

July
17
1966

SM Times

Belmont Will Vote July 25 On CATV Bid

The Belmont City Council again postponed action on awarding a franchise for a community television antenna system last night, but promised that it would take such action at its July 25 meeting.

Mayor Edward Vallerga suggested the continuance in study session, stating that the council has been getting "different answers" to questions concerning CATV from the five different applicants for the franchise.

Councilman Joseph Zucca urged, however, that the council "come to grips" with the matter within two weeks, stating that council members are constantly being bombarded with new information from the applicants.

Councilman Morton Podolsky proposed that the council set a time limit on submission of new material and information by applicants.

Zucca said he would be prepared to arrive at the next council meeting with his preference of applicants listed in order, suggesting that the other council members do the same.

At the request of developers of the Hallmark and Crestmont subdivision, the council continued to its August 8 meeting adoption of an ordinance to rezone Hallmark Unit 3 to R-1, approval of the final map for Hallmark Unit 3, adoption of an ordinance to rezone Crestmont to R-1 and approval of the revised tentative map for Crestmont.

Podolsky and Councilwoman Eve Sterry indicated they will oppose the Crestmont tentative map because of the proposed excavation of 110,000 cubic yards of earth for the project, but agreed to the offer of the developer to take a personal tour of the site.

City Manager Arthur Brandow informed the council that the contract for construction of Benson Way to connect Hallmark Unit 4 with the new Fox School site was to be let today by Hallmark. Construction of the roadway has been a factor in the council approval of the rezoning proposal for the Hallmark property.

In other actions, the council: Rescheduled its July 13 special meeting for discussion of council procedures to July 19 at 7 p.m., and will include discussion of a proposal made last night by Councilman Robert Fitzgerald that the hour-long study session immediately preceding regular council meetings be eliminated as "a waste of time and repetitive."

Endorsed the \$1,292,000 bond election July 26 in the Sequoia Hospital District for operation by the district of a 171 bed convalescent hospital at the site of the former Sunshine Convalescent Hospital.

Scheduled a public hearing for the proposed new zoning ordinance, approved by the Planning Commission last week, for July 26 at 7:30 p.m.

Tribune July 21, 1966

Secret Vote May Decide Belmont TV

By DRU ANDERSON
Tribune Staff Writer

BELMONT — The city council is considering a secret ballot for its crucial decision Monday night on the lush Community Antenna Television franchise.

Action on the award, an estimated \$500,000 a year operation, has been dragging on for months, and the pressure is mounting.

Thus, instead of each councilman coming out vocally with his choice for the award, the word was confirmed at city hall that ballots are being prepared so each council member can write his number one choice and throw it, unsigned, into the hat.

The suggestion was made by Councilman Robert Fitzgerald in a memo to other councilmen. Today, City Manager Art Brandow received a directive by Mayor Edward Vallergera to prepare the ballots.

Brandow said whether the ballots will be used will not be decided until Monday night. He said he feels the suggestion was made to allow each councilman to make his own choice without being influenced by another member's statement.

"There has been a tradition here in Belmont of voice vote," he pointed out, and the first thing he feels the council should do if a ballot is used is to adopt a motion changing the procedure.

The resolution awarding the franchise, however, must show the ayes and noes, as a roll call vote.

5 in Times 2-25-69

Belmont's Long Meet On Television

A small band of dedicated television crewmen stuck it out to the bitter and acrimonious end (12:22 a.m. today) of a Belmont City Council meeting that started at around 8 o'clock last night to get their first tape of a meeting, to be shown tonight at 7 o'clock on Cable TV's own channel 12 for Belmont subscribers.

This is the only city council now televised in the state, as far as is known. But if last night's premiere is an example, high school civics and govern-

ment teachers may want to preview the tapes before recommending them to their less mature charges.

The meeting started at 8:09 p.m. and went fine until 8:15 when Councilwoman Eve Sterry complained about the glare from the one powerful lamp illuminating the council table. She got nowhere with them and Councilman Gerald F. Day, sitting next to her, wound up the meeting wearing his sunglasses.

But things went downhill from there and before it was over the

council had had some more of its acid arguments, mostly over procedure, as usual.

Down toward the end of the 36-item agenda, which the council didn't make it through, Mrs. Sterry and Mayor Morton L. Podolsky got into about their eighth argument of the night and Mrs. Sterry remarked that during her council term, "I have been a very discriminated-against minority."

Podolsky retorted, "Mrs. Sterry, you're suffering from paranoia."

Belmont TV Antenna Is Granted, 4-1

San Mateo Times
July 26, '66

A community antenna television franchise at long last was granted by the Belmont city council last night, but not without one of the councilmen's increasingly frequent personality battles. This one was before a full house at city hall.

Lucky winner of the franchise was Belmont Cable Television Co., owned by Verne A. Laughton of San Carlos, owner of Verne's TV shop in the Carlmont Village Center, and Victor E. Sharar, another Belmont businessman.

Basically the system will provide 19 channels. There will be no installation charge and a \$4.50 per month service charge. The other four systems in the running—Belvision, Belmont CATV, Inc., California Cable Communications and American Cablevision Co.— offered 12 channels, installation charges of from \$9.50 to \$15 and monthly charges from \$3.50 to \$5.

It was noted that this finally should bring an end to television reception troubles in Belmont's hilly areas. City Attorney Kenneth M. Dickerson was instructed to draw up the ordinance for introduction at the August 8 meeting.

The lucrative operation could bring in an estimated half-million dollars a year and has been a hotly sought property by the applicants for months. An ecstatic Laughton said service would begin to subscribers before the end of the year but added he would have a further statement about it in a few days.

Wrung out by the bitter recriminations between Mayor Edward D. Vallergera, Councilman Morton L. Podolsky and Councilwoman Eve Sterry, the council voted 4-1 for Belmont Cable after Councilman Joseph J. Zucca's impassioned and unex-

pected motion that it be awarded to that outfit.

Mrs. Sterry the past few days has emptied her guns at a so-called "secret ballot" proposed by Vallergera to get council opinion on the prospects narrowed down, claiming it was illegal and that she wouldn't vote by that method.

"These were intended to be in poll form and I don't think anyone proposed a secret vote," Vallergera shot back last night. Warming up, the usually soft-spoken mayor glared at her and said, "I'm upset to see such persistent distortion of the truth," and went on to accuse her of "intentional misinterpretation" of his motives.

But the loudest came later after the motion when Podolsky said in his profession as a pediatrician "Three-year-old children interrupt because they don't know better and we forgive them. But what's your reason?"

Louis J. Kozub, 1137 Miramar Terrace, jumped to his feet from the audience and got a big round of applause in his defense of Mrs. Sterry by telling Podolsky and Vallergera "Her views should be heard because she represents the people who voted for her."

Somewhere in all this, Councilman Robert H. Fitzgerald seconded Zucca's motion. He said hiring a consultant to help determine the best franchise as asked by Vallergera wasn't right because "it's ours to decide."

Podolsky called this "the worst possible choice," and moved that it be tabled till the other applicants were heard from but it died for lack of a second. His was the lone 'no' vote against Belmont Cable.

He also produced correspondence of his own purporting to show some applicants were better at paying bills to electrical firms than others. Attempts to allow rebuttal were thwarted. Zucca said he thought they already had been in endless prior presentations and "We have all the protection we need in the ordinance."

BELMONT CABLE TV
REDWOOD CITY TRIBUNE
JULY 26, 1966

Belmont Council Clash:

TV, Secrecy

JUL 26 1966

BELMONT — Kicking and screaming, the city council last night voted a franchise plum — worth some \$500,000 a year — to Belmont Cable Television Co.

The proposed secret ballot plan, which as the Tribune pointed out yesterday would have enabled councilmen to vote their preference without publicity, was not used.

Voting for the winner on Coun-

cilman Joseph Zucca's motion were Mayor Edward Vallerger, Councilwoman Eve Sterry and Councilman Robert Fitzgerald. The short-ender, Dr. Morton Podolsky, gave voluminous reasons for his opinion that this was the worst of the five applicants.

But before the vote was taken, Vallerger lashed out at Mrs. Sterry in a loud exchange that had most of the council and nearly

all of the audience shouting and stomping. Scoring Mrs. Sterry's opposition to the planned secret ballot, Vallerger snapped, "I am disappointed and upset to see such persistent distortion of the truth."

To set the record straight, he said, the ballot idea was intended to be a preliminary poll and the ballots "were prepared at my request" so if the major-

ity of the council "saw fit" they could be used.

"Mrs. Sterry," he said, wheeling in his chair, "You've . . . intentionally and maliciously misstated . . ." the facts.

When the councilwoman began to counter, Dr. Podolsky shouted, "Mrs. Sterry! Mrs. Sterry! Don't interrupt the mayor."

Councilmen Zucca and Fitzge-

JUL 26 1966

rald, sitting at either end of the council group, pensively waited for the main feature of Belmont's "best show in town" to run its course.

Mrs. Sterry replied, "There is no precedent for" the written ballot. "I did not like it . . . it seems the only way I can accomplish changes in procedures is to raise my voice."

During a lull, Zucca roared:

"To heck with the secret ballot" and moved that the council draw up the franchise award ordinance in favor of Belmont Cable Television Company Fitzgerald seconded the motion.

The franchise will be drawn for a 10-year contract with provision for renewal after that period, according to Zucca's motion.

The Belmont Cable proposal

carried a \$4.50 per month service charge with no installation cost to the customers.

Laughton said construction of the CATV system would be under way as soon as possible and will be well under way by the end of the calendar year.

The ordinance which will be drafted in favor of Belmont Cable Television will be introduced for council ratification Aug. 22.

Verne A. Laughton of San Carlos and Victor E. Sharar of Belmont, co-owners of the winning company, were elated with the choice. During a recess called immediately after the vote, Sharar gasped, "I'm weak!"

Laughton clapped his brow and said, "It's been a long year." The CATV franchise race began last August.