



Director Report August 2020

Staffing

- Since mid-July, we have been maintaining regular open hours of Monday – Friday, 12-5, staffing the facility one at a time.
- I have attempted to take a week's vacation but have been unsuccessful. I was, however, able to take two days during the week of July 20th and another three days during the week of August 10th.
- Eric was on vacation during week of August 3rd.

Production & Programming

- Live streaming / broadcasting: We need to be looking for more opportunities & reach out to Towns, schools.
- Zoom: we now have 2 accounts, & using them regularly, supporting the various Towns with government meetings.
- Studio: back in use – slowly but surely. We have recorded on average 1 show per week over the last month in studio

Outreach & Marketing

- Okemo Valley Magazine: We were selected to be featured in the Fall / Winter edition. The magazine is published by the Chamber (formerly Okemo Resort). The catch, which I later found out, was that we were expected to write the article ourselves. This is a great opportunity for us, to tell our story, especially now with so much going on in the ways we have adapted, but it was a challenge to find the time to give it the attention it needed, with so many other things going on. The editor offered to help (she is the President of the Board of Brattleboro Community TV). I submitted a draft earlier this week and we are nearing completion. It is due out in mid-October.
- Advisory Committee: At the Annual Meeting in June, the Nominating & Elections Committee recommended that the Board add an to have an informal advisory committee to help support the Board. Some names were mentioned as possibilities for this committee. I think the timing is good to act on this, perhaps starting with Outreach & Marketing efforts.
- Survey: Last month, I mentioned the need for a new community-wide survey. I think the best approach is to do this as part of a new strategic plan, and to include both the Board and the advisory committee in that process
- School Outreach: We are having a conversation with TRSU about handling the recording of remote school board meetings (via Zoom). There have been some issues with the recordings and delays in getting them. It is sounding like we will be taking over the recording of the meetings for them, which will make things easier for everyone. There is a role for us to play, supporting the Towns, schools, community organizations, & others with media & technology. Along these lines, we need to see what we could be doing to support distance learning. What kinds of resources can we allocate and what interest level would there be with the SU & schools? We also need to revisit the

conversations from this past Spring, re: how we can assist & support the media archives of Black River HS after its closure.

- Facebook Page: Our Page is still “stuck” in a cycle of unwarranted restrictions for supposed (and unexplained) policy violations. I have had several people look into this, some with high-level experience in social media (including a former Facebook employee), none of whom could find answers to the problem. At this point, there is too much going on that needs immediate attention to give this the close enough look it needs. So I have chosen to ride it out for now and will revisit when things calm down a bit.

Administrative / Financial

- VTel: We received the 2020 1st Quarter franchise fee payment from VTel. It was due by May 15th and should have been accounted for in the FY2020 budget, but in fact wasn’t received until late July, and so is accounted for in this year’s (FY21) budget. The 2ⁿ quarter payment was due by August 15th but hasn’t yet been received. I will follow up again next week, if it still has not been received.
- Legislative Work: The \$466K in COVID relief funds that was earmarked for Vermont Access Network (VAN)- and for which all VAN members are eligible- is being broken into 2 rounds (Round 1 is from mid-March, when the state of emergency / “stay home” order went into effect through June 30th; Round 2 is July 1 – December 31st). Claims, along with supporting documentation, are due on Monday 8/24. There is a standardized spreadsheet that was created by VAN, with a section for each member to complete. I am working on ours this week. It looks like our claim will be approx. \$5000 for this round. The payroll figures for this round are based on estimates, since it is all back dated to March. I am now tracking everyone’s hours by differentiating between COVID & remote work vs other work.
- Statewide Channel: VAN has been laying some groundwork for a forthcoming statewide channel (on Comcast, but also to include online platforms). This is a continuation / extension of the collaborative work among VAN & building a stronger statewide identity & presence.
- Comcast Contract: Our contract expired 3 years ago; we are not alone – many other stations in the State have been operating on expired contracts. Due to the Comcast v Vermont legal proceedings, Comcast was simply recognizing the old / expired contracts. With the settlement last year, Comcast is ready to move forward with contract renewals. VAN & Comcast are negotiating on a statewide template, for all stations. This would simplify & streamline the process for all.
- Executive Director contract: This should be reviewed & updated. I recommend a meeting with the Personnel Committee to go over this.