

TOWN OF BEDFORD
WBNH-LPFM RADIO BOARD OF OVERSEERS
Meeting Minutes
October 17, 2016
BEDFORD TOWN MEETING ROOM

In Attendance: Bob Thomas (Chairman), Dick Barr (Vice-Chairman), Scott Winslow, Jay Taft, Phil Bruno, Dave Danielson, Dave Gilbert (Town Council Liaison), John Schneller (Alternate Town Council Liaison), Harry Kozlowski (WBNH Program Director) and Bill Jennings (BCTV/WBNH Station Manager).

Absent: Bill Foote, School Board Liaison

Chairman Bob Thomas called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Public Input:

None.

New Business:

WBNH Reorganization:

Bill Jennings spoke about the ongoing WBNH re-organization and a new proposed position for an additional full-time staff member. Bill Jennings will continue as BCTV Station Manager and is also the WBNH Station Manager as well. Harry Kozlowski's title is changing to WBNH Program Director. This will allow Mr. Kozlowski to focus on his areas of expertise and the running of the radio station programs. Mr. Jennings will continue to handle budgeting, as well as all operational and staffing related items for both the television and radio stations.

The new proposed position is a Broadcast & Radio Production Coordinator staff member, which will support both the radio station and the television station. Due to the fact that the department's staffing costs are funded solely through franchise fees, there is no impact to taxes. The Town Manager has approved the initial concept of this new position and Mr. Jennings will soon be presenting his proposal to Town Council. Chairman Bob Thomas asked, is the main responsibility of the new position to remain at the station 95% of the time while people are out in the field?

Mr. Jennings responded, yes - exactly. Mr. Jennings further explained the individual in this position will hopefully have both experience with the radio software programs, as well as knowledge of the television specifics, so that this individual will be able to support both types of media and potentially add additional station coverage on weekends and off hours. Harry Kozlowski explained that the most recent Windows operating software update actually deleted some of the radio software which caused the radio station to unexpectedly go off the air on Friday night. Luckily a contractor was able to find and enact a work-around so that there was only a six minute gap in coverage. Having another staff member at the station, while someone is out in the field, would help minimize, or at least help quickly resolve these types of unforeseen issues.

Scott Winslow asked, is this new position going to report to Harry Kozlowski for radio assignments and reports to Bill Jennings for the television assignments? Mr. Jennings clarified that the new position would receive all assignments from Mr. Jennings and would therefore report directly to Mr. Jennings.

While all individuals are welcome to share their thoughts and ideas, Mr. Jennings will ultimately remain the decision-maker for the department.

Dave Danielson asked, given the new reorganization of BCTV and the radio station, should we consider combining the two boards of overseers? Mr. Jennings replied that this was something that has been talked about. While the two boards do have some parallel responsibilities, the boards were kept separate to allow for more input and new ideas from additional board members.

Coleen Richardson stated that originally one of the main reasons she believes there were two separate boards, was because the television is a community based station, whereas the radio station is not a community station. Therefore the radio station will have different guidelines and different priorities.

Old Business:

Road Signage:

Chairman Thomas asked if the signage was still in the 2017 budget. Mr. Jennings thanked all the Overseers for all their time and effort in discussing the proposed sign designs and potential funding sources. Mr. Jennings explained that the signs are still in the 2017 budget, but more information and discussion will need to be had before signs are actually produced and posted to ensure that we remain in compliance with all road sign regulations and Town ordinances.

Mr. Gilbert asked if there are proposed sign dimensions and/or posting locations. Mr. Jennings stated that all of those details are up for discussion; nothing has been decided just yet. Mr. Danielson suggested that signs be posted along probable evacuation routes that might be taken during times of emergencies. While there are many ideas about where the signs should be posted and what they should look like, Mr. Jennings stated that he will be using input from the public safety Chiefs to help determine where the signs should go and what should be on them. More to come on this topic in the 2017 year.

Radio Station Manager's Report by Harry Kozlowski:

Since September 1st, we have been running weather forecasts every hour which are recorded by local meteorologists based in Nashua.

All Bedford High football games have been broadcast live, other than the Timberlane game. Also WBNH plans to carry every tournament championship. We are in the process of preparing a schedule for winter sports, including hockey and girls basketball. Thank you to all our volunteers who help make these broadcasts possible.

On the political side of things, we aired a series of candidate corner programs. Another round of these will begin in two weeks prior to the general election, so keep an eye out for those.

We have surpassed the 1,000 program download mark and we currently have 227 programs that have been produced and are available on the podcast page. It is great to know that people are making use of the podcast page and following us.

Finally, we are in the process of putting together holiday music for a planned uninterrupted music program that will be broadcast on Christmas Eve and Christmas day.

Bill Jennings stated that the sports radio links are also shared with the other teams and Towns that play in the games against Bedford.

Additional Business:

Coverage Area:

The northwest part of the Town has difficulty picking up the radio station. Harry Kozlowski spoke about the radio coverage analysis that was completed. There are areas of Town that are shadowed by surrounding structures and trees which prevent them from receiving the signal.

If we go up 50 feet there is substantial improvement in coverage. If we go up 100 feet there are significant improvements that result in very few areas without coverage. Mr. Kozlowski explained that FM signals are at such a high frequency that anything with water in it can block the signal, which includes leaves. Due to the mature trees surrounding the tower itself, some signal is being blocked before getting out of the parking lot.

Dave Danielson asked about possibly putting a repeater on a tower that is located at Joppa Hill. Mr. Kozlowski explained translators must be applied for separately from the FCC. Currently there is no application window open at this time and it may be years for such an opportunity to open. Whereas changes to the tower could be almost immediate, the only major factor would be funding and internal procedures. There are no additional licensing requirements for tower height changes as long as we are within the 150 foot approved range.

Mr. Jennings stated it is the radio stations responsibility to recognize and address the coverage issues, especially because the station is mainly for emergency issues. Mr. Barr stated he would like to see the highest possible tower height. As a homeowner and tax payer, he feels it is important to have access to the radio station, especially during times of emergencies.

Councilor Schneller asked about Zoning restrictions. Mr. Jennings replied, no - not for Town property. Really it comes down to aesthetics. Harry explained that they are continuing to research and gather information about all possibilities relating to coverage improvements.

New Business Points for Future Meetings:

Dave Danielson brought up the following bullet points for future discussion.

- Potential internal traffic reports during times of major construction, such as during the Route 101 traffic options – live may be difficult, but general PSA's might be instrumental in keeping people informed about the construction status.
- Program idea: Similar to the Radio Unleashed/Bull Dog Reports, maybe have a kids talk show about civic issues.
- Bob Dylan just received the Nobel Prize. Mr. Bruno stated there is a dedication program currently in the works.
- Is public health part of what is covered by emergency radio? Mr. Kozlowski briefly replied, yes - if there is information that needs to be disseminated, let us know. The door is always open for additional programs or PSA's depending on the issue. Always feel free to contact Harry or Bill to discuss new options, however Harry and Bill are always working with both the Fire and Police Departments to ensure important public emergency topics are covered.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

The approval of minutes for the June 20th meeting were tabled until the next board meeting, which is scheduled to be held on December 12, 2016 at 7 p.m.

Discussion adjourned at 8:20pm.

Respectfully submitted by:
Danielle Basora