



Administrative

- Low Power FM Application: After receiving some enthusiastic responses to our survey, I decided it was worth our while to submit an application for a Low Power FM (LPFM) community radio license. The deadline is this week; the application is being completed with the help of Prometheus Radio Project. One of the requirements is a letter of “reasonable assurance” from a property owner who will consider allowing the use of their property for the antenna. In the interest of time, the path of least resistance was to seek that from the Town. Municipal Manager Brendan McNamara is supportive of the idea of a radio station and siting the antenna on the roof of our building. The actual physical location can be changed at a later date.
- Strategic Planning / Board Retreat: The Board decided at the last meeting to hold the new strategic planning “retreat” in the studio on January 16th, with a dinner provided. The details need to be finalized for this, and we might consider holding it instead off premises.
- Staff Holiday Outing: I am taking staff out for a holiday gathering this Friday, starting at 5pm, at Game Bird in Ludlow. It is also Will’s last day of work for us. This is an open invitation to Board members as well, but please let me know by Wednesday so I can give Game Bird a final number. I am covering the tab for this outing. I have decided that is how I will use my bonus that the Board generously provided me – by paying it forward.

Production

- School Programming: We have several school holiday concerts being recorded: Mount Holly, & GMUHS concerts are being covered by staff and Paula VanGuilder has volunteered to record the one in Cavendish.
- Staff Productions: Aside from the holiday concerts (and the gov. meetings) , we staff have been working on a handful of other productions. I recorded the book talk at the Fletcher Memorial Library last Friday with local author Jon Clinch. Peter is producing a series of short segments tentatively called “Mocktails with Abby”, featuring Abby Lechthaler from Downtown Grocery mixing non-alcoholic concoctions. Rebekah & I are helping him out with the production, so it will be a team effort. We will be doing this on Friday afternoon, before our holiday party. We have been hired again to provide AV services for the hybrid annual meeting of the Salt Ash Homeowners Association. That is taking place December 28 at the golf course.
- Other Productions: Librarians Amy McMullen & Kata Welch each recorded their holiday versions of “Story Time” readings recently. Claire has been cranking out her behind the scenes “vlog” episodes from the Yoh Theatre at Woodstock Union HS (where she works). Students at Expeditionary School at Black River have continued to work on creating different community videos.

Community Engagement

- FOLA Film Festival Follow Up: We need a plan for our participation in the February 15th film screening event.
- Membership Drive: We have received some new membership contributions, including a donation from Expeditionary School at Black River.

- General Donation: I recorded a Celebration of Life ceremony for Ralph Pace's wife, Janet. Ralph was a longtime producer and host of studio shows (he hosted well over 300 episodes over the span of 15 years), and is still doing it, albeit on a limited basis. He was the recipient of the Okemo Valley TV "Lifetime Achievement" award in 2017. He gave me a donation for recording Janet's Celebration of Life, which I shared with the station.
- Underwriting: We have our first underwriter for 2024: Lisa & Bob have signed up on behalf of their vacation house rental business. Thank you, Lisa & Bob! This got me to thinking of a whole segment of the business community that we may have been missing until now – a popular business segment at that. Our 2023 underwriters need to be contacted to gauge their interest in renewing for 2024, and we also need to reach out to new prospects.
- Social Media & Marketing Work: Between Abby's recent vacation schedule, other workloads, and the growth of her business, she has been finding herself not able to meet our needs, as far as all of the tasks on which we were hoping to have her work. She is considering bringing on some extra help to work with us; we will see how it goes, but most likely we will need to maintain some flexibility and manage our expectations with the workloads we are looking to outsource.
- E-News: One regular focus of work for Abby has been with the weekly e-news. She helped create an updated format and new template. We tag team on most of the editions, which have been getting positive responses. While our subscription list has not grown much (it still hovers just a little over 300), our open rate is consistently near 50%.
- Grant Writing: After my general call out looking for grant writers, Wendell helped to generate some interest. He has put me in touch with two different potential options.
- Survey: As mentioned above, the survey we distributed (re: LPFM community radio) yielded some positive responses. If nothing else, it generated some buzz and has been a conversation starter. We've had about 50 responses so far, with some more still trickling in.
- Town Appropriation Requests: We have submitted requests to Ludlow, Plymouth, Cavendish, & Andover.

Equipment / Buildings & Grounds

- New Laptop: We have received the new MacBook Pro and have put it into use.
- Ludlow Auditorium Project: We are still waiting to hear from the Town on a response to our proposal (with FOLA), outlining the needs to be addressed to finish the AV system once & for all. I am not sure where that stands. There is a lot of equipment (which equals money spent) that has been sitting dormant for too long. All the while, we have been putting together a sub-optimal patch-worked system for the meetings & events taking place at Town Hall. I am hopeful that a change for the better is in the works.
- Plymouth Town Office re-installation: With the renovations in the Town Office building complete, the AV system that was purchased & installed last year (and then uninstalled and moved into storage), has been re-installed. The installer set the hardware back up in place, ran the cables, terminated the connections, etc., but did not set up the equipment & software to be functional. That part was to us, but the first two attempts at using the system were not very successful. I put in some hours over the last week to get it straightened out. We are close. I will probably need to spend another half-day over there before the next meeting to finish the configurations.