10-22-10 BPACC Minutes FINAL.pdf

Brookfield Public Access and Communications Committee
BPACC Studio, Elementary School
Minutes of October 22, 2010

Members Present: Sarah Heller, Gerald (Jerry) Johnson, Sharon Mahoney (chair), Adam Rundell, James Sniffen

Members Absent: Linda Barron, Kathleen Hosterman

Sharon called the meeting to order at 7:10pm.

I. Approval of Minutes
Adam moved and Jerry seconded approval of the August 16 minutes. Adam, Jerry, Sarah, Sharon and James voted in favor. There were no opposing votes. The motion passed.

There were several amendments made to the September 16 minutes. Jerry moved and Sarah seconded approval of the September 16 minutes. Adam, Jerry, Sarah, Sharon and James voted in favor. No one voted against. The motion passed.

II. Discussion of Archive system
James explained that he would like to set up a scheduling system. He also recommended 2 white boards for scheduling 2 months (current and next month), including columns for What, Who, and Equipment out. There would be a sign in/out sheet. Members endorsed the idea, with action to be taken later, but no motion was made.

III. Communications
Charter Bill for $250: Jerry has discussed the situation with Betty Benoit, the town accountant. It takes so long to get through the town's payment process that by the time a check is cut, the bills are often past due. Betty recommended that we authorize Jerry to give our Charter bills to Betty to pay as a monthly routine, without a vote required for each month. ***Adam moved and Sarah seconded that we authorize Jerry to work with the accountant to pay the Charter monthly bill without requiring a signed voucher each month. Adam, Jerry, Sarah, Sharon and James voted in favor. No one voted against. The motion passed.***

Jerry also explained that the town is not allowed to pay the tax on these bills. He will talk to Charter and give them the Town's tax-exempt number for their records to forestall any further tax charges. He should be able to get them to remove the past due amount one last time as well.

October 22 Report of the Chair
After all members read the report, there was discussion about the suggested purchases (last page of report).

Item 1: Sarah has several white-erase boards that she can donate to the studio. She will bring them in for the next meeting. If they are not appropriate for the intended use, then the committee may need to purchase.

Items 2-5: ***Sarah moved, Jerry seconded, that Sharon be authorized to purchase the recommended items on her report (plastic storage sleeves, double layer DVDs, ten-packs of DV tapes, stapler). Adam, Jerry, Sarah, Sharon and James voted in favor. No one voted against. The motion passed.***

Policies Relating to Distribution of DVD Program Copies

Sharon explained that she spoke with Donna Neylon and it is her understanding that until the minutes are approved, DVD videos or other recordings of the meeting must be made available to anyone requests them, as per the public records law, which for the purposes of the law treats them the same as notes for taken for the purposes of writing minutes. Once the minutes are approved, they then become the official record of the meeting and public access recordings requested after that time need not be turned over. According to town counsel, we must honor any verbal or written request for a meeting DVD that was made prior to the approval of that meeting's minutes within 10 days.

Our 1996 guidelines conflict with this because we do not give out copies to anyone under any circumstances except to a program's producer. If we were an independent, 501(c)(3) organization we would not be subject to the Public Records Law, but because we are a governmentally appointed committee we will need to revise our guidelines for the distribution of DVDs, and possibly other similar policies, to bring them into line with the law. Jerry mentioned that we should have town counsel review our guidelines. Sarah suggested that our committee pay for that service from our operations budget because the town has no money in its budget for such committee-originated requests.

When Sharon asked for suggestions on how to handle a public request for a copy of a DVD, James and Jerry both suggested that we respond, "I'll start working on getting it for you right away, but in the meantime, please give your request in writing so that we have a record of it for our files."

IV. Open Discussion about various topics

James said that he is looking into repair options for the broken cameras. He said that ideally based on his experience at Spencer Cable Access, we should have as our goal 4 operating cameras and 5 trained operators.

Sharon said that her copy of Adobe Premiere has been giving her trouble on her computer. Sarah said that Premiere is working well on the studio computer, and she can do the production of the DVDs there.

There was discussion about increasing the studio computer's onboard RAM from the current 2GB to 32GB, which is the maximum that computer can run. The cost of such RAM, according to a brief search online, seems to be around $800. This would increase the speed at which Premiere operates and lessen the bottleneck with editing. Adam said that he would investigate purchasing the RAM and give a report at our next meeting.

Sharon also recommended getting an exterior hard drive or RAID array of 8 Terabytes for backup and storage. Each 4.5 minutes of video uses 1 Gigabyte of memory, so the more memory we have at a given time, the more efficiently we can work on processing video. See details on the last page of her Oct. 22 report. James will look into types of memory arrays available.

Fixed Camera: Sarah mentioned that because the Selectmen will not be meeting in the Banquet Hall at Town Hall until spring, we have time to work researching the specifics of such an installation.

Vouchers: The committee signed two vouchers for $100 each to join MassAccess for the calendar year 2011, and Alliance for Community Media from Nov 2010 to Nov. 2011.

Converting archival VHS programs to DVD: Adam said we should look into doing this so the older programming won't be lost.

Microphones: James said that he found a lot of equipment in the studio that he could use to record better sound at meetings. He also talked about the specific sound problems he has encountered, including a low-frequency hum that appears when recording with the school's PA system. The CSX informational meeting footage was not usable because of the hum. He thinks he understands the reason and will correct it when he records the town meeting.

Property Divestment Policy: Sharon said that this is still pending. We need to evaluate what equipment in the studio is still usable and what is obsolete. Kathleen said the Elementary School has such a policy in place and the Select Board may also and that it might be useful to use both or either as a starting point.

Double Layer DVD players: Sharon asked Sarah to swap the DVDs being used for broadcast so that the ones that accept double layer DVDs, Model S38s, are available for airing programs. Currently two of them are being used to play CD music on Channels 12 and 13. Sarah agreed to do that.

James recommended that we try to use the Panasonic camera for recording meetings that will probably run over one hour; the Canon DV cameras, which record on 60-minute videotapes, are best for meetings or events under one hour. If we are using the Canon and need to switch tapes, we need to ask the people running the meeting ahead of time to pause the meeting while we change the tape and then say "we are resuming the meeting," once the new tape is in place and recording resumes.

James suggested once we have the studio in order we plan an open house for the public and invite the town. We could hook up a live camera in the studio and broadcast the event. He also said that he is working on a slide show of photos he took of the Apple Fair and the Pumpkin Fest this year.

Sarah suggested we look into downgrading our Internet service to save money. We have the highest speed available and we aren't using it. Jerry will investigate with Charter Communications.

Sharon will look into attending the New England Cable Expo on November 10 in at the Convention Center Worcester.

There was a motion made by Adam and seconded by Jerry to extend the meeting past 9 pm. Adam, Jerry, Sarah, Sharon and James voted in favor. No one voted against. The motion passed.

Adam said he would look into selling the Amiga system once we have a policy in place for doing so.

Sharon asked what we should do about the missing tapes of Selectmen's meetings and town meetings. The previous chair of the committee has made it clear he will not cooperate in our request for help in finding them. Now that there are approved minutes, the tapes are no longer considered public documents. Sarah said that it is important to document the situation. Jerry said we need to specify exactly what is missing. It is common knowledge that Mr. Dackson produced the raw footage from the camera's videotapes to DVDs at his home, on his home computer. Jerry suggested that a letter be drafted to Mr. Dackson asking, "You were the last person to have these materials in your possession; please let us know what happened to them." There was discussion about whether to send such a letter, either directly to Mr. Dackson or through the Selectmen. No decision was made.

Bulletin Board: We want to be sure people know that they can put announcements on the bulletin board. James recommended we send a notice to the local newspapers.

Discussion about the next meeting
Sharon asked us to let her know possible dates for the next meeting. She will then check for conflicts and email us potential dates and see if we can find one that all can attend.

Adjournment
Sarah moved and Adam seconded that the meeting adjourn. Adam, Jerry, Sarah, Sharon and James voted in favor. No one voted against. The motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Heller
Secretary, Brookfield Public Access Committee

Minutes Approved by the Committee on *November 18, 2010*

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