

# Cable 7, Inc. Board Minutes

Approved 19 February 2010

**February 12, 2010**

Attending: Aart Dolman, Eric Peterson, Kevin Manthey, Neil (Jerry) Taylor, Kathleen (Kathy) Gessaman

Aart opened the meeting in the atrium of the Times Square building at 10:20 a.m. Aart noted that Mayor Winters asked for volunteers to serve on a Cable 7 Board on January 19<sup>th</sup> (Aart, Jerry, and Kathy volunteered at that City Commission meeting) and subsequently appointed Aart to chair that Cable 7 Board at the February 2, 2010 City Commission meeting. Aart said the next Board meeting will have a formal agenda and encouraged everyone to call (454-5554) or email (aart-dolman@bresnan.net) with ideas for the agenda.

The Cable 7 Bylaws call for a five to ten member Board. There are potentially three remaining members from the old board, but that board has not met in over 5 years and is non-functional. Coleen Balzarini, the old board's treasurer, was not able to attend this meeting. Mr. Barrett is out of town. Eric Peterson was the only member of the old Cable 7 Board present today. Aart noted the minimum number of board members needed for a quorum is five.

Aart asked everyone to briefly introduce him or herself and state what their interests for Cable 7 were. Aart said he is a board member of KGPR public radio, and he raises money for KGPR and the Mental Health center. Aart is interested in having a program on Cable 7. Jerry T. said he has over 30 years of experience as a city chemist and has extensive experience working with city governments. He formed and operated his own computer company and, while he has set up web pages and computer systems, he has no background in television. Kathy G. said she has no experience in television either but has volunteered with many civic organizations and would like to help young people get involved in Cable 7 - perhaps helping students produce their own shows. Eric P. has been involved in television since 1976; he has a degree in film and production and worked in Billings in a public access TV position much like Kevin's at Cable 7. Aart added he is a retired educator and his specialty is international law. Kevin, the Executive Producer of Cable 7, said he has worked in television since 1976 with CBS, NBC, ABC, and three other public access stations.

Aart reported he obtained two binders with historical information on Cable 7 a week or so ago; he reviewed them and passed them to Jerry. Jerry read them and will turn the binders over to Kathy at the end of the meeting today. Aart said he is already thinking of fundraising ideas. KGPR fundraising for this year begins on Feb. 20<sup>th</sup>.

Aart asked for ideas or suggestions for future Cable 7 activities. Suggestions included: produce shows with community-orientated topics such as helping increase public awareness of mental health issues like Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome for military veterans; help find sponsors for programs; hold a volunteer appreciation dinner; have a roving camera to highlight/spotlight different downtown businesses; find out more of the history of Cable 7 and its contracts; find a permanent home/studio for Cable 7; increase Kevin's hours from half time to full time; provide a part-time administrative assistant for Kevin; look into getting help from RSVP; fully identify Cable 7's current income; write a business plan for Cable 7, create a Cable 7 budget before the Feb. 26<sup>th</sup> City Commission budget presentation, etc.

Aart expressed the need to prepare for the February 16, 2010 City Commission meeting. The main issue needing to be addressed is the legal status of the interim Cable 7 board - perhaps the

new City Attorney can address the issue. Aart said he would make an electronic copy of the current Cable 7 bylaws and other information he has collected for Eric.

Aart called for the election of officers for the new Cable 7 board. Jerry noted the new officers could serve for one year until there is a full board.

**Jerry Taylor nominated Aart Dolman for president of the Cable 7 board, and Eric Peterson seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor of Aart as chairman.**

**Aart Dolman nominated Jerry Taylor as vice-president of the Cable 7 board, and Eric Peterson seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous for Jerry Taylor as vice-chairman.**

**Aart Dolman nominated Kathy Gessaman as secretary of the Cable 7 board, and Jerry Taylor seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous for Kathy Gessaman as secretary.**

Aart noted Coleen Balzarini was the secretary/treasurer in 2004 when the last recorded Cable 7 board meeting occurred. Perhaps Ms. Balzarini would be willing to continue as treasurer for a year. Kevin said Dan Shannon wrote up the current 501c3 application for Cable 7, and maybe he would know the status of the old Board. Aart said he hoped Mayor Winters would help clarify the issue.

Aart outlined the next steps. First job - prepare for Kevin's Cable 7 budget presentation on February 26<sup>th</sup>. Jerry said he would make an outline of a business plan and have it ready for the next meeting. Kevin said he would get a budget template from Lisa Kunz, City Clerk. Kevin said the agreements with Bresnan and the City of Great Falls and Cable 7 need to be examined and future negotiations should be open to the Cable 7 Board. Ideas on how to increase Cable 7's portion of the Franchise Agreement were discussed; Kathy suggested leaving the City of Great Falls with the first \$650,000 of the money Bresnan pays to the City of Great Falls' general fund and allocating any money paid by Bresnan over the initial \$650,000 to Cable 7. As Bresnan grows and prospers, so will Cable 7. Eric noted Cable 7 is entitled to more channels when the current one Cable 7 is using is filled; channel 38 is designated as belonging to Public Access. Bresnan is and has been collecting assets from this channel, which really belongs to Cable Channel 7, Inc. Perhaps that is a negotiating point to help get a new drop for Channel 7 new business location?

Kevin was asked to record and broadcast the upcoming joint commission/ECP/B & M consultants public meeting on 2/18/10 at 5:30 PM. Kevin stated there was no funding to do that for this meeting. He was directed, by the board to look into whether funding from the city could be found; Kevin agreed to do that.

The next meeting will be Friday, February 19, 2010 at 10 a.m. in the Civic Center; Kevin will reserve one of the smaller meeting rooms. The meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

Recorded by Kathleen Z. Gessaman

Additional notes:

Before the board meeting, the group toured a suite of rooms in the lower level of the Times Square building, and the building manager offered the suite for the basic rental fee of \$200/month. A non-load bearing wall would have to be removed to create a large enough area and the ceiling ducting was low but it is a promising site for a studio for Cable 7. After the meeting the group looked at a potential site in the building at 511 Central Ave - it had high

ceilings but the rent could not be firmly established. Neither location has a cable drop for uploads; no one knows for sure where all the cable drops for Cable 7 are located. The Civic Center and the College of Technology were known to have had drops at one time. According to part of Exhibit B (see below) of City Ordinance 2620, Cable 7 is entitled to upstream access at seven locations.

#### **EXHIBIT B [Ordinance 2620]**

##### **FRANCHISE AGREEMENT**

This Franchise Agreement, by and between the **City of Great Falls**, (Franchise Authority) and **TCI Cablevision of Great Falls, Inc.** (Grantee), is made and entered into this 5th day of May, 1992....

**3.14. Public Access Channel Grant** When requested by the Franchise Authority, based on the currently acknowledged Public, Educational and Governmental Access needs and interests of the community, but not sooner than September 1, 1993, Grantee shall allocate a sum of eighty thousand dollars (\$80,000), for use in the acquisition of equipment for the City and/or facilities in support of the City's community access activities. In addition to the one-time grant of \$80,000, Grantee shall also:

a. Provide the capacity for live program origination on the public access television channel by returning seven upstream lines from the following locations to the Grantee's Headend Facility:

1. Civic Center, Great Falls, Montana
2. Great Falls High School, Great Falls, Montana
3. CM Russell High School, Great Falls, Montana
4. College of Great Falls, Great Falls, Montana
5. Great Falls Vocational Technical School, Great Falls, Montana
6. Columbus Hospital, Great Falls, Montana
7. Deaconess Hospital, Great Falls, Montana

The upstream lines shall be completed in conjunction with completion of the cable system rebuild but no later than December 1996. However, the upstream line to the designated public access studio shall be completed on or before September 1993.

b. Cost of construction, maintenance, installation, and/or service to public buildings not specified in Section 3.12 [\[see below\]](#) or for additional sites not specified in Section 3.14(a) will be the responsibility of the Franchise Authority.

**3.15. Access Channel.** Grantee shall provide two downstream channels for joint public (community) access usage. Additional access channel capacity shall be provided at the request of the Franchise Authority when the existing channel capacity has been programmed to seventy percent (70%) of the time between 9:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. each day for a period of three (3) consecutive months with initial run and first rerun programming but not sooner than the completion of the cable system rebuild. The Channel designations shall be 7 and a channel to be determined at a later date.

**3.12. Service to Public Buildings.** The Grantee shall provide without charge (1) outlet of Basic plus Expanded Basic Service to the Franchise Authority's office building, the police station and the public access studio. The outlets of Basic plus Expanded Basic Service shall not be used to distribute or sell Cable Services in or throughout such buildings; nor shall such outlets be located in common or public areas open to the public. Users of such outlets shall hold Grantee harmless from any and all liability or claims arising out of their use of such outlets including but not limited to, those arising from copyright liability.