

Proceeding #11-75

Gentlemen:

Since filing my Petition to Deny the sale of the local central Florida public television station WMFE, much has happened that makes it even more important that the commissioners deny WMFE's request to transfer their license and sell the station to a subsidiary of Daystar.

Information has become available through the local media which, for many viewers and financial supporters of WMFE/TV, brings into question the credibility and real intent of selling this public television station.

It is important to understand that WMFE/TV has been serving central Florida for some 45 years. During that period, all of the financing has come from viewers' donations and taxpayers' dollars through federal, state and local government grants. In other words, all of the property, buildings, studios, equipment and antennas have been purchased with money from the public.

One of the reasons for the urgency of selling the station, according to the CEO of WMFE, Mr. Jose Fajardo, was that PBS was going to raise the rates charged to WMFE by 37%!

At a press conference held at the PBS convention in Orlando, the CEO and president of PBS, Ms Paula Kerger stated publicly that PBS was not going to raise rates and there was never any discussion with Mr. Fajardo to raise rates, and they (PBS) knew nothing of WMFE's financial difficulties until Mr. Fajardo called and told them the station was being sold. ? SOMEBODY IS NOT TELLING THE TRUTH! Why?

The board of trustees, who are appointed by WMFE's CEO and president, Mr. Jose Fajardo, who incidentally is also an employee of the station, state that they have considered all possible alternatives including contacting financial supporters, but found none they thought would be effective to solve the station's financial difficulties.

The annual report of WMFE/TV-FM for 2010 that was published on their website gave no indication that the station was having any financial difficulties and the figures published showed that it finished the year in the black. ? It is not surprising that so many people are wondering what is going on at WMFE.

The president and CEO of one of the largest non profit foundations in central Florida, which has contributed over \$600,000.00 to the station over the years, when told of the sale was, like many other central Floridians, shocked and could not believe that no effort was made by the station's trustees

and management to bring to the attention of the public WMFE's financial difficulties.

WMFE supporters have searched the files of the local newspapers to see if WMFE had conformed to the FCC's requirements to post public notices of the proposed sale. So far, nobody has been able to find any and the TV station, when questioned, has no comment. ? Why?

Throughout this whole procedure WMFE's CEO has been extremely confident that the sale would go through without any objection from the FCC. Based upon the information above, could it be that WMFE's plan was to keep the sale secret from the public as long as possible and so give WMFE's attorneys the opportunity to rush their request through the FCC? This way, the FCC might approve the license transfer before the public had any idea what was going on. It makes you wonder, doesn't it?

WMFE's attorneys are now stating that because the University of Central Florida (UCF) will take over responsibility for public broadcasting in central Florida the sale should go through without further delay. This is outrageous!

For UCF to become the principal PBS station in central Florida it will mean having to raise substantial sums of money from the public. Why should UCF have to raise these funds when WMFE's property and equipment, which has already been paid for by public funds, is available? If the transfer of WMFE's license to Daystar is denied by the FCC, the public property of WMFE should be handed over to UCF including the transfer of the station's license.

I respectfully request that the commission deny the sale of WMFE and the transfer of its license to Daystar, and advises WMFE to hold public hearings under the auspices of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting or some other appropriate entity. ? This way, the public who have paid for and supported the station over the 45 years will be able to have their say as to what should be done with their station and its property.

Respectfully,  
Michael D. Ashington-Pickett