

BCAT, Inc., Board Monthly Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Wednesday, April 26, 2023

Board Members present: Paul Wittman (PW), Ralph Hammond (RH), Scott Counsell (SC), Bob Dutton (RD); Tony Melfi (TM) joined at 7:39

Board Members attending remotely: None

Board Members not present: None

Staff Members present: Brian Hebert (BH)

Visitors present: None

Visitors attending remotely: Emily Mitchell [EM] of the Bedford Select Board

Board Meeting held at Bedford TV Studio and virtually

General meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM

Approval of BCAT Board Meeting Minutes of March 22, 2023

- The minutes of the BCAT Monthly Board meeting of March 22, 2023, were unanimously approved.

Executive Director Report Summary

Financial

- BH reported that the station continued to be well under budget, due to savings on salaries and health insurance.
- A laptop and camera were procured using capital funds. A second laptop that was desired is not available. Apple no longer offers integrated desktop PC's – to replace our existing Mac workstations, the staff will utilize an aggregation of Mac Mini's and peripheral devices.
- A second camera and a light kit are also slated for purchase.
- The FY2022 tax returns and statements were completed and submitted after errors were corrected. Next year, BH, the BCAT administrator and the BOD treasurer will review these submittals ahead of time.
- Insurance coverages and underwriters underwent changes, and the updated information was conveyed to the Town.

Operations

- The new intern from Middlesex Community College will be working through the spring.
- We discussed the station's PTO policy. Currently, PTO allotments reset to zero at the end of the fiscal year. BH suggested that we consider a reset to 8 or 16 hours. The matter had been overhauled in the past, but we will review again.

Classes

- Classes are ongoing. The Introduction to Photography class is now being offered.
- Children's classes run through June. These classes have generated \$6503 in revenues thus far.

Outreach

- Black Dog Marcom, a marketing and communications company, has signed on as a Standard sponsor and will sponsor the Bedford High School Graduation. They will also create a podcast.
- New Elite sponsor Suzanne & Company will create a podcast as well.
- A 'Dine & Donate' event will be held at the Chipotle Grill on June 13 from 5-9pm.
- The Minuteman Diner has tentatively offered to sponsor Trivia Night on August 25.
- The station will begin streaming local sporting events on YouTube with the eventual goal of lining up sponsors for these events.

Productions

- The spring school sports season begins on Friday, April 28.
- Government meetings are ongoing. The Council on Aging is sending recordings to the station to be posted. BH will contact the new Town Manager to discuss streaming other town meetings.
- Several upcoming productions are in the works including studio productions and town events.
- BCAT will take part in the 48 Hour Film Project, a group endeavor that entails a weekend of planning, shooting and editing.

Deadlines

- An updated version of the BCAT Rules & Regulations is due to the Town on June 13.
- The updated Grant Agreement is due on June 30.

Strategic Planning

- The Community Media Committee (CMC) approved the draft of the new Grant Agreement. The current agreement expires on June 30. William August, the lawyer hired by the Town for cable license negotiations, objected to the proposed language changes in the Grant Agreement to make it less 'cable-centric'. He felt that due to the need to comply with state law, the document had to largely adhere to its original language. This was discussed at the CMC meeting – while changes were desired the document will be largely unchanged.
- A motion was made to accept the Grant Agreement as approved by the CMC and was approved unanimously. PW will sign the document at Town Hall along with the Select Board members.
- The CMC also discussed setting up a working group to explore new funding sources for BCAT in light of the decline in cable subscriber counts – Bedford's count has declined 8.8%. Various options were brought forward, including the possibility of state funding, which is still pending, and tax levies, which would have to be approved by the Finance Committee.
- SC proposed that BCAT and the BOD look into analyzing the budgetary requirements for the public, educational and government channel operations of the station and then identify funding sources for each operation. A case could be made to ask the taxpayers for funding for the government channel, and the School Department and school sports stakeholders for funding for the educational channel. This was discussed – the board members felt that asking taxpayers for help in funding the government channel was a viable option but seeking funding for the educational channel from school-related sources was more problematic, especially for sports programming.
- BH has continued to discuss funding alternatives with other access stations – he reported that former Executive Director Greg Dolan, who now oversees the Danvers access channels, told him that they moved the operation to the Danvers high school to save money.

New business

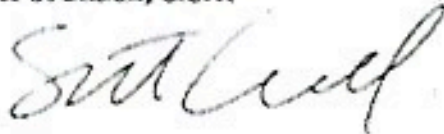
- The BCAT PTO policy will be reviewed at an upcoming meeting.
- Motions were made to approve the BCAT Policies and Procedures as written, and to approve the Q3 BCAT Report as amended - both passed unanimously.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:58 PM

Executive Session: not held

Next Monthly Board Meeting: Tuesday, May 16, 2023, at 7:00 PM

Prepared by: Scott Counsell, Clerk

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Scott Counsell".