

**Bedford Township Cable Committee Meeting**  
**May 16, 2005**

The Cable Committee meeting was held in the Bedford Township Board Room on Monday, May 16, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. with the following members present: Sigmund Geremski, Mike Murphy, Gene Stock, Steve Lennex and Bernice Heidelberg ( Whiteford rep). Absent were Denise Hill (Whiteford rep) and Tom Dawson ( Buckeye Cable rep).

**Election of Officers:** The group appointed Steve Lennex to be the temporary chairman of the meeting. The group appointed Bernice Heidelberg to the secretary position. The group delayed the election of the chair and vice chair until a member of the Bedford Township board is appointed to this committee.

**Review of the Cablevision Ordinance Number 86:** The membership began to review the ordinance and had several concerns. These included:

- A) 44.005 (a): this portion of the ordinance is limited to a multi-channel video programming network. Items that may not be included are residential telephone service, satellite, video, high speed internet. More information is needed.
- B) 44.008 Compensation
  - (f) This section does not include satellite, internet, video and any other subscriber service offered by Buckeye Cable.
  - (h) Neither the township nor the Cable Company is supporting local origination or the program at Bedford Schools as written in this section. This paragraph needs to be re-written.
  - (e) The cable committee would like to see the copies of the quarterly reports sent with the franchise fees.
- B) 44.009 section 9 : Public Education and Government Access: the committee would like to know what events changed programming to not include public access.
- C) 44.010: This section requires the cable company to have a local office. Many residents have expressed concern and a desire to have a local office.

- Discussion:**
- (1) The group suggested that this contract be re-written to reflect the current status of the Buckeye Cable Company as it is in Bedford Township.
  - (2) The group also requested that a representative of the cable company be present at the cable committee meetings.
  - (3) Meg Smith is to check if Bedford is participating in the Metro Act.
  - (4) Residents are requesting the Food channel is added to the system and more local events covered.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Bernice Heidelberg*

- would then be able to post its own information. The cable committee feels that the township is not utilizing its cable assets to their full potential.
- 44.10 Many residents have expressed concern and displeasure over the closure of the local cable office. Tom Dawson told the group that the Lewis Avenue office did not have enough walk in traffic to keep it open. After closing Lewis Avenue, the office moved to Foodtown in Lambertville. That office was forced to close when the store was sold. Efforts were made to make new arrangements with either the new Foodtown owners or the Kroger store across the street to no success. Mr. Dawson told the group that Buckeye would look into this again.

Mr. Dawson was asked if he felt that the cable agreement should be re-written. He responded that he felt that the company was complying in all of the areas of concern with the exception of the local office.

**Cable Fees** It was stated that many customers do not understand the franchise fee charges on their bills and question why it is passed on to the customer. Mr. Dawson responded that this was the result of legislation in 1992 that deregulated the cable industry. The fees are paid to the township for the franchise. In the past, the cable provider paid these fees to the township, as a part of doing business. In 1992, the new legislation allowed for these fees to be passed on to the customers.

Some concern was expressed over the increase in the customer cable costs and customer notification of this action. Mr. Dawson responded by saying that each subscriber receives a written notice that is included with the monthly statement. The increase notice is provided 30 days prior to the increase. The Cable Company also announces the increase in the Toledo Blade. It was suggested that the notice be placed in the Monroe Evening news and the Bedford Now.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.

**Bedford Cable Committee Meeting  
June 20, 2005**

Attendance: Steve Lennex	Gene Stock	Denise Hill
Nick Karay	Sigmund Geremski	Bernice Heidelberg
Tom Dawson: Buckeye Cable		Mike Murphy, excused

Temporary Chairperson Steve Lennex called the Bedford Cable Committee meeting to order at 7:16 PM in the Bedford Township Board Room. A motion made by Gene Stock and seconded by Sigmund Geremski approved the May minutes. Motion passed.

Election of Officers was re-visited from the May meeting. Sigmund Geremski was elected Vice Chair. A permanent Chairperson was not elected again this evening. The committee felt that a Township Board member should be attending these meetings and that this person should chair this committee.

It was suggested that a letter be sent to the Township Supervisor expressing our concern about the lack of a township presence. It was also suggested that the letter contain a request for information that would be helpful to this committee. The Cable Committee Secretary will write the letter.

The remaining time of the meeting was spent in discussion with Buckeye Representative, Tom Dawson. The group reviewed the minutes of the previous meeting with Mr. Dawson. The May minutes contained several questions concerning the Cable agreement between the company and the township. The committee felt Mr. Dawson could resolve several issues for them. The following is a review of the discussion.

**44.005:** This questioned the available services. Mr. Dawson informed the group that Buckeye provides multi-channel videos and the township receives the franchise fees for this service. High Speed Internet service fees are paid to the State of Michigan in the Metro Authority Act. The state would in turn send the payment to the municipalities. The fees charged are based on a cost (cents) per foot in the road right of ways. The committee would like to know if the township has received any fees from the metro Act, how much in fees and what was the money used for.

**44.008: Funding for Local Origination** Mr. Dawson informed the group that part of the franchise fees paid by Buckeye Cable was to be used as the providers share of the local programming costs. The group expressed concern about the money allocated to Bedford Schools in the original agreement. They believe that the township is using the money collected in the franchise fees to support the local origination programming. The group felt this issue should be further investigated.

Mr. Dawson presented to the Committee secretary copies of quarterly report and fees paid to both Whiteford and Bedford Townships for the last year. The group would like to know what the township is using the franchise fees for.

**44.09** Tom Dawson reminded the group that 2 channels are provided to the township for Public Education(69) and Local Government (11). The company put generators in place for "VOD" to Bedford and Whiteford. The 2 townships

would then be able to post its own information. The cable committee feels that the township is not utilizing its cable assets to their full potential.

- 44.10 Many residents have expressed concern and displeasure over the closure of the local cable office. Tom Dawson told the group that the Lewis Avenue office did not have enough walk in traffic to keep it open. After closing Lewis Avenue, the office moved to Foodtown in Lambertville. That office was forced to close when the store was sold. Efforts were made to make new arrangements with either the new Foodtown owners or the Kroger store across the street to no success. Mr. Dawson told the group that Buckeye would look into this again.

Mr. Dawson was asked if he felt that the cable agreement should be re-written. He responded that he felt that the company was complying in all of the areas of concern with the exception of the local office.

**Cable Fees** It was stated that many customers do not understand the franchise fee charges on their bills and question why it is passed on to the customer. Mr. Dawson responded that this was the result of legislation in 1992 that deregulated the cable industry. The fees are paid to the township for the franchise. In the past, the cable provider paid these fees to the township, as a part of doing business. In 1992, the new legislation allowed for these fees to be passed on to the customers.

Some concern was expressed over the increase in the customer cable costs and customer notification of this action. Mr. Dawson responded by saying that each subscriber receives a written notice that is included with the monthly statement. The increase notice is provided 30 days prior to the increase. The Cable Company also announces the increase in the Toledo Blade. It was suggested that the notice be placed in the Monroe Evening news and the Bedford Now.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.

**Bedford Cable Committee Meeting  
July 18, 2005**

Attendance: Steve Lennex	Gene Stock	Denise Hill
Larry O'Dell	Walt Wilburn	Bernice Heidelberg
Visitor		
Absent: Sigmund Geremski	Mike Murphy	Nick Karay
Tom Dawson		

Temporary Chairman Steve Lennex called the meeting to order at 7:10p.m. in the Bedford Township Hall and asked the members present to review the minutes from the June 20, 2005 meeting.

Election of a Chairman for the committee was brought up again since a township board member was present at the meeting. Township officials asked Mr. Lennex to state the reasons why it is essential for the township representative to be the chair. After a brief discussion, Larry O'Dell, trustee, and Walt Wilburn, supervisor, asked Steve Lennex to remain as chair temporarily until Mr. O'Dell is brought up to date with the cable committee history. Mr. Lennex agreed to remain temporarily.

The remainder of the meeting was spent discussing the previous minutes and concerns of the committee members.

- 1) The concern remains concerning local origination and the contract that was entered into supporting it. It was decided that Mike Murphy, Medd Barr, Lamar Frederick and John White should be invited to a meeting to discuss the funding for the studio at Bedford Schools. It also agreed that that portion of the contract might need to be re-written or that section amended.
- 2) The committee had received copies of the Metro Act. This document was requested at an earlier meeting. It was determined that the Metro Act funds were for road right of way projects only.
- 3) The committee would like to find out how the franchise fees paid to the township are being used. Walt Wilburn said he would research this. It was mentioned again that the residents do not understand the listing of the franchise fee on their cable statement.
- 4) The group felt that the township should make better use of the local government channel. One thought was to have a posted schedule of announcements for easier use of the residents.
- 5) The contract also included a cable office in the township. That will be investigated further.

The next meeting will be August 16, 2005. Meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

*B. Heidelberg*

to Bedford Clerk  
From B Heidelberg

Bedford Cable Committee Meeting  
September 19, 2005

Attendance:

Nick Karay	Tom Dawson/Buckeye	B. Heidelberg/ Whiteford Township
Larry Dell	Sigmund Geremski	Denise Hill/Whiteford
Walt Wilburn	Mike Murphy	Steve Lennex
Gene Stock	1 visitor	

The discussion continued as to the issue of non compliance with the franchise agreement. The original agreement requires a three part financial support of the local origination at Bedford Schools. The partners are Bedford Township, Buckeye Cable through its franchise fees and Bedford Schools. It is still unclear, if there was any township action to discontinue the financial support. Walt Wilburn and Larry Dell will look into the township records.

It is the general consensus of the committee to honor the agreement starting from this date if nothing is found in the township board minutes. The group also felt that a representative of Bedford schools and Med Barr and Lamar Frederick be invited to the discussion.

The committee was informed that the franchise fees are currently placed in the township general funds and used for payments to televise the board and committee meetings, advertisements and related equipment.

Meeting adjourned 8:20 pm. Next meeting October 17, 2005

*B. Heidelberg*

**Bedford Cable Committee Meeting  
October 19, 2005**

Attendance:

Denise Hill	Larry O'Dell	Lamar Frederick
Gene Stock	B.Heidelberg	Jon White, BHS
Mike Murpky	Nick Karay	Arnie Jennings
Sigmund Geremski	Tom Dawson	Vince Di Pofi

Absent: Steve Lennex

The Bedford Cable Committee met on Monday, October 19, 2005 in the Bedford Township Hall Board Room. The meeting was called to order by Larry O'Dell, acting chair due to Steve Lennex's absence. Larry O'Dell had invited Lamar Frederick, former township supervisor, Arnie Jennings and Medd Barr, Former Township trustees to the meeting. Bernice Heidelberg invited Jon White, superintendent of Bedford Public Schools. The purpose of this meeting was to clarify the status of the local origination and its funding.

The group was informed by the former board members that at one time; Bedford Township had two cable agreements: one with Comcast and one with Buckeye Cable. Ordinance 86 is the franchise agreement with Buckeye Cable enacted in 1999. This agreement includes the terms for the local origination and its funding. This was a result of the former board's feelings that the township was not benefiting from this arrangement. Initially, it was thought that Bedford High School students in the Broadcast Journalism Class would tape the township meetings and then play it on the local origination channel. This proved difficult for the students to do. The township board decided to hire Triple L productions to tape and run the township meetings. As a result, the board felt that it was not receiving any benefit from the original agreement between the school and township. At a meeting 4 years ago, the township board voted to revoke the funding of the local origination.

The committee members were given the franchise fee amounts paid to the township from 1997 to 2003. These were:

1997 84,407.00	2000 76,240.00
1998 72,892.00	2001 76,110.00
1999 78,463.00	2002 110,982.00 (includes internet fees , now Metro Act)
	2003 171,108.00 (includes internet fee, now Metro Act)

At the November 2005 meeting, the franchise fees paid in 2004 will be available. Also the group requested a copy of the township minutes that include the board revoking the funding of the local origination and any communication with Bedford Schools concerning this issue.

In new business, it was asked if the music on channel 11 could be changed. Tom Dawson did not believe that was possible. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.

## Bedford Cable Committee Meeting

November 21, 2005

Attendance: Steve Lennex, Bernice Heidelberg, Gene Stock, Sigmund Geremski, Denise Hill, Larry O'Dell, Mike Murphy, Tom Dawson

Guest: Jon White

Absent: Nick Karray

Minutes from the October 19, 2005 meeting were approved after being amended by a motion made by Gene Stock supported by Sigmund Geremski. The correction is that the music can be changed on the local channel. But, it cannot be changed to a radio station. Motion passed.

### Old Business:

Steve Lennex provided the committee with a fact/information sheet that he had compiled concerning the local origination and fees to be paid to Bedford Schools. Discussion followed after reviewing the document.

Larry O'Dell had contacted several of the township board members that were on the board at the time the fees were stopped. They voted to stop the fees to Bedford Schools because they felt that Bedford schools were not contributing to the local origination fund monetarily. August 20, 2002 was the date that the township board hired Triple L Productions to tape and air the township meetings.

Jon White, Superintendent of Bedford Public Schools stated that Bedford Public Schools were not made aware of any concerns about the school contributing \$10,000.00 to local origination. He told the group that the School and the Township had formed an oversight committee for the local origination. Medd Barr and Dennis Steinman attended the meetings and nothing was mentioned concerning the \$10,000.00 contributions.

Mike Murphy is concerned about the township not adhering to the franchise agreement with Buckeye Cable and that the franchise agreement with Comcast has not been rescinded.

Steve Lennex commented that the school had contributed to the local origination by investing in the equipment and studio housed in Bedford Schools along with the taping and broadcasting of several community events. He further stated that in the early discussions concerning the partnership for local origination, it was understood that Bedford Public School's contribution would be "in kind" services as their match. He further stated that in the franchise agreement, it states that to change any portion of this agreement, it had to have the approval of Buckeye Cable. Buckeye Cable was not notified of any changes to the agreement.



Steve Lennex asked the group to each express their opinion of the situation and any suggestions to resolve this issue. Initially, the group was divided in how to resolve the situation. Three wanted to recommend to the township board that they acknowledge the mistake, rescind the Comcast Ordinance #79 and start making payments to Bedford Schools for Local Origination. Three agreed that the Comcast Ordinance needed to be rescinded and that the board should acknowledge the error in stopping the payments to Bedford Schools. But, they wanted Bedford Schools to be reimbursed for past and present fees as provided in the agreement.

Gene Stock made the motion, supported by Denise Hill to make the following recommendations to the board:

- 1) Rescind Comcast Ordinance #79.
- 2) The township board members review the Buckeye Franchise agreement, Ordinance #86 and the supporting documents provided by the cable committee.
- 3) Bedford Public Schools is financially reimbursed for the local origination fees from 2002 to present in a timetable that is acceptable to the township board and Bedford Public Schools.

Motion Passed.

#### **New Business:**

Earlier this year, the committee held election of temporary officers. It was decided this evening to select permanent officers for the year.

**Chairman:** Gene Stock moved and was supported by Denise Hill to nominate Steve Lennex as chair. Mike Murphy moved, supported by Gene Stock that nominations be closed. Mike Murphy moved, supported by Denise Hill to approve the election of Steve Lennex as chair of the cable committee. Motion passed.

**Secretary:** Denise Hill moved, supported by Gene Stock to nominate Bernice Heidelberg for secretary. Mike Murphy moved, supported by Gene Stock to close nominations. Denise Hill moved, supported by Gene Stock to approve the election of Bernice Heidelberg as cable committee secretary. Motion Passed.

Jon White thanked the committee for its assistance. He reported that Mike Murphy and his students worked on a telethon to help the residents in Pass Christian to support the town that the township had adopted.

The meeting adjourned after the completion of its agenda at 8:35 pm. Next meeting is January 16, 2006. The group will prepare its presentation to the township board on January 17, 2006.