

## Terry Beacham

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**From:** Holland, Brendan [brendanholland@dwt.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, July 25, 2011 4:40 PM  
**To:** susan.kimmel@fcc.gov; francine.crawford@fcc.gov  
**Cc:** watsjj55@netscape.net; jgormally@wggb.com; Terry Beacham  
**Subject:** Response of WGGB-TV to captioning complaint  
**Attachments:** FCC Answer072511.pdf

Re: Case No. 11-C00307626-FC  
Complaint from Jacqueline Watson re: WGGB-TV

All-

Good afternoon. Attached please find a copy of the response of Gormally Broadcasting Licenses, LLC, licensee of television station WGGB-TV, Springfield, MA, to the closed captioning complaint filed by Jacqueline Watson, Case No. 11-C00307626-FC. This response is being filed via courier through the FCC Secretary's window today. In addition, a paper copy is also being sent to Jacqueline Watson via U.S. Mail.

Regards,  
Brendan

<<FCC Answer072511.pdf>>

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\*PLEASE NOTE OUR NEW SUITE NUMBER AND ZIP CODE



**John Gormally**

**President & Owner**

Gormally Broadcasting, LLC WGGB-TV

ABC 40 / FOX 6

1300 Liberty Street, Springfield, MA 01104

(413) 537-4241 jgormally@wggb.com



July 25, 2011

**VIA HAND DELIVERY and E-MAIL**

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20554

ATTN: Susan L. Kimmel, Deputy Chief  
Disability Rights Office  
Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau

**Re: Response to Official Notice of Informal Complaint  
11-C00307626-FC WGGB-TV (Watson)**

Dear Ms. Kimmel:

By this letter, Gormally Broadcasting Licenses, LLC (“Gormally”), licensee of television station WGGB-TV, Springfield, Massachusetts, hereby responds to the Commission’s Notice of Informal Complaint dated June 24, 2011. The Notice is the result of a Complaint filed by Jacqueline Watson, Case No. 11-C00307626-FC, regarding the programming aired by WGGB-TV on June 1, 2011. The Complaint does not contain any specific material allegations, but simply indicates that the complaint involves the accessibility of emergency information on television closed captioning relating to tornado and severe weather coverage at 4 PM on that date. In response, Gormally provides the following.

On June 1, 2011, portions of the WGGB-TV viewing area were under a severe weather watch and did, in fact, experience severe weather. With the storm approaching the city of Springfield, Massachusetts, the station’s community of license, the decision was made to interrupt regular programming to provide coverage of the weather that afternoon. Given the predicted intensity of the storms, the station felt it was important to cover the event, and the station mobilized quickly to service its viewers.

During the course of the day, the station broadcast a number of reports about the storms. The reports broadcast earlier in the day had visual graphics of a tornado watch, including one broadcast at about 3:05, in which a text crawl was used to alert viewers to the fact that severe thunder and lightning weather warnings had been issued for the station’s viewing area.

At approximately 3:52 PM, the weather had worsened, and the station broke into regular programming with live storm coverage. The live newscast broadcast interrupted the regularly scheduled programming, "*The Doctors*", from 4 PM to 5 PM. The live coverage consisted primarily of two meteorologists on the air tracking the storm and giving weather updates.

The meteorologists also provided information about possible tornado activity related to the storms that were passing through the area. Much of the coverage from 4PM to 5PM consisted of Doppler radar images of the storm, often focusing on areas in the community that were experiencing the most severe weather. The images were broadcast, often covering the full-screen, with specific town names shown on the radar image so that viewers could see where the severe storm cells were at any particular time.

During this unscheduled broadcast of coverage of this storm, all hands in the newsroom, operations, and engineering were busy handling the coverage and fielding calls from viewers. As is often the case with a breaking weather event, the situation unfolded quickly, and the information was continuously changing. During the 4PM to 5PM coverage, staff on the assignment desk and in weather department who previously had generated information for crawls were busy taking calls from viewers and news spotters, and coordinating coverage as best as possible at the time.

The station employs the 'electronic newsroom' method of closed captioning its news. This method of captioning takes scripted portions of a newscast from the teleprompter and encodes it for closed captioning. Live, or unscripted portions of the programming, however, remain uncaptioned, as was the case here with this live, ad-libbed news coverage. During the 4PM to 5PM live coverage, the station did not air any crawls of information, but rather relied on the discussion and information provided by the meteorologists and the radar maps and visuals.

While the audio of the storm coverage was not open captioned or closed captioned, the radar maps visually presented the path of the storm, the areas of greatest intensity, and the progression of the severe weather, providing in text on the radar maps the nearby communities so that viewers could visually see where the storms were in relation to those communities. The station aired these radar maps throughout the coverage.

Following the station's coverage of the severe weather on June 1<sup>st</sup>, the station reformatted its graphic generating equipment to allow for additional visual images and information beyond the radar maps and graphics primarily used during the June 1<sup>st</sup> breaking news. In addition, the station has taken the following measures to further improve its breaking news coverage of such events:

- Met with all news producers and reinforced the rules regarding emergency information and the station's policy of running crawls in such circumstances when closed captioning is not available. Copies of the relevant FCC Rules and

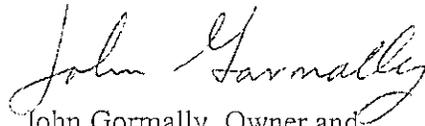
Regulation regarding the requirement to provide captioning during emergencies were redistributed to the staff.

- All directors and operations personnel will be vigilant in making sure graphically presented material is aired in a timely manner, and the staff has been given copies of the relevant FCC Rules and Regulations.
- The news department will not break into programming without providing crawls, static stills, or other visual presentations where captioning is not available.
- In the event that crawls or graphical presentations are not possible, the news studio has a dry erase board available for use if needed to visually convey safety of life and critical details of emergency information.
- Prior to this event, the station has been in the process of obtaining and installing new video production equipment (which is not compatible with the current analog equipment) that will include a new weather system with enhanced capabilities for warning viewers and providing more detailed presentations of weather. It is expected that that new equipment will be operational in 30 to 45 days.

WGGB-TV worked hard to inform the viewing area of the severe weather on June 1<sup>st</sup>, and believes that the quick work of its staff helped warn and inform the community of the storms and quite possibly saved lives of people in the storm's path. In fact, the station has received several calls indicating our coverage was superior to the other stations in providing necessary information. Based on its coverage that day, the station has taken the opportunity to reform some of its operational procedures to do an even better job of covering weather related news in the future.

We appreciate your interest in WGGB-TV and support of the station, and please feel free to contact us with any further questions.

Sincerely,



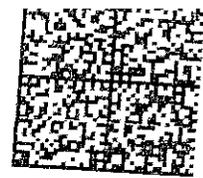
John Gormally, Owner and  
General Manager  
Gormally Broadcasting Licenses,  
LLC

cc: Francine Crawford (*via e-mail*)  
Jacqueline Watson (*via U.S. Mail and e-mail*)



**Gormally Broadcasting, LLC**

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