

2-9-21

### CATV Board Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Donna Girot, Peg Allen, Julia Griffin, Sharon Racusin, Barbara Krinitz, Dan Maxwell Crosby, Tracy Hutchins

#### Minutes from last meeting approved.

#### 2020 Budget Recap with 2021 Budget Comments

- Short on staff - Donna hired an all around office person
- Might need Hartford & Norwich Town Meeting petition for contributions changes.
- Despite the pandemic revenue losses, CATV did not have to dip into our savings to conduct business. In fact we have some year end income to put toward 2021 capital expenses, and possibly to apply toward our expected 2021 revenue shortage.
- We secured a \$20,000 SBA low interest "just in case" loan to prevent cash flow stress. Our 2021 goal is to payback half of this note in 2021 if possible.
- We secured a \$41,500 SBA PPP loan & \$10,000 EIDL loan which we are asking the SBA to turn into a grant in 2021. It has moved from our banker, Mascoma, to the SBA. The SBA has 90 days to approve or reject. Tracy is a pro at the PPP loans. Donna wanted to reapply for 2021 money but we do not meet the criteria by a few % points of lost revenue for a quarter in 2021. Because of franchise fee quarterly payments, our revenue losses were gradual enough to not secure additional PPP funding.
- We lost \$67,000 of income when Lebanon pulled half of their franchise fees which was not expected in 2020. Originally the city said that they would pull revenue starting 2021. So the 2020 loss was not expected when the budget was built.
- We gathered 3,800 local email addresses, redesigned the website as a more functional tool, and launched a weekly show highlight e-newsletter.
- 2021 budget needs to raise \$55k in donations and sponsorships. A tall order given our lack of fundraising experience, donor friends and the state of commercial business investing in an on-air sponsorship program.
- We secured a new office and studio location at HACTC, who is willing to be a benefactor.
- We secured a rental in the Tip Top building, so we did not have to move our head end transmission equipment.
- 2021 sees a TipTop security cost increase, and insurance cost increase because of child abuse risk insurance needed to be in HACTC.
- Each VT town gave us their entire appropriation commitment in 2020 instead of half which was anticipated. The second half had been expected in 2021.
- Contrary to what was expected, Comcast & VTel decided not to deduct any \$s from our 2020 franchise fees for in-kind services although the FCC gave them permission to do so.
- Secured a 2021 contract with Lebanon School District (because the city walked away from their contract). Put Donna in a position to create a price list.

- The franchise fees pay for local government meetings. Donna uses budget to decide whether or not we can add meetings, and she tries to apply equity. Some years, towns need more help shooting than others.
- We have a talented volunteer who has participated in our summer camps and workshops and should be hired as the spring intern. She is 15 years old and needs to get approval from the state to start employment. Donna doesn't want to lose the student. Not only talented but then we can train and keep employee for at least two years while in high school. Also this is a solid marketing story.

**Julia made a motion to approve the 2021 budget. Tracy seconded it. Budget passed.**

- Zoom subscription cost for large meetings up to 5,000 attendees is \$2500 for a MONTHLY subscription. To buy it, the town of Hartford coordinated with two other groups to pay for this subscription, and Donna bought the subscription. Donna asked Zoom for a better deal for non-profits and got it \$2499 for the YEAR. The first zoom for Hartford's (meet the candidates).
- Daybreak - Aggregation tool now posting about CATV. CATV newsletter going to about 3500 people, average of 22% are opening and reading. People are looking. Donations are coming in but low.
- New studio improvements made So far: Lighting, Greenscreen. HATAC student welders helped do some work as a project for school.
- Still need Cable Access TV in the CATV office location. The wiring from the GMP pole to the office is the problem.
- Government meetings have a pulsing light (need HD upgrade perhaps) and the audio from these meetings also bleed into the other channel (which is still a mystery). Systematically taking steps to figure out where the tech gremlins are. Only in Comcast transmission. Vtel transmission is ok. Currently working with the satellite company to see if the transmission is a problem between satellite feed and comcast.
- VAN and Comcast has created a contract template. We are the only station (out of the coalition) that doesn't ask for capital (\$1200-1300 / year or 0.5%). This would amount to an assessment which will tax the users of the service. Very difficult to obtain this extra money. It is an arduous process and needs to go before the PUC. Donna is hoping to sign the contract (with Comcast) and then follow up with the process. Julia will try to help get an answer.
- Donna is leaving her position as ED for CATV. Search: Do we want a fundraiser or a techy? Include staff in the search committee if they are interested. Donna will assist with the transition when a new ED is hired and will continue to write the newsletter until mid May.
- Do we need a full time ED? Maybe 2/3 (fundraising, Relationship building), and technical.

Adjourned 7:00