

BCAT, Inc., Board Monthly Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Tuesday, August 15, 2023

Board Members present: Paul Wittman (PW), Ralph Hammond (RH), Bob Dutton (BD), Scott Counsell (SC)

Board Members attending remotely: None

Board Members not present: Tony Melfi (TM)

Staff Members present: Brian Hebert (BH)

Visitors present: None

Visitors attending remotely: None

Board Meeting held at Bedford TV Studio

General meeting was called to order at 7:04 PM

Approval of BCAT Board Meeting Minutes of July 18, 2023

- The minutes of the BCAT Monthly Board meeting of July 18, 2023, were unanimously approved.

Executive Director Report Summary

Financial

- The station's bookkeeper, AML Bookkeeping, raised their rates, with a quarterly increase of \$43.
- Spectrum, the firm managing employee 401K accounts, is now charging \$225 to oversee accounts for both present eligible employees and some former employees of BCAT. We discussed the implementation of a policy requiring ex-employees to roll over their 401K's so as to control these costs. BH will draft a policy incorporating a ninety day waiting period for new hires and a six month deadline for ex-employees to roll over their 401K's.

Operations

- The air conditioning in the facility was repaired as of August 15.
- Studio activity is light and the production coordinator has been working remotely.

Classes

- The Non-fiction Film class will finish on August 16.
- Pro tip videos continue to be produced by station staff, including videos on Adobe After Effects offered by the production coordinator.
- RH reported that a Bedford High School art teacher has expressed interest in teaching a production class.

Outreach

- The Minuteman Diner will sponsor Trivia Night on August 25. The entry fee has been waived and BTV will instead collect a portion of the evening's proceeds.
- A competition to create a new intro clip for the Bedford news program will be held in the fall.
- The Crowdsourced Boston video project is due on September 5.

Productions

- The fall school sports season will resume on September 8.
- Government meetings are ongoing. The Council on Aging is now furnishing recordings of their meetings to be aired on Bedford TV.
- Besides ongoing production of the weekly news program, other upcoming productions include Trivia Night, a Fahad Alden interview, Bedford Common, Color Run and the Starfish Storytellers podcasts.

Deadlines

- A performance evaluation is due to the CMC by 9/23.
- The annual Bedford Day event is scheduled for 9/23.

Strategic Planning

- The working group formed to explore new funding sources for BCAT held a meeting on August 15, just prior to the BOD meeting. SC was in attendance and reported on recent proceedings in the state legislature. The group reviewed various outreach efforts – Matt Porter, a working group member, reported that he found that other stations were considering a transition from non-profit status to becoming municipally operated. He held a conversation with David Gauthier, the head of MassAccess – Mr. Gauthier told him that in his opinion, it was not worthwhile to seek funding from school departments to help with educational access programming as it held the potential to erode good will by ‘nickel and diming’ school districts. He also suggested other strategies, such as offering production services and partnering with other stations to form regionally based entities. Matt Porter went on to express his reservations about the idea, discussed previously, of separating the public, educational and access tiers, feeling that their impact could be weakened by such an arrangement. The working group discussed next steps – Select Board member Emily Mitchell mentioned that there was precedent for the Town to provide financial assistance to organizations with funding shortfalls who were providing services to the town. She would need more hard data from BCAT as to any impending budget shortfalls. SC was tasked with seeing if we could obtain more data in that regard. The working group’s next meeting is tentatively scheduled to be held in November, probably after the Special Town Meeting scheduled on November 6.
- BD reported that he attempted to review the Town’s financial reports but that the data generated by a new accounting system was hard to decipher. He may be able to get a more complete picture later this year and will work to get readouts on quarterly disbursements to BCAT. Capital funds and operating funds are reported out as separate disbursements.

New business

- The Board briefly discussed the upcoming license renewals due in 2024.
- Planning for the FY 2025 budget will need to begin in December and be finished by January 2024.
- The Board discussed various options for a date for the BCAT Annual Meeting. We settled on a first choice of Friday, December 1, with a second option of Friday, November 3.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:41 PM

Executive Session: not held

Next Monthly Board Meeting: Tuesday, September 19, 2023, at 7:00 PM

Prepared by: Scott Counsell, Clerk

