CATV Board Meeting Minutes for August 8, 2017

Members Present: Peggy Allen, Chair; Linda Carbino, Vice Chair; Mike Murray; and Sarah Welsch, secretary.

Members Absent: Margaret Jacobs; Barbara Krinitz

Staff present: Donna Girot, Executive Director (“E.D.”); Eric Chatterjee, CATV government videographer.

I. Minutes:

The June 13, 2017 CATV Board meeting minutes were reviewed and one correction was noted by Linda.

The July 17, 2017 CATV Board meeting minutes were also reviewed. However, due to the lack of a quorum of members present, neither set of minutes could be formally approved today.

Peggy Allen corrected this ruling, informing all present that she had now received a Board-member resignation notice from Frank Jones. This actually reduces the quorum number by one, so that four members present now constitute a quorum. The final July Minutes were requested to be sent to Donna and Peggy now.

II. Review of the Board’s Calendar:

Donna raised the question of how often we need to meet, and whether we might now go back to a meeting every other month? The primary reason for this change back is financial: it is costing CATV more money to have the bookkeeper approve the month’s finances, when we are already working on a tight budget. All members present agreed to change the meetings going forward to:


In addition, Peggy said she will check whether CATV’s board needs to post the Meeting Agenda in advance; and what to do regarding notifying Board and Staff members on specified snow dates. This includes checking what Federal, as well as NH and VT state rules apply here.

III. Expanding CATV’s Board:

The Board now numbers six members, but everyone agrees we need to find new members now. Peggy reviewed the skill sets we need: persons with experience in marketing, fund raising, legal training; accountancy, and teaching (K through 12th grades, or some part of this range).

Linda said she thought that since she’s been a member, the largest CATV Board has been nine people, and that we currently have no representatives from either Norwich or Hartland.

On the subject of a legal advisor, Donna asked if we should ask Bob about his lawyer/friend? Peggy said she would call Bob, find out and contact that person.

As to the Board, we are now looking for three more people, and Peggy asked how we want to proceed?

Mike suggested we set up a Board Recruitment sub-committee, and Peggy, Linda, and Sarah agreed to join Donna and form it. The first task is to think of who we would like to talk to; then speak individually
to them briefly, and bring their names and details to the first, September, meeting of the sub-committee.

Final comment on recruitment: Eric Chatterjee, one of CATV’s videographers, said he could be asked to volunteer to work on this—or any other—subcommittee, even as an employee.

IV. Executive Director’s Report:

a) Comcast CPG Update:
Donna gave an update of the Comcast issues in Vermont by email to board. Donna attended the meeting on this, where many Vermont PEG stations objected to Comcast’s performance and to the quality of their streaming/program presentation. Vermont’s PEGs are more organized than many other states, and they went to the PUC, who then sided with VAN’s complaints. Comcast objected and now we are waiting to see if the VT Public Utilities Commission keeps its demands with Comcast. IF so, most likely Comcast will then sue the State. Meanwhile, VAN is soliciting support from Comcast’s opponent networks.

We might want to get the Valley News on this story? Donna said there is a press release that VAN produced that might be used for background.

Eric commented here that in his work with municipal groups’ meetings, the public complaints focus on the lack of information from Comcast on the dates and times of the meetings’ broadcasts—no scheduling made by Comcast for viewers. So perhaps we might create an information sheet (based the press release?) and give it to all our videographers to hand out at these meetings, thereby informing them and asking them to protest to Comcast, at least. By the way, rumor has it that Comcast is considering merging with Verizon.

b) Funding & Sustainability:
Donna has finished and submitted 2018 external funding request to the Acting City Manager of Lebanon.

c) Summer Video Camps:
Made it through our largest attendance summer video camps. Have tested the limits and realize our small studio does not accommodate the limit well. We will pull back on number of kids to the sweet spot of 12 students per camp, for the next sessions.

d) Doing an active Halloween-o-thon pitch to kids and parents during weekly Friday summer camp premiere days. Goal is to develop independent filmmaker foundation in area and to continue relationship with kids so as to eventually build a high school intern community.

e) Community Outreach
--Donna and Linda made a presentation and tour of the building for YALI—the Dartmouth Young African Leaders Institute. Our utilities franchise fee funding is unusual as a business model.

--Made an educational presentation to WRJ Rotary, and Donna was invited to return and attend another Rotary meeting in the near future.

--Working with Tuck Business School to take advantage of various community non-profit counseling opportunities.
--Donna met with the Jobs’ Director at the Lebanon branch if the River Valley Community College, trying to find more candidates for government videographers with CATV, but unfortunately, she learned that the RVCC currently has no academic program in film. But the President of the College asked to meet with Donna and Dillon too.

--Donna has also continued discussions with Becky Bailey at the Hop on PR efforts.

**At this point in the Executive Session, Eric left the meeting, as arranged.

f) Human Resources:

And two candidates have been hired and have accepted:

Chico Estridge: a resident of WRJ who knows many of the city’s local people, is now both Studio Producer and Education Outreach coordinator;

Thomas Bishop: one of our current government videographers, he is now working as our Field Producer and the Equipment Coordinator. The office staff is comfortable with his new position.

g) Lease

No update. Need $5000 deposit for a new lease that we currently don’t have. Donna will wait until year end to see if we can squeeze it out of the budget. But at this point she thinks it may be unlikely.

There being no further business to discuss, this meeting was adjourned at 7:15 pm, in a motion made by Linda and seconded by Peggy. The next Board meeting will be held on October 10, 2017 at 5:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Welsch, Secretary