

BCAT, Inc., Board Monthly Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Tuesday, September 19, 2023

Board Members present: Paul Wittman (PW), Ralph Hammond (RH), Tony Melfi (TM), Scott Counsell (SC)

Board Members attending remotely: None

Board Members not present: Bob Dutton (BD)

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 7:07 PM

Approval of BCAT Board Meeting Minutes of August 15, 2023

- The minutes of the BCAT Monthly Board meeting of August 15, 2023, were unanimously approved.

Executive Director Report Summary

Financial

- BH reported that Q1 expenses will show an underrun of about \$12K, due to lower outlays for salaries. Hours for part-time staff were lower than projected due to light activity.
- The station has been receiving donations through PayPal Give at Checkout. PayPal users can designate BTV as their favorite charity and \$1 from every purchase they make is sent to BTV.
- BH outlined two proposals to replace the SlingStudio production kit, which is no longer supported.
 - The first option would be a Yololiv Yolobox production system; together with three Hollyland transmitter/receiver kits, this would cost about \$3500.
 - The second option would include a Black Magic ATEM Mini switcher, three Hollyland kits, a dedicated live streaming laptop, camera link devices and a monitor – initial estimated cost around \$3900.

The Board discussed these options and a consensus emerged that the second option might be a better bet in the long run - but that more money should be spent on a monitor, which would increase the cost. BH hopes to pursue a Cultural Council grant to help with this purchase.

Operations

- BTV needs a dated copy of the grant agreement.
- The new 401K policy was finalized. Former employees will have ninety days from their last day to transfer their 401K's to a new fund – otherwise, management fees will be incurred and passed on to the former employees.
- The Select Board and School Committee are now holding their meetings in the Reed Room at Town Hall, due to concerns with available exits. This has complicated BTV's efforts to cover these meetings.

Classes

- The Intro to Filmmaking class is ongoing, with 11 students and four mentors.
- Pro tip videos continue to be produced by station staff, including a video produced by the production coordinator and administrator.
- Two classes - Intro to Photography and Intro to Scriptwriting - will be offered from October through December.

Outreach

- The Trivia Night held at the Minuteman Diner was a success, with proceeds of \$726. The raffle was also successful.
- New signage will be required to alert viewers of the impending Comcast channel change, from channel 99 to channel 22.
- BH is working on setting up interviews with the new town manager, fire chief and facilities director, and arranging for a walk-through of the new police station.
- The Bedford Film Showcase, a forum for BTV members, will be starting in November and will be genre-based.

Productions

- The fall school sports season has resumed, with 21 scheduled games between now and our next meeting in October.
- Government meetings are ongoing. The Council on Aging is now furnishing recordings of their meetings to be aired on Bedford TV. BH will be trying to obtain recordings from other committees, including the Board of Health.
- Besides ongoing production of the weekly news program, other upcoming productions include Bedford Common, Bedford Day, the Bedford Community Forum and the Citizen of the Year ceremony.

Deadlines

- A performance evaluation is due to the CMC by 9/23.
- The annual Bedford Day event is scheduled for 9/23.
- FY24 Q1 ends on 9/30. The FY Q1 report is due to the Town on 11/1/23.

Strategic Planning

- We reviewed the findings of the working group formed to explore new funding sources for BCAT, which met on August 15. The group will continue their outreach efforts to the access community to solicit ideas. Another step recommended by Select Board member Emily Mitchell was to obtain more hard data from BCAT as to any impending budget shortfalls, in order to make a case to the Town for funding assistance in the future.
- The Special Revenue Account (SRA), on which station funding is drawn, has a surplus that could be tapped for shortfalls - but that may run out in a few years. During the past fiscal year, the station's budget exceeded revenues by about \$19K, with the budget at \$230K and revenues at \$211K.
- One item in the budget to target would be the rent payment to the Town.
- BH will attend the Alliance for Community Media-Northeast meeting in November and hopes to conduct more outreach regarding funding strategies.

New business

- RH submitted a proposal regarding a partnership between the Bedford Rotary and BTV to launch a local chapter of the Interact Club, a Rotary initiative for young people that is designed to foster leadership and writing skills. This chapter would also partner with the Bedford Historical Society; they would meet upstairs in the Society's offices and then work on projects at BTV. RH is hopeful that this could evolve into a 'feeder' program for BTV, furnishing volunteers to help with productions without asking a lot of the staff's time and resources. A motion was made and seconded to approve the establishment of this chapter, and it passed unanimously.
- The Board has settled on Friday, December 1 for the BCAT Annual Meeting.
- Other items on the agenda will be discussed later.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:47 PM

Executive Session: not held

Next Monthly Board Meeting: Tuesday, October 17, 2023, at 7:00 PM

Prepared by: Scott Counsell, Clerk

