



Director Report December 2020

Production & Programming

- Remote & Hybrid Meetings: As virtual (remote) meetings and events have become the norm, there has been increasing interest in offering a hybrid platform ([part in-person, part remote]). Even in a post-pandemic world, I expect that there will continue to be hybrid meetings (and likely still some full-on remote meetings). The feedback I've been hearing is that people like to have the option of participating in a meeting or event from home. These realities are driving new ways of doing things, and new equipment needs. We are developing some new workflows around remote and hybrid productions. Our "guinea pig" at the moment is the Mount Holly Selectboard. As I reported last month, we have been experimenting with the hybrid format there. The Town has given us an additional one-time contribution (\$500) to support our effort in this area. My plan is to use that money towards some of the new equipment so that we can produce these meetings with one staff person. At present, it takes two of us to make it all happen. And so, for starters, I have purchased a web camera, a small / basic portable video switcher, and some peripheral equipment. We will see how that goes.
- Town Meeting Day: Due to the pandemic, Towns throughout the State will be handling it differently this year – we are reaching out to each Town is planning to do in our area and offer to work with them to support with any tech / media needs
- Lake Rescue Milfoil project: The Lake Rescue Association seems pleased with the results of the video that we produced with them.
- FY20 Programming Data: I have a report to share with you, which was generated for our annual report

Outreach & Marketing / Fundraising

- Marketing Contract Work: Wendy Reynolds, a new-ish Proctorsville resident and co-owner of Red Vault Productions, is now handling our weekly program highlight marketing. The first one is scheduled to go out tomorrow!
- Work-study: The Mill River HS student who was starting to volunteer as a work-study, is not able to continue. There was too much on her plate.
- BR Independent School: I have continued discussions with Kendra Rickerby, the head of school, and Trevor Barlow, the Executive Director of black River Innovation Campus. There is a lot of potential through this partnership, and we've discussed several different possibilities. The focus right now is to start working on shorter-term projects in the immediate future, to help build that partnership. Kendra has drafted an MOU for us, in hopes we will sign on to solidify this partnership, as the school seeks its accreditation and other means of support.

Equipment & Technical

- Streaming: The parts for the 2 streaming servers (for live streaming our 2 TV channels over the internet) are being ordered ASAP. As I mentioned last month, I hired a college student from Chester, Marley Greenslet, to do this work. It's been going slower than I had hoped, but it sounds like it's getting there. And he certainly brings with him expertise in this area.

Administrative / Financial

- Operations: As of 2 weeks ago, we are once again closed down to the public. Equipment loans and other services are available by appointment. I have been working on site at the station most days, but still have been doing a bit of remote work. Eric & Fred are working remotely just about exclusively. We currently do not have a policy on doing in person production work, so I've been addressing it on a case-by-case basis. As the cases of infection continue to rise around us and the guidance from the State and health officials is to avoid indoor gatherings, that may need to change. So far, with the in-person productions that we've doing over the last couple of months (Andover Selectboard, Plymouth Selectboard & Planning, Mt. Holly Selectboard), we've been able to practice physical distancing, and masks are being worn by most (though certainly not all). This deserves some serious attention.
- PEG Funding Study: Last month, I indicated that the State-funded "PEG Access Study" was underway and that a consultant / analyst had been hired & was scheduling interviews with each access station. Due to a change in the structure of that person's contract, the individual interviews are no longer happening. Instead, data is being collected by VAN. The consultant's main charge is to identify a viable new alternative (broadband-based) source of funding while also making recommendations on new cost efficiencies. The latter charge ties in with the exploratory work that I have been doing over the last 2+ years with regional colleagues.
- Comcast Contract Renewal: Now that Comcast & VAN have come to an agreement on a statewide template for contracts and seeing that our contact with Comcast is now 3 years expired, I have been contacted by Melissa Pierce, the VT head of Regulatory Affairs. She has presented us with the new proposed contract, using that template. It will be forwarded to the Board for review.
- VTel Payments: The most recent quarterly payment was due from VTel on November 15th. As with the prior payments, it was late. On behalf of all of the affected stations (there are 6 of us contracted with VTel), I have been the point person in communication with VTel. Once I contacted them about this, the payments were submitted.
- Annual Report & 990s: Our Annual Report was due at the end of November. However, I have been delayed in getting it submitted. The report requires the most recent tax returns (Form 990) as part of the financial report. I wanted to wait to get them in hand. What I didn't realize a month ago was that an extension was being filed by our accountant's office (Janice Graham CPA). It was due Nov. 15th and the extension gives us to May 15th. However, they are now complete – I just received it yesterday. It will be e-filed next week. Treasurer Cama is reviewing prior to it being submitted. Now the Annual Report can be completed as well.