have received Senators Hassan and Shaheen’s support to prevent the FCC from doing this and Congressman Pappas is also aware and has offered support. But this is a very real threat that we are monitoring closely. We have sent in letters and emails and we will continue to do so. I will provide a separate one page overview of the impact and the course of action we have taken locally, state wide and nationally with our community media alliances separate from this report for your review.

Candidate Interviews, live debates, BHS Hockey and Basketball Sports coverage along with programming with the Bedford Fire Department and the Girl Scouts of the Green & White Mountains are some of the events we were working on in February.

BCTV recorded interviews with 9 Candidates to include 3 School Board Candidates, 3 Town Council Candidates, 2 Town Clerk Candidates and 1 Library Trustee Candidate. BCTV also covered the Bedford Men's Clubs Live Debates with both Town Council and School Board Candidates. The Bedford School District's Deliberative Session was also covered live.

High School Sports programming included live coverage of both Boys and Girls Basketball as well as Boys Hockey. Radio and BCTV broadcast the games simultaneously. When there is an away game, Radio will handle the broadcast only. Radio has a smaller footprint in opposing gym locations since the broadcasts normally take place in the stands and audio doesn't require the amount of bandwidth that video distribution requires. We have gotten spoiled with our gym locations since WIFI is located throughout BHS; inside and outside.

The Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains had recorded "Cook's Corner" with WMUR in the past however WMUR was no longer recording this program, so the Girl Scouts organization approached BCTV to record a similar cooking program. In the program a 16 yrs. old Girl Scout interviewed younger girl scouts as they prepared some recipes using Girl Scout Cookies. BCTV also recorded a PSA with them to help promote cookie sales.

The Bedford Fire Department has started an initiative to create a "Health & Wellness" program and the first cooking episode was recorded with Captain Thatcher Plante.

MONTHLY REPORT



To: Town Manager and Town Council
From: Bill Jennings, BCTV-WBNH Station Manager
Date: April 3, 2019
Dept.: Bedford Community TV / WBNH Radio
Period: March 2019

Total Number of BCTV Programs All Channels: 87

Channel 16 - Public: 56

Channel 22 – Government: 11 Live First Time Runs; 157 Re-Runs

Channel 23 – Education: 20

BCTV Video on Demand Views: 1348

BCTV Website Page Views: 727 WBNH Website Page Views: 270

BCTV Program Streaming Users: 1965 WBNH Unique Listeners: 903

WBNH Podcast Downloads: 142

BCTV Public Service Announcements: 65 WBNH Public Service Announcements: 62

BCTV – WBNH Points of Interest

Support from our elected Washington officials continues with all opposing the FCC proposed cable “In-Kind” services rules change that could significantly impact our franchise fee funding. Since my last report, Congressman Pappas has joined Senators Shaheen and Hassan in submitting letters directly to the FCC Chairman strongly opposing the change. Congresswoman Kuster will soon be joining her colleagues as well which would make it unanimous support from our New Hampshire representatives. I have also personally talked in person with Congressman Pappas on two different occasions about the issue as well as Senator Hassan who I met recently at a social gathering. They are very vocal in their support of PEG Access Channels. All have been into BCTV and other community stations during their campaigns as well as during their terms for interviews on policy and legislation.

March was full of activity with specific focus on elections and playoff high school sports. The amount of people who rely on TV and our on-line streaming and video on demand services is even more evident when we look at March’s data. I can only provide you with online streaming data since we have no way to collect TV statistics; the cost is extremely prohibitive, but we sense that TV viewing surpasses online viewing here in Bedford for these types of events.

BCTV Video on Demand had almost 1400 views. Remember now that Video on Demand means viewers are specifically searching out previously recorded programming to watch. This should not be confused with actual real time live streaming. The most popular VOD program was the school board candidate debate with 396 views. This is in contrast to the town council debate which had 69 views.

Why the difference? The school department has a parent mailing list and they mailed our VOD link to parents to watch. Candidates also took advantage of the BCTV VOD system by mailing their show links and/or embedding the links on their campaign webpage or Facebook Page. Without mentioning specific candidates, one candidate had 116 views with the balance of candidates averaging around 50 views.

We had an additional number of VOD users who watched the hockey and basketball games on our BCTV YouTube Channel with the Exeter vs Bedford hockey quarterfinal tallying the highest number with 354 views. Just as note, we do not upload government and school board meetings to our YouTube Channel. We limit those meetings to our BCTV VOD server since it allows us to create agenda chapter markers as well as the capability to upload the meeting agenda with associated document hyperlinks. Our YouTube Channel does not have that capability.

For actual live online viewing, the live election show from the polls on March 12th had 376 viewers who watched the two hour show hosted by Dave Danielson and Sue Mullen. In contrast only 103 viewers watched the town budgetary meeting online. We're fairly confident that many residents were watching these both of these broadcasts on TV Channel 22

Boys' hockey was the big winner as people watched the team's run to the DI Championship. The semi-final game against Concord at JFK arena in Manchester averaged 300 active viewers throughout the game. When the game went into overtime it jumped to 376. One of the reasons for the jump was the AD sent out a Twitter message that the game was headed to OT. So, Twitter and Instagram works to draw viewers. We are planning on adding these two social media capabilities here at BCTV-WBNH too.

Some other programming highlights was the staff covering the New England Council Politics and Eggs breakfast at the BVI where Congressman Pappas spoke. We also have started a "Firehouse Cooking Show" where various members of the fire department will show off their cooking skills right there in the fire house kitchen. Our informative safety PSA series continues with more and more video and audio PSA's running on BCTV and WBNH.

You will see construction at BCTV from time to time with the most recent change in the BCTV station lobby. Also planned for the near future is replacing the main entry doors due to rusting frame deterioration and the removal of carpeting in selected areas. The carpeting will be replaced with plank flooring to help prevent potential mold air quality issues. Just for clarification, carpeting will remain in the town meeting room. In addition to those projects, the building flag pole is also scheduled to be replaced.

MONTHLY REPORT



To: Town Manager and Town Council
From: Bill Jennings, BCTV-WBNH Station Manager
Date: May 7, 2019
Dept.: Bedford Community TV / WBNH Radio
Period: April, 2019

Total Number of BCTV Programs All Channels: 99

Channel 16 - Public: 71

Channel 22 – Government: 10 Live First Time Runs; 138 Re-Runs

Channel 23 – Education: 18

BCTV Video on Demand Views: 301

BCTV Website Page Views: 407 WBNH Website Page Views: 218

BCTV Program Streaming Users: 571 WBNH Unique Listeners: 235

WBNH Podcast Downloads: 178

BCTV Public Service Announcements: 71 WBNH Public Service Announcements: 68

BCTV – WBNH Points of Interest

An interesting comparison between the March and April numbers for online viewers show that the numbers were down primarily due to high school winter sports ending and spring sports beginning in late April. High School sports is a big online driver for BCTV, particularly when it's a live broadcast. VOD numbers are always high for BHS sports. School and Government broadcasts follow sports in popularity and demand. Again, as a reminder, we cannot measure actual TV viewership only online viewer access.

The Town Council Meeting of April 3rd had the highest Video on Demand Views with 51 viewers. That was followed by the School Board Meeting of April 8th with 27, followed by the SNHPC presentation with 24.

Fire and Police worked with the BCTV crew to continue their safety public informational PSA program with several new videos this past month. Office Joshua Gray and Monique Pliakos from the BPD worked with Captain Thatcher Plante from Bedford Fire, and Coleen Richardson from BCTV to produce a "Distracted Driver" PSA that reached 4000 people on the Facebook Network. Nina Malley, BPD Communications Specialist, worked with BCTV to produce a short video about how the dispatch center works as part of Telecommunications Week. This short video reached over 7000 people via Facebook. Needless to say we have some pretty talented people in our safety organizations who are quite entertaining and informative in front of the camera. I hope you've had the chance to see them but if not, then please contact us and we'd be happy to send you the link.

As most of you know, Senator Jeanne Shaheen joined Rick and Becky at the Pulpit Rock Conservation Area as part of the Earth Day Celebration. Quite a few state department personnel were on hand as well. BCTV was the only media outlet to cover the event and the short video that was produced was greatly appreciated by the Senator's office.

With Congresswoman Kuster joining Congressman Pappas and Senators Shaheen and Hassan, New Hampshire now becomes the only state in the Union where all of our Washington representatives sent a personal letter of support for PEG Access Community TV to the FCC. New Hampshire was recognized for that accomplishment on a recent national conference call by the Director of the Alliance for Community Media with specific reference to BCTV for leading the charge in this effort. He encouraged all the states to follow New Hampshire's lead.