PROPOSAL

MCCI – MCTV Operational Plan February, 2016

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About MCTV and the MCCI Board

MCTV is a solid, local Public Access station with strong community support, an active and productive volunteer base and a record of achievement that goes well beyond recording local meetings, including leadership in regional collaborations and support of local public access start-ups in neighboring communities.

MCTV has strong, experienced, corporate leadership: the MCCI board of directors has many years of cumulative leadership experience spanning non-profit, government and community boards, committees and organizations, and years of successful local business activity. As the governing body of MCTV, we experience the same sorts of challenges that are common to any small non-profit or volunteer committee: trying to increase community participation from the board level and down, improving services, and keeping to a budget!

MCTV has been through multiple strategic reorganizations and staff reconfigurations all the while increasing meeting coverage and local productions. See our **Current Operational Plan** on the next page.

MCCI is proud of the support that we have enjoyed – and continue to enjoy – from other local organizations, and are proud of the support that we've been able to provide, in return, and that we continue to provide as a core organizational value in the course of our daily operations.

The MCCI Board of Directors

Michael Langknecht, president   Veronica Phaneuf, treasurer

Dana Faldasz, clerk   Michael Muller

MCTV Current Operational Plan

Based on the Town of Montague's priority of increasing public participation with its Public Access station, MCTV, the staff and board of MCCI propose this operational plan to increase the local programming on Channel 17; to change the strategy for outreach to increase community engagement and participation and to invigorate our board development; and to explain how this affects the budget.

In this Plan we also discuss access to programming, our future equipment purchases and technical plans for the station and Town Hall.

Local Programming

Seeing that there has been a slow but steady decrease in the number of residents willing to come into the station and borrow cameras to video local events and broadcast them on public access, including existing long-time producers, in January, 2015, MCTV started contracting a group of vetted video technicians (at $10/hr), to produce videos of local events in town.

With the passing of our Technical Coordinator, MCCI decided to eliminate his high-level position in favor of multiple support positions (at $10/hr), focused on (a) receiving the video footage generated by the station's contracted camera people and editing / titling the footage, (b) porting it over to the broadcast server and scheduling its cablecast, (c) uploading that content to our online channel at Vimeo and managing the library contained there, and (d) creating the PSA slides.

This is a new operational model for public access stations. Traditionally, public access programming was created on a strictly volunteer basis: PEG access providers provided the camera, etc., and volunteers created the content that was important to them. As the only place the public could go to get access to high quality video equipment and to broadcast their own TV shows and make their views known, getting a slot in the schedule was coveted. Now there's YouTube, Vimeo, Facebook, and Twitter and every smart phone, tablet and digital camera is an HD video recorder. Public access is no longer the only game in town – and is certainly not the most convenient game in town – which means that volunteerism has plummeted at the same time the need for Public Access has, arguably, increased. In response, we've redefined what it means to provide access to mass media by including operators along with the video equipment. All the public need do now is get in front of the camera and speak their mind ("Lily of the Valley"), or simply point us in the direction of important events and content and let us do the driving (pipeline hearings, committee meetings, Memorial Day ceremonies).

 And the new model is working. At present, MCTV staff keeps an eye out for compelling, important or interesting local events, fields requests from community members and from local government boards and committees (in keeping with our new agreement with the Town of Montague) and calls on the pool of video techs to go out and capture them. We now have a sharp increase of local programming which, of course, still includes the material from old-school, independent volunteer producers.

Outreach

MCCI's original outreach vision was to develop a large and diverse Board of Directors that would include members from each village and from a wide variety of other stakeholder groups. It was our view that broad representation would lead to a stronger sense of ownership and to greater levels of participation. Based on the broad-based and passionate community support for returning local access to a local organization, we assumed that populating such a Board would be easily achievable. We were wrong. After years of trying to fit outreach into the role of our smaller Board and our existing staff, we created the Outreach Coordinator position to tackle the challenge head on, but the results – some of which were great successes in their own right – could not justify the cost of the position.

As we analyze the breakdown of production costs under the new operating model and determine the production capacity of the station, MCCI will develop mechanisms for public input that will allow the community- in its full diversity of identity, opinion and belief- regular participation in the process of determining what programming is produced with our in-house production capacity. This will help us to achieve broad community representation in our local content and will encourage participation by greatly simplifying the process through which individuals can become more directly engaged with the "storytelling."

We will continue to maintain a weekly series of articles about the happenings at the station, any new productions and producers, as well as articles that discuss the video industry in general. These articles are posted to the MCTV website, local websites and social media, emailed to all subscribers of the station, and published in the Montague Reporter as a weekly column. We will also develop short "How To" videos to be played on MCTV to familiarize potential producers with the production process and describe the resources and support available to them at MCTV. And, of course, our Station Manager will continue to work with the schools and other institutional participant. Also, as finances permit, we will engage in surveys and other outreach projects of scale (like town-wide mailings).

Board Development

Another key element of outreach for MCCI is board development. With the signing of a new contract, our highest outreach priority will be bringing on new board members. To make membership more appealing to prospective participants, we have already taken steps to cut back on the number of mandatory meetings. With fewer meetings, we are looking at ways to make each meeting more of an event, as it were, to increase interest in attendance for board members and community members, alike.

We have created an "Aide de Camp (de Board)" position which supports the board in keeping on track with our reporting requirements, our agendas and minutes, the scheduling and posting of meetings, and with special projects like developing report templates or reviewing our policy manual – the things that keep board members up at night. We also intend to employ the outreach devices described above to inform prospects of what the board membership "process" is and generate interest in participation.

The Budget Narrative

In changing our operational model, we have changed the way we operate from day to day.

From the positions that were eliminated, we were able to reallocate roughly 35,000 (along with the corresponding taxes, benefits, etc., which are accounted for in another line item). That money has been reallocated across a number of positions.

- Our video techs have been budgeted at $20,000. That money pays for production and post-production work (camera operators, editors, etc) and assistance with station operations (programming the server and the community calendar, etc.).
- We have budgeted $6,000 to increase the hours of the station manager to 36hrs a week from 30 hours to cover the additional supervisory duties accompanying the new operational plan and to more accurately reflect the typical workload.
- We have budgeted $5000 for the Aide de Camp position which assists the Board in our reporting; our record keeping; and contractual compliance (which is already proving to be a fabulous allocation of resources).
- We have budgeted $3000 for the ongoing weekly articles for our outreach program.
- In addition, with $12,500 coming each year for capital/equipment expenses from the license renewal, we can reallocate up to $5,000 from our voted operating budget (for equipment purchases and repairs) to fund special outreach projects (like surveys or town-wide mailings) and to fund our board events.

Access to New and Old Programs

Unlike in the past, today's television watchers have many viewing options, including such on-demand online services as Netflix and Hulu, which can be watched on a tablet mobile device while sitting in bed or even on a bus. Even individual television network such as NBC and HBO have gotten on the bandwagon and are now making their shows available in an archival format, where entire seasons can be "binge-watched" in one evening.

Thankfully, there are now low-cost online options for public access TV stations, such as setting up a "channel" account on Vimeo.com. MCTV started using that service in January of 2012 and currently has over 800 programs posted, which can be watched on demand, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, through our website, MontagueTV.org. People can even do searches to find specific programs.

Future Equipment Purchases

Lastly, MCTV plans to upgrade much of its equipment in the next few years, adding more digital capabilities and larger storage for the increased content expected from the steps outlined above. We plan to buy a newer field-switcher and a better audio mixer for Town Meeting and other field shoots.

Detailed plans are included in the section **MCTV Equipment Plans**.

Future Facilities

MCCI is still interested in purchasing the old Cumberland Farms building which would be an excellent fit for our organizational needs but it is not clear that this building is or will be available.   Since the one thing that is clear is that our current facility is inadequate for our needs, we will undertake a methodical search process for an alternative.

Cable Advisory Committee, Reports and Reviews

MCCI looks forward to getting back to a quarterly schedule with the CAC and requests that they attend at least one of our MCCI board meetings per quarter. This will ensure we stay on track, and receive valued feedback regarding our operation. Having such frequent interactions will also ensure we stay on schedule with our annual reviews.

MCTV Equipment Plans

Town Hall Overhaul (Selectboard Room-2ⁿᵈ floor)

Upgrade equipment in Town Hall second floor Selectboard meeting room.	Upgrade to HD Robo Cams.	Existing cameras are analog and cameras are antiquated and becoming finicky. Current Mics are wired and banging on table is transferred to Mics and paper shufflling and tapping is audible.
	Research Wireless voice activated mics to reduce ambient noise.	New Anycast or Tricast can be used here as live mixer. It would be preferable to build a stand-alone system that is turn-key and requires minimal setup/breakdown.
Explore Option of Stand Alone System	Research feasibility of suspending audio from ceiling.	Explore equipment options

Broadcast Server:

Update to Tightrope Broadcast Server	Capital budget Plan	One channel $12,000 Overhauling the current model is not a cost effective solution. Tightrope Server is not only a cost effective solution but comes with added benefit of being able to broadcast in Analog or SDI, and ingest and play a variety of file formats (mpeg, mpeg4, Quicktime, AVI, etc) This eliminates costly conversion time for both staff and public. Another server required if we designate channel 15 to Government Programming.

Tightrope Digital Signage Server

Replace Tightrope Digital Signage Server	Allocate monies to cover replacement Cost of Signage Server purchased in 2009.	Each year an assessment can be made about existing server integrity - this influences timing of replacement

Road Mixer (Anycast, Tricaster)

$16,000

Replace the Road Mixer	Plan to replace/ Upgrade	Current All in one mixer (Sony Anycast) Analog and was purchased in 2008. This model cannot be upgraded to HD. It is getting a lot of wear and tear and is integral to the broadcast of government meetings both at the town hall and Town Meetings from the High School. Currently we have to down convert any signal coming from our HD cameras before interface. It would be nice to utilize the full capability of the Canon HD cameras that we have purchased and also eliminate possible weak spot in technology loop.

Overview of Previous MCTV Performance

Since moving to a system for creating and tracking equipment and facility reservations, MCTV has been able to create usage reports. Below you can see that we are on an upswing in equipment usage, which, with the exception of summer 2014, has been increasing since 2011. The first quarter of 2016 is not over, yet.

Quarter	Reservations	Facility
2010-1	33	
2010-2	27	
2010-3	23	
2010-4	12	
2011-1	20	
2011-2	12	
2011-3	11	
2011-4	15	
2011-1	16	
2012-2	31	
2012-3	30	
2012-4	21	
2013-1	27	
2013-2	25	
2013-3	25	
2013-4	18	
2014-1	26	
2014-2	39	
2014-3	18	
2014-4	45	
2015-1	49	29
2015-2	77	45
2015-3	42	41
2015-4	50	26
2016-1	34	29