

**Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In re Application of)	
)	
Faith Enterprises, Inc.)	Facility I.D. No. 20558
)	NAL/Acct. No. MB-2006414140110
For Renewal of License for)	FRN: 0009221169
Station WZOO(AM))	File No. BR-20040308ABK
Asheboro, North Carolina)	

**MEMORANDUM OPINION AND ORDER
AND
NOTICE OF APPARENT LIABILITY FOR FORFEITURE**

Adopted: January 31, 2007

Released: February 22, 2007

By the Chief, Media Bureau:

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Commission has before it the captioned application of Faith Enterprises, Inc. (the "Licensee"), for renewal of its license for Station WZOO(AM), Asheboro, North Carolina (the "Station"). In this *Memorandum Opinion and Order and Notice of Apparent Liability for Forfeiture* ("NAL") issued pursuant to Sections 309(k) and 503(b) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended (the "Act"), and Section 1.80 of the Commission's Rules (the "Rules"),¹ by the Chief, Media Bureau by authority delegated under Section 0.283 of the Rules,² we find that the Licensee apparently willfully violated Section 73.3539 of the Rules,³ by failing to timely file a license renewal application for the Station, and willfully and repeatedly violated Section 301 of the Act⁴ by engaging in the unauthorized operation of the Station after its authorization had expired. Based upon our review of the facts and circumstances before us, we conclude that the Licensee is apparently liable for a monetary forfeiture in the amount of seven thousand dollars (\$7,000), and we grant the captioned WZOO(AM) renewal application and reinstate the call sign for the Station.

II. BACKGROUND

2. Section 73.3539(a) of the Rules requires that applications for renewal of license for broadcast stations must be filed "not later than the first day of the fourth full calendar month prior to the expiration date of the license sought to be renewed."⁵ An application for renewal of WZOO(AM)'s license should have been filed by August 1, 2003, four months prior to the Station's December 1, 2003, license expiration date,⁶ but was not. Accordingly, on March 2, 2004, the staff wrote to the Licensee

¹ 47 U.S.C. §§ 309(k), 503(b); 47 C.F.R. § 1.80.

² See 47 C.F.R. § 0.283.

³ See 47 C.F.R. § 73.3539.

⁴ See 47 U.S.C. § 301.

⁵ 47 C.F.R. § 73.3539(a).

⁶ See 47 C.F.R. §§ 73.1020, 73.3539(a).

indicating that the Station's license had expired and that (1) all authority to operate the Station was terminated; and (2) the Station's call letters were deleted from the Commission's data base. The Licensee was advised that any operation of the Station was then unauthorized and must cease immediately.⁷ Upon receipt of the letter, the Licensee tendered the captioned license renewal application and a request for Special Temporary Authorization ("STA") for WZOO(AM) to continue operating, pending consideration of the application (the "STA Request").⁸ The staff granted that STA request on March 19, 2004.⁹ By the terms of that letter, the STA expired on September 19, 2004. The Licensee timely filed a request for extension of the STA on September 10, 2004, which remains pending. In the original STA request, the Licensee indicated that it had attempted to file a license renewal application for WZOO(AM) without the benefit of counsel on June 30, 2003, more than one month prior to the August 1, 2003, filing deadline. However, the Licensee did not tender its application filing fee until July 21, 2003, three weeks later.¹⁰ Because the Licensee did not timely submit the appropriate application filing fee, the June 20, 2003, renewal application was never properly filed. The Licensee's filing on March 8, 2004, was the only renewal application that was properly filed, because the Licensee also submitted the required filing fee.

III. DISCUSSION

3. *Proposed Forfeiture.* In this case, the Licensee has failed to timely file a license renewal application for WZOO(AM), as required by Section 73.3539(a) of the Rules. Moreover, it continued Station operation for more than three months after its license had expired on December 1, 2003 before filing the STA Request and renewal application. Moreover, the Licensee's explanation for the late filing in its STA Request is that it had made a prior attempt at filing the renewal application, but failed to pay the appropriate application filing fee. This explanation is unavailing. Because the Licensee failed to timely tender its application filing fee, the June 30, 2003, application was never considered as having been filed. The Licensee refiled its renewal application on March 8, 2004, more than three months after the filing deadline, this time complying with the requirement that it submit the appropriate application filing fee.

4. This *NAL* is issued pursuant to Section 503(b)(1)(B) of the Act. Under that provision, any person who is determined by the Commission to have willfully or repeatedly failed to comply with any provision of the Act or any rule, regulation, or order issued by the Commission shall be liable to the United States for a forfeiture penalty.¹¹ Section 312(f)(1) of the Act defines willful as "the conscious and deliberate commission or omission of [any] act, irrespective of any intent to violate" the law.¹² The legislative history to Section 312(f)(1) of the Act clarifies that this definition of willful applies to both Sections 312 and 503(b) of the Act,¹³ and the Commission has so interpreted the term in the Section 503(b) context.¹⁴ Section 312(f)(2) of the Act provides that "[t]he term 'repeated,' when used with

⁷ *Letter to Faith Enterprises, Inc. from Chief, Audio Division, Media Bureau*, Ref. 1800B3-DW (Mar. 2, 2004).

⁸ File No. BLSTA-20040308AEA.

⁹ *Letter to Gary S. Smithwick, Esq., from Chief, Audio Division, Media Bureau*, Ref. 1800B3 (March 19, 2004).

¹⁰ STA Request at 1. The Licensee indicates that it mistakenly believed that, so long as the filing fee was filed by August 1, 2003, the renewal deadline, its renewal application would be timely filed. *Id.*

¹¹ 47 U.S.C. § 503(b)(1)(B). *See also* 47 C.F.R. 1.80(a)(1).

¹² 47 U.S.C. § 312(f)(1).

¹³ *See* H.R. Rep. No. 97-765, 97th Cong. 2d Sess. 51 (1982).

¹⁴ *See Southern California Broadcasting Co.*, Memorandum Opinion and Order, 6 FCC Rcd 4387, 4388 (1991).

reference to the commission or omission of any act, means the commission or omission of such act more than once or, if such commission or omission is continuous, for more than one day.”¹⁵

5. The Commission's *Forfeiture Policy Statement* and Section 1.80(b)(4) of the Rules establish a base forfeiture amount of \$3,000 for the failure to file a required form.¹⁶ The guidelines also specify a base forfeiture amount of \$10,000 for construction and/or operation without an instrument of authorization for the service.¹⁷ In determining the appropriate forfeiture amount, we may adjust the base amount upward or downward by considering the factors enumerated in Section 503(b)(2)(D) of the Act, including “the nature, circumstances, extent and gravity of the violation, and, with respect to the violator, the degree of culpability, any history of prior offenses, ability to pay, and such other matters as justice may require.”¹⁸

6. In this case, the Licensee failed to timely file the WZOO(AM) renewal application and continued Station operations for more than three months before filing an STA request and the appropriate renewal application. Nevertheless, because it had previously been licensed to operate Station WZOO(AM), the latter transgression is not comparable to "pirate" wireless operations, which typically have been subject to forfeitures of approximately \$10,000. Taking into consideration these facts and all of the factors required by Section 503(b)(2)(D) of the Act and the *Forfeiture Policy Statement*, we propose a forfeiture for the full \$3,000 amount for the failure to timely file the renewal application and STA request, but reduce the proposed forfeiture for the unauthorized operation from the \$10,000 base amount to \$4,000.¹⁹ Thus, we propose a forfeiture in the total amount of \$7,000.

7. *License Renewal Application.* In evaluating an application for license renewal, the Commission's decision is governed by Section 309(k) of the Act.²⁰ That section provides that if, upon consideration of the application and pleadings, we find that (1) the station has served the public interest, convenience, and necessity; (2) there have been no serious violations of the Act or the Rules; and (3) there have been no other violations which, taken together, constitute a pattern of abuse, we are to grant the renewal application.²¹ If, however, the licensee fails to meet that standard, the Commission may deny the application – after notice and opportunity for a hearing under Section 309(e) of the Act – or grant the

¹⁵ 47 U.S.C. § 312(f)(2).

¹⁶ See *Forfeiture Policy Statement and Amendment of Section 1.80(b) of the Rules to Incorporate the Forfeiture Guidelines*, Report and Order, 12 FCC Rcd 17087, 17113-15 (1997) ("*Forfeiture Policy Statement*"), *recon. denied*, 15 FCC Rcd 303 (1999); 47 C.F.R. § 1.80(b)(4), note to paragraph (b)(4), Section I.

¹⁷ A broadcast station requires an authorization from the Commission to operate. See 47 U.S.C. § 301.

¹⁸ 47 U.S.C. § 503(b)(2)(D); see also *Forfeiture Policy Statement*, 12 FCC Rcd at 17100-01; 47 C.F.R. § 1.80(b)(4); 47 C.F.R. § 1.80(b)(4), note to paragraph (b)(4), Section II.

¹⁹ See, e.g., *Discussion Radio Incorporated*, Memorandum Opinion and Order, 19 FCC Rcd 7433, 7438 (2004); *Gospel Media, Inc.*, Letter, 19 FCC Rcd 15600 (MB 2004). Although in *Gospel Media*, the Bureau imposed a proposed forfeiture of \$3,000 for unauthorized operation, the unauthorized operation lasted only two weeks and the applicant did not allow its STA for continued operations to expire. The \$4,000 forfeiture proposed here for unauthorized operation is analogous to use of an unauthorized frequency by a land mobile station holding a license for a different frequency. See, e.g., *In the Matter of Dave Mitchell*, Forfeiture Order, 20 FCC Rcd 1366 (EB 2005); *In the Matter of Joselyn Gordon*, Forfeiture Order, 19 FCC Rcd 23557 (EB 2004).

²⁰ 47 U.S.C. § 309(k).

²¹ 47 U.S.C. § 309(k)(1). The renewal standard was amended to read as described by Section 204(a) of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, Pub. L. No. 104-104, 110 Stat. 56 (1996). See *Implementation of Sections 204(a) and 204(c) of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 (Broadcast License Renewal Procedures)*, Order, 11 FCC Rcd 6363 (1996).

application "on terms and conditions that are appropriate, including a renewal for a term less than the maximum otherwise permitted."²²

8. We find that the Licensee's apparent violations of Section 73.3539 of the Rules and Section 301 of the Act do not constitute "serious violations" warranting designation for evidentiary hearing. Moreover, we find no evidence of violations that, when considered together, evidence a pattern of abuse.²³ Further, we find that Station WZOO(AM) served the public interest, convenience, and necessity during the subject license term. We will therefore grant the license renewal application below.

IV. ORDERING CLAUSES

9. Accordingly, IT IS ORDERED, pursuant to Section 503(b) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, and Section 1.80 of the Commission's Rules, that Faith Enterprises, Inc. is hereby NOTIFIED of its APPARENT LIABILITY FOR FORFEITURE in the amount of seven thousand dollars (\$7,000) for its apparent willful violation of Section 73.3539 of the Commission's Rules and willful and repeated violation of Section 301 of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended.

10. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, pursuant to Section 1.80 of the Commission's Rules, that, within thirty (30) days of the release date of this *NAL*, Faith Enterprises, Inc. SHALL PAY the full amount of the proposed forfeiture or SHALL FILE a written statement seeking reduction or cancellation of the proposed forfeiture.

11. Payment of the proposed forfeiture must be made by check or similar instrument, payable to the order of the Federal Communications Commission. The payment must include the *NAL*/Acct. No. and FRN No. referenced above. Payment by check or money order may be mailed to Federal Communications Commission, at P.O. Box 358340, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15251-8340. Payment by overnight mail may be sent to Mellon Bank/LB 358340, 500 Ross Street, Room 1540670, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15251. Payment by wire transfer may be made to ABA Number 043000261, receiving bank Mellon Bank, and account number 911-6106.

12. The response, if any, must be mailed to Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission, 445 12th Street, S.W., Washington D.C. 20554, ATTN: Peter H. Doyle, Chief, Audio Division, Media Bureau, and MUST INCLUDE the *NAL*/Acct. No. referenced above.

13. The Commission will not consider reducing or canceling a forfeiture in response to a claim of inability to pay unless the respondent submits: (1) federal tax returns for the most recent three-year period; (2) financial statements prepared according to generally accepted accounting practices ("GAAP"); or (3) some other reliable and objective documentation that accurately reflects the respondent's current financial status. Any claim of inability to pay must specifically identify the basis for the claim by reference to the financial documentation submitted.

²² 47 U.S.C. §§ 309(k)(2), 309(k)(3).

²³ For example, we do not find here that the Licensee's Station operation "was conducted in an exceedingly careless, inept and negligent manner and that the Licensee is either incapable of correcting or unwilling to correct the operating deficiencies." *See Heart of the Black Hills Stations*, Decision, 32 FCC 2d 196, 198 (1971). Nor do we find on the record here that "the number, nature and extent" of the violations indicate that "the licensee cannot be relied upon to operate [the station] in the future in accordance with the requirements of its licenses and the Commission's Rules." *Heart of the Black Hills Stations*, 32 FCC 2d at 200. *See also Center for Study and Application of Black Economic Development*, Hearing Designation Order, 6 FCC Rcd 4622 (1991), *Calvary Educational Broadcasting Network, Inc.*, Hearing Designation Order, 7 FCC Rcd 4037 (1992).

14. Requests for full payment of the forfeiture proposed in this *NAL* under the installment plan should be sent to: Associate Managing Director-Financial Operations, 445 12th Street, S.W., Room 1-A625, Washington, D.C. 20554.²⁴

15. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Call Sign WZOO(AM) IS REINSTATED.

16. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, pursuant to Section 309(k) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, that the license renewal application of Faith Enterprises, Inc. for Station WZOO(AM), Asheboro, North Carolina (File No. BR-20040308ABK) IS GRANTED.

17. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that a copy of this *NAL* shall be sent, by First Class and Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested, to Faith Enterprises, Inc., P.O. Box 460, Asheboro, North Carolina 27204.

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Monica Shah Desai
Chief, Media Bureau

²⁴ See 47 C.F.R. § 1.1914.