

TOWN OF BEDFORD
BCTV - WBNH Board of Overseers
October 3, 2019
MEETING MINUTES

Present: Melissa Stevens (Town Council Representative), Bill Duschatko (Town Council Representative - Alternate), Bob Thomas, Pete Macdonald, Dave Danielson, Andrew Hanson, Joel Schwelling, Bill Jennings (BCTV/WBNH Station Manager), Harry Kozlowski (WBNH Program Director)

Absent: Dick Rawlings, Bill Foote (School Board Representative), Julio Nunez, Coleen Richardson, Assistant Station Manager

I. Call to Order:

In Chairman Rawlings absence Mr. Thomas (Vice Chair) served as Chairman and called the October 3, 2019 meeting of the BCTV – WBNH Board of Overseers to order at 7:00 pm. Roll call and introduction of members occurred.

II. Public Input:

- None

III. Old Business:

- Approval of minutes from previous meetings: May 9, 2019

MOTION by Mr. Danielson to approve the BCTV - WBNH Board of Overseers minutes of May 9, 2019. The motion was seconded by Mr. Duschatko. One abstention: Mr. MacDonald. Vote taken – all in favor.

IV. New Business:

- BCTV-WBNH Manager’s Report

A. BCTV Manager’s Report

Mr. Jennings reviewed his Manager’s report stating that people are demanding more live programming (town government meetings, school board meetings, sports), and Google analytics shows spikes during these types of live

programming. Our analytics on the town website show that live streaming and video on demand is growing every day. Therefore, we are positioning ourselves to cover a lot of events.

Mr. Jennings reviewed the monthly report of BCTV with the board. Our broadcast system, our own website, and our YouTube environment give indication of who is coming in to view BCTV or listen to WBNH. Our streaming views continue to grow. Mr. Kozlowski shared that 1,156 unique IP addresses listened to WBNH in the month of September totaling almost 111,000 minutes of listening. Following is the data for the month of September:

BCTV Video on Demand views: 420
BCTV Website Page Views: 645
WBNH Website Page Views: 317
BCTV Program Streaming Page Views 1,173
WBNH Unique Listeners: 1,156
WBNH Podcast Downloads: 430
BCTV Public Service Announcements: 64
WBNH Public Service Announcements: 75

Mr. Jennings said we unable to measure (due to prohibitive cost) the number of people watching Channels 16, 22, and 23.

Points of interest: There is a new program we are working with Bob Jozokos, Bedford High School Principal. He shares links from BCTV in emails to parents so they can watch events they may have missed or go back to watch events they've attended in order to get further information.

The Parents Teachers Group (PTG) meetings give a high-level overview of key focus points at each respective school and are broadcast live on BCTV and made available 24/7 online. The PTG also shares a link to the broadcasts on their website.

We've been busy inside and outside of the studio filming events such as the "Miss Bedford Pageant", "BeBOLD Bedford", "Veterans Forum", "The Leadership Edge", the Paul Bordeleau musical "Uncle Mort's Funeral", "Gabbing with God", and the Bedford Historical Society's silent movie night with musician, Jeff Rapsis.

Mr. Danielson asked what things shown in the statistics are of value to the town council. Mr. Duschatko replied that the statistics are very general, but it is helpful to keep up with what is going on. Mr. Danielson asked if the

schools had given any indication if they are finding out anything important from the data. Mr. Jennings said the school doesn't receive the data and shouldn't. The data is mainly for the town's and BCTV's use. The schools see merit in using BCTV as a lifeline to get information and publicity out. It is a value-add that BCTV provides to the community. Depending on where we go in the future with franchising fees and depending on how funding evolves over time we would expect that there might be equal participation between the town and the schools to keep the operation floating.

Mr. Danielson said the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce will be doing a program about housing and suggested that we may want to explore some of the housing issues in the town and State in our programming. Mr. Jennings said any and all programming and subject matter is on the table.

Mr. Jennings shared that some of the most watched programming includes Bulldogs games, planning board meetings, and zoning board and town council meetings (depending on what the subject is). Many people are also using video on demand and sharing programming through links. Mr. Jennings said we experimented with sending a live broadcast for the first time over Facebook which went well, and we plan to use it again for specific events. We can also stream over our YouTube channel. The feed can be put up on WBNH radio and on BCTV. We can also grab Nashua's feeds.

Mr. Jennings said that the new Broadcast Production Coordinator, George Cox is a very talented and creative guy who is helping us focus on public service announcements, video, and post-production using green screen. BCTV wants to promote WBNH radio shows and have prepared video promo spots for the radio programming. He shared a video made for the "New Wave Flashback" radio program with Tiffany Lewis and John Britton.

Mr. Jennings shared a video Mr. Cox made about The Boys and Girls Club's Camp Foster in Bedford. Camp Foster loved it so much they played it at a major fundraiser and it went over very well. This is the kind of creativity we are becoming involved in. Mr. Jennings also shared a promotional video that was created to promote the Bedford Handmade sale taking place at Bedford High school on November 2, 2019. Lastly, he shared a promotional video of the "Beatles Rewind" show on WBNH with Matt Dion and explained that the video promos for the radio shows began airing 2 weeks ago and were put up on our Facebook page.

Mr. Jennings showed a photo of an equipment set-up used in Nashua. We've been able to control our costs because equipment costs are coming down. The one small piece of equipment shown in the photo allows us to broadcast live

all around the world and has cellular, wireless and network capabilities. We currently have 2 of these pieces of equipment which, for example, allow us to cover a game and cover a town council meeting at the same time. It is very cool.

Starting with this BCTV meeting tonight, we are now streaming in HD online (but not on the channel yet). When we have an HD channel we will be able to do so; however, but we will be restricted/maxed out at 720 as opposed to 1080. We had to do major calibration on our television cameras, so now we have equally balanced color.

Mr. Jennings said Mr. Duschatko and the town council have been briefed about what is going on with the FCC, and the BCTV board was sent a report about FCC franchise and in-kind services. The FCC voted in favor of disenfranchising franchise fees which means that federal law's focus is allowing cable providers to assign an in-kind service value. Many thought "the sky would fall" but it is not as bad as it initially appeared to be because Bedford and the State of New Hampshire are in a very good situation and have concentrated their funding in areas that do not become an expectation on the tax-side. Some other communities use funding to offset their tax rate by taking franchise fees, and with the reduction of those fees there will be hard decisions made around the country by municipality services which may value funding of police and fire departments over their PEG access stations. In addition, a value could be added to municipality drops (we have 15 in the Town of Bedford) where they had been given for free. We may be able to get around the issue of INETs if video and not data is transferred (We have 2 INETs in the Town of Bedford – one coming from the high school and the other from the SAU). Now that we are backing things up on digital recorders we have data. We no longer have to use INETs at the high school because of the piece of equipment shown in the photo earlier in the meeting. In New York they have huge INETs that the cable companies pay for. We did the smart thing by using capital funds since 2003 to pay for our INETs ourselves and we paid for it to come back from the SAU and high school. Because we paid for this ourselves, they cannot come back and say that we owe them anything. Cable providers could potentially charge a service fee, but we are not expecting any from Comcast. Anything depreciating is now exempt (including purchased equipment) and will not be charged an in-kind value.

They have talked about putting a value on channel capacity (how many stations you have). The Town of Bedford has 3 channels and a 4th HD channel coming. If they assigned the highest value to each of the channels we would have had to shut the doors, but that didn't happen. They may revisit it

in the next 12 months. National chapters are working with Congress, and both New Hampshire Senators and both New Hampshire Congressman have been active in writing letters to the FCC. The new rules went into effect September 26th. Our revenues are strong. Cable companies and the franchise authority may have further discussion on this issue in about 6 months. Mr. Jennings doesn't see Comcast doing anything radical but is thankful that we have our 10-year agreement that went into effect with Comcast last year. We are taking a wait-and-see approach before we react. A strategy is in place. Another thing that may have an impact in the future is the trend toward people cutting cable and looking for alternatives.

Chairman Thomas said he was initially nervous but feels a little better after hearing Mr. Jennings' report. In 8-9 years we may need to become a non-profit, but Comcast will still want the write-off. Mr. Jennings said BCTV is realistic that they compete with other departments that may have more urgency, but BCTV tries to have a value-add to the community. He says we need alternative approaches on how to move forward – we have not aggressively gone after sponsorships, but that doesn't mean we couldn't do so if needed in the future, and perhaps have someone sponsor a sports season. Mr. Thomas feels we are so newly into our contract with Comcast that he doesn't expect that to happen for quite some time. To be candid, Mr. Jennings feels channel capacity is a major threat, as are alternatives to watching cable. Consumer Reports put out an issue about 2 months ago saying "Cable Wants You Back" now that people are cutting the cord, cable companies can offer big discounts if the customer calls to ask for a discount. All of the a la carte alternatives can add up and cost as much as a traditional cable plan. We will prepare by adjusting franchise fee rates and our capital.

B. WBNH Program Director's Report

Mr. Kozlowski reported that 2 weeks from tonight the New Hampshire Association of Broadcasters will hold their Granite Mike Awards. This year WBNH radio has 13 entries. WBNH had nine 1st and 2nd place awards over the last two years. We hope to keep this string going! Our volunteers generate content that wins awards in many cases and we are proud of that.

Bedford High school's radio program Radio Unleashed is back. We have our 3rd generation of students producing the show. They are independent and driven. They keep bringing people in and training their replacements. They hit the ground running and produce great shows and never skip a beat. Last year Bedford Radio Unleashed won 2nd place for spot news across all radio station news departments across the State with a story they did about a gun protest at the school. They are entered again this year, and we hope they have good luck

We are not able to calculate how many people listen over the air, but we know that we have about 1,100 unique listeners and about 111,000 minutes of listening in total. Some of the shows receiving the largest number of listeners online include our sports broadcasts especially football games. We put the shows our producers make on Podbean and they can be streamed online for two weeks after they are broadcast, and we are averaging about 500 streams a month as people listen on demand and catch up on shows.

Mr. Kozlowski and Mr. Jennings are constantly working on ways to get the signal out better and clearer and looking at places we can relocate booster transmitters so it can be heard in other areas around town. We always work to make the station sound a little better and get out a little further.

- Review of both BCTV and WBNH Policies – discussion of potential revisions/amendments

Mr. Jennings explained staff had disagreement on one part of our policies regarding dealing with non-commercial and non-profit so we asked the board to review the policies. In going through the policies Mr. Jennings felt we did a good job on our last revision in 2015. In the old days a non-profit organization that was doing a fundraiser in a commercial environment and getting a piece of that action - - which has evolved in a common sense way so that now if a non-profit organization is benefiting because a restaurant is donating a portion of their proceeds there doesn't have to be a percentage qualifier. The commercial organization makes arrangements directly with the non-profit and does not advertise their products or their specials – it is all about the non-profit. We previously got into debate on shooting footage at such an event. For example, if Murphy's Taproom does a fundraiser for Bedford Little League we are now able to broadcast their logo or graphics and in the past we could not because it was not in our policy. On page 16 - Program Underwriting - Mr. Jennings would like to get more aggressive with this in the future and make some updates to this portion of the policy. Mr. Jennings asked for the boards feelings on a for-profit company supporting a non-profit with no call of action. He thinks the language in our policy right now allows us to move forward with something that is not violating any contractual language with our current cable provider.

Mr. Macdonald thinks we are meeting the spirit and intent of what compliance means and he has no issue with what Mr. Jennings has described. Chairman Thomas said to keep in mind the policies were written in the very beginning when we were first growing and didn't want to be inundated with people asking for favors and asking us to advertise for them. We have grown a lot since then and have much better understanding and control. The policy was written very stringently but is open to interpretation that we should allow the managers to handle and if there is something to be changed it should be brought to the

board, but right now he doesn't see why we shouldn't be expanding it a little bit. Mr. Jennings doesn't feel we have to drop language in there. He said Ms. Richardson is a finance and detail-oriented person and will challenge us, which is great and has been helpful in many instances. On this particular issue they could not come to agreement.

Ms. Stevens feels if Ms. Richardson has concerns she knows she can bring them up – but as it stands we are not hearing any concerns about this from non-profits or others. Mr. Jennings said the most important thing is that the non-profit leads the effort. An organization cannot sponsor the station but can sponsor non-profits in town. We can look to companies as a way of expanding our marketing if they are looking to work with non-profits and can get some exposure on TV or Facebook pages.

Mr. Danielson agrees with Mr. Macdonald about where we were and where we are today. Initially we were extremely cautious, didn't want to do anything wrong and the language in the policies were constrained. But now we have grown and we are moving toward the idea of underwriters and noted that PBS uses the phrase "underwriters" a lot. He asked Mr. Kozlowski his opinion. Mr. Kozlowski is unsure what constraints the cable provider can put the TV station under, but on the non-commercial radio and television side it is basically the five W's: Who, what, when, where, and why about a business are allowed (for example, the name of the business, their location, hours, phone number and website), but you can't discuss price or have a call to action, but any factual statement about your underwriter is allowed and if you work within those guidelines it is fine. You cannot advertise the business or any specials they may be offering.

Mr. Hanson added a proposal for some language so everyone is comfortable that they are not breaking the rules. He discussed amending the second bullet point in Section 2.5.1 of the Bedford Community Television Policies and Procedures Manual so that it would now read (edit underlined here for convenience): "Commercial programming which in whole or in part depicts, demonstrates, or discusses products, services, or business with the intent or substantial effect of benefiting or enhancing a profit-making enterprise and without the intent or substantial effect of benefiting or enhancing a non-profit-making entity." The board agreed with this edit to the language in the policy.

Mr. Danielson feels if we make a proposal to adopt 2.5.1 with the modification then we would also agree to give the blessing to go forward to the policy. Chairman Thomas suggests writing the proposal to adopt 2.5.1 officially, having time to think about it, and voting next meeting rather than voting on it tonight. Chairman Thomas feels Ms. Richardson should be a part of the process, and he would also to see something in writing to review, and then we could put voting on the agenda for our next meeting on January 9th.

Mr. Jennings asked Mr. Hansen his opinion on the language about program underwriters. Mr. Hanson said he would review it in detail before next meeting.

Mr. Duschatko spoke regarding PBS and the use of underwriters. He said he would be very concerned if we got into that type of situation with underwriters and if we were to change the language he would like to have some restriction on the amount and use of underwriters. Mr. Kozlowski asked for clarification whether Mr. Duschatko was talking about straight underwriting where a business would buy underwriting messages on BCTV or WBNH but not do anything with a non-profit. Mr. Duschatko said that was correct. Mr. Kozlowski said that we are not doing that in the immediate future but would only think about should circumstances lead there. Mr. Duschatko put out the hypothetical example of a non-profit signing up with one of the gambling casinos and asked if we would promote that. Chairman Thomas says there is a way for non-profits to make money by working at a gambling place, and we don't want to support the gambling place, but the support of a non-profit doing that act is something we would not want to do is what he believes Mr. Duschatko seems to be saying. Mr. Duschatko said it concerns him. Chairman Thomas is comfortable with the policy as written now, but as we grow and start looking for revenue streams we will have to readdress those concerns. He suggested reviewing sections 2.5.1 and 2.11 at the next meeting.

Chairman Thomas reviewed the planned meetings for 2020:

- 1st Quarter – Thursday, January 9, 2020
- 2nd Quarter – Thursday, April 2, 2020
- 3rd Quarter (if needed) – Thursday, July 9, 2020
- 4th Quarter – Thursday, October 1, 2020

Mr. Jennings asked George Cox, the new Broadcast Production Coordinator to introduce himself to the Board. Mr. Cox said he has been involved with PEG access since 1999 and knows the ins and outs of PEG access and underwriting if anyone has any questions. He is looking forward to the opportunity at BCTV. Mr. Jennings added that Mr. Cox comes to us from Acton-Boxboro Community Television and has experience working in a school district in Lawrence, MA, and has a high-energy personality and we are fortunate to have him onboard.

Chairman Thomas asked for any additional comments. There were none.

V. Adjournment

MOTION to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Danielson and seconded by Mr. MacDonald. Meeting was adjourned by Chairman Thomas at 8:12 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Tiffany Lewis