

Santa Maria Community Television
Minutes
SMCTV Board of Directors

Mark van de Kamp – Chair
Bob Morrison – Director
David Cross – Director

Alan Sutterfield – Clerk of the Board

Meeting
June 8, 2011
6:30 PM

Santa Maria Community Television
910 South Oakwood Drive
805-925-9176

1. Call meeting to order

The meeting was called to order by SMCTV Board Chair, Mark van de Kamp, at 6:30 p.m. Also present were directors David Cross, Bob Morrison and SMCTV PEG Station Manager, Alan Sutterfield.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Approval of December 1, 2010 Minutes

ACTION: Motion to approve by Mr. Cross, seconded by Mr. Morrison. Motion passed 3-0.

4. New Business

a. INFORMATION: Update on PEG Legislation

Mr. Sutterfield said that Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin and Congressman Steven Latourette re-introduced legislation known as the CAP Act, which seeks to moderate some of the severe challenges facing PEG access centers in several states that moved from local to state franchising. The CAP Act had been stalled, needing the support of an opposition party member, but was now positioned as a bi-partisan bill and was back on track. He indicated that the new state franchising legislation has damaged support for PEG in twenty states, six states would lose all of their funding in 2012 and that since 2005, over 100 communities have lost their PEG access centers, with the possibility that another 300 could close in the future. Mr. Sutterfield explained that the CAP Act could save as many as ten thousand jobs nationally, and it would allow PEG funds to be used for any purpose, not just capital expenditures.

b. INFORMATION: Update on FCC PEG issues

Mr. Sutterfield told the board that at the Federal Communications Commission, a petition from the Alliance for Community Media and other organizations, which bans the practice of channel-slaming PEG channels by cable providers, continues to be ignored some two-and-a-half years after it was submitted. The FCC Chairman, Mr. Julius Genachowski, claimed in a public forum that he had already addressed most of the issues covered in the petition, but the AMC could find no record of those actions being taken. Mr. Sutterfield went on to say that on May 12, FCC Commissioner Meredith Attwell Baker resigned her post to work as a lobbyist for Comcast Cable, twelve weeks after voting to approve the controversial Comcast/NBC Universal merger, indicating that in her view, the merger would be good for consumers. Also, as part of the merger, Comcast Cable announced that it would support PEG channels by providing within the next five years, web-streaming and video-on-demand for all the PEG channels on its systems, though some of the specific details were unclear. Mr. Sutterfield explained that while this would be a net benefit for SMCTV and other access centers, he expressed concern that this might be a strategy by Comcast Cable to shift PEG programming entirely to the internet, freeing up valuable spectrum on the basic cable tier. Mr. van de Kamp asked if local officials were going to take a position on the CAP Act. Mr. Sutterfield indicated that Representative Lois Capps was a PEG supporter, but that she was not a co-sponsor. Mr. Cross asked about the time-line for web-streaming being phased in. Mr. Sutterfield said Comcast had indicated that they would test market it within two years and have it fully deployed at all locations within five years. He said that web-streaming and video-on-demand is expensive and time-consuming but would increase the reach of PEG channels in the community.

5. INFORMATION: Report from PEG Station Manager

Mr. Sutterfield reported that SMCTV continues to provide services in support of 50 or more local nonprofits, with new participating nonprofits being Saint Joseph High School, Cal Recycle, National Kidney Foundation, Los Padres Artists' Guild, All My Sister and Me, Cabrillo High School, Coastal Voices and New Hope Church. He added that he had facilitated an executive directors' roundtable for the Nonprofit Support Center of Santa Barbara, which resulted in studio programming crewed by staff and volunteers, for the nonprofits SLO Mothers for Peace, Alzheimer's Association and the Santa Barbara Council of the Arts. He thanked SMCTV members who volunteered their time on the productions, mentioned that the Latino Business Council and the National Day of Prayer also submitted programming, and that he attended the Arellanes Junior High School career day. Ninety percent of the students at the school indicated that they would favor internet over cable television if given a choice of only one of the two services, despite surveys that indicate the number of hours of TV watching per person continues to expand. He said that SMCTV had concluded its productions of The Valley Speaks: The Next Step, that the Media Center would continue to be closed the third Friday of each month for the city's MTO budget restrictions and that the fiscal year would end within budget.

He also said that for the next fiscal year, funds would be available for equipment repair and maintenance only, not for acquisitions and that some repairs had already been deferred. Also, Comcast Cable recently distributed new digital cable boxes with some attendant technical difficulties, but that response from Comcast tech support was good. He indicated that programming continues to grow on all channels with both programs and programming hours up, with three new Spanish-language programs added to the public channel, and that twelve programs are now produced in the SMCTV studio on a regular basis. Also, responding to a public comment at the last SMCTV board meeting, channel 25 is now being programmed from 2 AM to 6 AM with rotating blocks of programs from the previous day's schedule. Sponsorship/underwriting acknowledgements voted in by the board at the last meeting had been taken up by two community program producers. Mr. Cross mentioned that he was a board member of the Santa Maria Valley Historical Society and thanked SMCTV for their support of The Valley Speaks: The Next Step. He also inquired if commercial rentals of the studio had raised any funds. Mr. Sutterfield said there had been some inquiries from the public, but the \$45 per hour rental rate, indexed to other city facilities, was relatively high. Mr. Cross said that underwriting opportunities for access programs were a good option. Mr. van de Kamp asked if the studio rentals were being publicized on the SMCTV channels and Mr. Sutterfield indicated it would be a good idea to do so. Mr. Morrison inquired about funds being available for local advertising, but Mr. Sutterfield indicated that the budget was extremely tight this year, though at one time SMCTV had run a banner advertisement below the TV guide section of the Santa Maria Times. Mr. Morrison mentioned that perhaps one of the local commercial TV stations might be interested in SMCTV material. Mr. Sutterfield indicated that SMCTV community affairs programming might be possible, but that publicizing the SMCTV channels would be a non-starter, as it would be directing viewers away from the commercial channel. Richie Ziatz, a community producer, suggested during public comment that the SMCTV website could be used to solicit donations. Jeff Wynne, a community producer, suggested during public comment that as a fundraiser, viewers could bid at auction for a date with their favorite community producer. Mr. Sutterfield indicated that timeslots on the public channel, in the high-demand hours of six to eleven PM, are in short supply and that he would discuss solutions with the members on methods to keep new program submissions from being shut-out of high demand hours. Mr. Morrison asked about the possibility of going back to quarterly SMCTV board meetings. Mr. Cross indicated he would be in favor of such a move if there was a need for it. Mr. Sutterfield mentioned that special sessions of the board were allowed and that one such meeting had been held in the past. Mr. van de Kamp asked if there were any other public comment speakers. There were no speakers.

6. Adjournment

Mr. van de Kamp adjourned the meeting at 7:09 PM.