Brookfield Public Access and Communications Committee
BPACC Studio, Elementary School
Minutes of September 16, 2010

Members Present: Linda Barron, Sarah Heller, Gerald (Jerry) Johnson, Sharon Mahoney
Members Absent: Adam Rundell, Kathleen Hosterman

The start of the meeting was delayed due to the lack of a quorum. Sharon called the meeting to order at 7:40pm.

Report on Purchases
Sharon reported that the new digital camera equipment that we approved at our last meeting has been delivered and she is in the process of learning to use it and configuring its PortaBrace carrying case. She also reported that she made the following additional purchases all of which fall within the $5000 limit that we approved at the last meeting:

1. From B&H Video, ordered along with the camera and case: Professional headphones, and a card reader that will allow us to read the camera cards on the computer without need of the camera;
2. From Amazon.com: Two 32 GB flash memory cards and one extended-life rechargeable battery for the new camera.

Sarah made a motion to reimburse Sharon $520.05 for the Amazon.com purchases. Linda seconded. Linda, Sarah, Jerry and Sharon voted in favor. The motion passed and all signed a voucher for this amount that Sharon will submit to the town accountant.

In addition, Sharon has purchased other miscellaneous supplies for the studio—from Staples, DVD disks; and from Radio Shack, connectors for attaching audio RCA plugs to Charter Communications' modulators. She will bring completed vouchers and receipts for reimbursement for those purchases for the committee to endorse at the next meeting.

Report on Modulators
Sharon reported that she had a conversation with Jason, a Charter technical service employee, who came to the studio to replace the repaired modulators. He said our current cable coaxial modulators are outmoded and very difficult to service. He said that other towns have moved to fiberoptic modulators, and we should consider it. A fiberoptic node is located just down the street from the school building where our studio is located, which could make it possible to upgrade to a fiberoptic modulator once a fiberoptic line has been dropped from the node to the studio to replace the existing coaxial line. She will ask Andrew Shanley at Charter about this possible upgrade, and if there is a cost involved.

Committee Name
Sharon stated that the select board gave our committee a new committee name, effective July 1, 2010: The Brookfield Public Access and Communications Committee. She noted that this is a very long name and cumbersome to use. After some discussion, ***Sharon moved that we ask the Selectmen to change our committee name to: The Brookfield Communications Committee. Linda seconded the motion. Linda, Sarah, Jerry and Sharon voted in favor. The motion passed and Sharon will send a request to the Board of Selectmen.***

John David Holdcraft's accusations
At the end of several recent Select Board meetings, during the public access period, resident John David Holdcraft has made general and as of yet unsubstantiated allegations about the committee's Select Board meeting broadcasts on Channel 13, which he called "incomplete" because they didn't exactly match recordings that he made at the same time, using his own equipment. He had demanded that the Select Board tell him who specifically had prepared the tapes for broadcast, and that the Committee "come clean" on this alleged "censorship." He had also posted this accusation on his yellow sign on Route 9. Sharon responded to Mr. Holdcraft's accusations on camera at the Sept. 7, 2010 Selectmen's meeting on behalf of the Committee, and has included a transcription of that response in her Report of the Chair of August 16, 2010.

There was discussion about what other response was necessary. Sharon and Sarah stated for the record that any missing minutes in the middle of a recording is due to the need to stop the digital videotape (DV) camera whenever a 60-minute DV tape is full, and swap the tape out for a fresh one, in order to continue taping the remainder of the meeting.

The new solid-state camera's memory card, which can hold four hours of video files, will eliminate the need to change tapes and will provide a seamless broadcast. Then, once a fixed camera set-up is in place that will record directly to DVD, the need to convert video from tapes or a memory card will be eliminated. In addition to eliminating any need for editing, it will speed up the process of broadcasting the meetings. In the meantime, whenever the DV camera is used at Select Board meetings, Sarah and Sharon have begun requesting the Board members pause their meeting while tapes are being swapped is used to avoid missing recording any part of the proceedings.

Sharon made a motion to write an article for the next Brookfield Citizen newspaper regarding the status of the studio and the committee's work. Linda seconded. Sharon, Linda, Sarah and Jerry voted in favor. None voted against. The motion passed.

Bulletin Board Report
Sharon stated that she and Phil Peirce of the *Brookfield Citizen* discussed publishing the *Citizen* deadlines on the Channel 12 Bulletin Board and publish our programming schedule for Channels 11, 12, and 13 in the *Citizen*. Members agreed that that was a good idea, and that once we have a regular programming schedule established, we will send that information to Phil for publishing in the *Citizen*. Sarah agreed to begin immediately to publish the deadlines for the *Citizen* on Channel 12. We also discussed setting up a brookfieldma.us account so that announcements can be sent to us via email. Sarah will set up the account.

Sarah reported that at the moment she has been the only person updating the Bulletin Board. She monitors the town hall mailbox as well as getting emailed announcement notices from Donna Neylon. Sarah stated that updating the Bulletin Board takes about two to three hours a week, and she would like to see volunteers handling this as soon as it is feasible. In the meantime, she would like to train other members of the committee so the duty can be rotated. She stated that the bulletin board operates on PowerPoint and is very easy to use.

Procedures
Sharon spoke of the need under GASBE regulations to have a written procedure in place prior to selling or otherwise disposing of any of the station's outmoded, broken or unneeded equipment. There is presently none in the station's 1996 Policies and Procedures. We need to document what we are doing and that we are following an established and consistent policy. Linda suggested that there should be a template available for such a policy from other public access committees. Linda asked what the actual procedure would be for

selling things, and if the funds from the sale would go into our account or general fund. Jerry said that any cash generated from sales of surplus property goes back into the general fund and can be transferred back to us by vote at a town meeting. Sharon said that we might be able to set up some kind of revolving fund with the town to do this, and that she would investigate.

Jerry also said that Betty Benoit, the town accountant, has a box in the corner of her office containing invoices and other paperwork. We may find papers in there from prior years pertaining to the BPACC. He had looked through it quickly but didn't find anything.

Sharon reiterated that our operational document, entitled "Policies and Procedures," date from 1996, the earliest days of the station, and needs to be brought up to date. She has sent each committee member an electronic copy of the document and asking they begin reviewing them and noting possible changes on their copies, so that we can discuss potential revisions at a future meeting.

Sharon mentioned that many other public access committees require that each producer using the town cameras purchase and use their own media. She feels with the move away from DV or VHS tape to flash cards—which are small, expensive and easily misplaced or stolen— that this would be a reasonable requirement for any producer who wants to use the station's solid-state camera. In addition, public access stations often require prospective volunteers or producers to become "members" and pay a membership fee to participate. Membership allows the committee to establish requirements to participate, such as training, and paying a fee gets the person to "buy into" the committee's mission. Sharon will check with Charter about their own requirements in regard to who may participate in such a membership program in Brookfield, such as if they must be town residents. Linda asked about those Tantasqua students who are not residents but attend the regional school system of which Brookfield is a part. Sharon mentioned that Tantasqua is currently using one of our three channels, Channel 11. Jerry mentioned that drawing on Tantasqua opens up a potential pool of volunteers. Jerry suggested the possibility of having a reciprocal agreement with other regional towns, similar to mutual aid, if Charter's contract allows it.

Volunteer Recruitment

Linda asked for clarification regarding Page 3 of the August 3rd minutes and the need to look for volunteers at Tantasqua. Sharon explained that Peter O'Connell had talked with her about potential volunteers at the school. He mentioned that he had contacted Brookfield Resident Scully Metz, a teacher at Tantasqua, as well as another teacher, Deb Mckinstry, who used to be the faculty advisory for Tantasqua's media center, about getting Tantasqua involved in some way in the station's activities. Peter asked if anyone on our committee could serve as a liaison. Linda, with her ties to the educational community, was mentioned as a logical choice.

One of the Committee's stated long-term goals is recruiting and training volunteers, but there was consensus that members of the committee need to have clear procedures set up for operations and programming prior to opening things up to the general community. Sharon and Linda stated that before we send out a call for people to help, we need to become more comfortable with we are doing ourselves so that we can train others effectively. In addition, given the lack of a full-time staff person to supervise, the studio's disarray when it was turned over to us, and the committee's subsequent discovery of missing DV tapes, DVDs and software, we need to be cautious about whom and how we allow access to the station's expensive equipment until safeguards are in place to protect the station and its property.

unknown. She will pursue this—it would involve changing the password at the root level of the operating software to allow the Committee to sign in and out.

Fixed camera - Linda will ask what equipment is used to record Select Board meetings in North Brookfield; Sharon will look into West Brookfield's set-up.

Programming - Sarah said that she and Rudy will record footage of the Quaboag 350th Anniversary Parade on Sept. 19 in West Brookfield. Sharon said that she'll contact Ruth Lyons to see who is on the cable access committee in West Brookfield, to coordinate our efforts with theirs.

Sharon and Sarah will continue to record Select Board meetings and other events as needed.

Next Meeting
We tentatively agreed to meet Tuesday, Oct 12 at 7 p.m. at the studio. However, to make sure that all members can attend, Sharon will contact Adam Rundell to find out if that date will work for him. She will also circulate a document via email where each of us can indicate what evenings present scheduling conflicts. This may enable us to come up with a regular monthly meeting night.

Adjournment
Sarah moved, Jerry seconded that the meeting adjourn. Sharon, Jerry, Sarah and Linda voted in favor; none voted against. Motion Passed. The meeting was adjourned at 9:20pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Heller
Secretary, Brookfield Public Access Committee

Minutes Approved by the Committee *October 22, 2010*

Minutes delivered to the Selectmen via email *October 3, 2011.*