

**Alliance for Community Media  
Michigan Chapter  
General Meeting Minutes**

**Date: October 10, 2014**

**Location: WKTV- Wyoming, MI**

**I. Call to Order (approx. 12:40 p.m.)**

Alysha Schlundt-Bodien notes that MI-ACM Board members Debora Guthrie and Linda Gellasch are absent from today's meeting. Also that Jay Winko has retired and resigned from his position as Vice President of MI-ACM.

**II. Approval of Minutes**

A. Ashley Berens moves to approve the meeting minutes from 5/16/14. Beth seconds. No discussion. All approve.

**III. Old Business**

**A. Budget**

The MI-ACM budget was shared with the group. Jon Koeze, Treasurer, says that the general fund is discretionary. Michigan was the first chapter of the ACM. The political action fund should be used for political things; that's why it is in place. Ron Beacom says that we have used it for lawyer fees. Jon also says we don't spend a lot or take in a lot of money each year. The annual membership fee is \$15 and spending is usually based on getting speakers, planning workshops, etc.

**IV. New Business**

**A. Troy's Access Center (Questions)**

The center is getting started with AT&T and had some questions for MI-ACM:

- 1.** Who with AT&T in Michigan do I contact about getting a city's municipal channel onto Uverse. Specifically the city of Rochester's municipal channel.
- 2.** Outside of the common concerns with PEG and Uverse, has anyone had experience getting their channel onto the system? Was it difficult?
- 3.** What is involved technically?
- 4.** What is the cost? Equipment costs, setup, maintenance, direct fee to AT&T??

**B. Troy's Access Center (Answers)**

Here is the feedback provided by MI-ACM members:

## **Q1.**

Mark Monk says Gaven Gates, he is the contact person at AT&T who will have people get in touch with them. Mark says to be sure that you record any conversation you have with him.

Ron Beacom says talk to places that are already doing it like PMN and HOMTV. Do some homework before about how many channels you have and what that will mean tech wise with AT&T. (The group believed Troy has 3 channels.)

Mark shared that PMN has a \$15-20,000 Niagara unit for streaming and that unit has 8 inputs. Price will change based on how many inputs you need. He also said that AT&T requires 1.5 megs of bandwidth as an AT&T subscriber, plus another 1.5 for audio, plus more for the backend. So bandwidth will cost you too.

Tom Norton says to always get a second opinion on what hardware/equipment you need. AT&T told WKTV to buy a bunch of stuff that was very expensive. They hired in an IT person who quoted them way lower and said they didn't need some of the items AT&T told them.

## **Q2.**

Mark says often at PMN in the facility we see something different than what other subscribers are seeing.

Tom says they record on camera the difference between Comcast and AT&T and after 5 p.m. the quality is noticeably different- worse. Also that the further away you are from Wyoming, the worse the picture quality is and the audio is often out of sync.

Beth Mitchell says that the U-Verse channel guide is wrong and AT&T will take forever, if at all, to correct it. PMN's channels moved back in June of this year and to make PMN channels easy to find they wanted to change the numbers on the U-Verse channel guide. Beth filled out the proper form over three months ago and still hasn't heard anything from AT&T.

Mark says that for a long time PMN had an issue with the aspect ratio of each stream. He eventually got connected with someone in Texas who worked with him on what specs were needed to change the aspect ratio to 4:3. Mark says he was never initially given this information from the person who was supposed to be assigned to Michigan.

Beth notes that at PMN the only control we have to troubleshoot AT&T issues on their stream is to literally stop, start, reset, or rebuild the encoder. There is pretty much no audio controls beyond panning left or right or muting, so if you are off signal and tried all of those things and it doesn't come back you are at the mercy of AT&T.

Mark also noted that in Kalamazoo, PMN has an AT&T head a block away and that PMN said they would pay to run cable to that branch but they said no.

**Q3.**

HOMTV has a good diagram that Chris (last name unknown) can get.

PMN talked with AT&T where they said one thing and came back and said they never said that at all. (Noted why Mark suggested recording conversations.)

Ron says the process with them on conferencing calls, etc. was clunky. They started communication in January and Midland was on U-Verse by July- for them the outcome of being on AT&T has been positive. Ron did note that there are only two centers on their network- maybe why they have less problems than others?

**Q4.**

Tom says when WKTV switched to TDS to transmit the signal it saved them a lot of money. For just U-Verse it's about \$680 a month for two channels, it used to be \$1,700 a month on AT&T. He stresses to shop around, and find the least expensive way! Their total startup costs was about \$35,000.

Ron says Midland's startup cost was about \$7,500 and they've invested about \$32,000. They don't have a monthly fee because they use the city's bandwidth.

Dale Germiner says their capital costs weren't great but they already had a new automation system at Access Vision. So AT&T wanted to split the signal and send it back through the cloud so Access Vision isn't haven't to pay more for equipment beyond the Telvue system. For broadband they pay \$100 every 3 months because they have a partnership with the city of Battle Creek.

Jon says if you are receiving funding from a city(s)- PEG fees, you might want to look at them doing it for you. City's get discounts on Cisco equipment so look at the city buying the equipment and you reimburse.

**C. Any Other Tech Issues (Comcast or Charter)**

i. Ron says they have the worst signal with their Gov. channel on Charter and no one will come out, and they aren't getting support they need. When they do send someone out they don't know anything about their system.

ii. Beth says PMN is using Rovi's A-List system for program guides on Charter but it isn't working properly. A few people in the group said they had similar issues getting started. Beth is looking for contact people at Rovi to get in touch with for support.

**D. Updating MI-ACM By-Laws**

The Executive Board is looking to set up a committee to review and update the current by-laws. Alysha and Beth are interested in this and are looking for one or two more people to help.

E. Spring Conference

The Spring conference will be hosted by HOMTV in Lansing with MAB!

V. Announcements

A. Thank you WKTV for lunch!

VI. Adjournment at 1:38 p.m.