



Director Report October 2024

Administrative

- Staffing Changes: Peter has stepped down from the role he has held over the last year and a half. He had been our regular part-time Producer & Editor, covering meetings & community events, and helping with the post-production workflow. He will now be a fill-in person, working approximately 2-3 nights per month while also helping out with the after school program in Cavendish (more on that below). Sarah Devereux is taking over more of the regular work that Peter was doing. She had been our “fill in” person, and is now moving into a more regular role.
- Finance: Janice Graham’s office will be working on our tax return preparation (Form 990), which is due November 15th. I need to get our bank statements & other financials to her, which I will do this week.
- Strategic Planning: I am not sure where this stands, but it seems like we may need to start the process from scratch. With all of the changes going on, it would behoove us as an organization to establish a new 5-year plan, including clear goals with measurable outcomes. As Newt pointed out a while back, there is an opportunity through the VT Community Foundation to apply for a grant to assist with this effort.
- Policies & Procedures: We still need to have the Board do second readings of the 1st two policies (Statement of Purpose & Corporate Structure), and consider them for adoption, followed by a first reading of the Membership policy. Next up (in November), we will have an updated Programming & Content Distribution policy for your review.
- Professional Development: Rebekah has been practicing her aerial camera work with our drone and has been shooting some very nice video with it. I have offered using some of our professional development money to pay for her to get licensed (FAA Class 107). Here is one of the longer-form videos she has recently made: <https://okemovalley.tv/fall-flight-over-ludlow>

Black River Radio

- Report: You can find a report from the advisory committee [here](#), which includes updates (as of 9/18) as well as a projected timeline
- Site Visits: I recently went on site visits to two potential antenna / transmitter locations with Carmine Iannace. One was at Okemo Mountain Resort, where we met with Executive Assistant Diane DePalma Vullo, Terrain Maintenance Manager Kyle Kostura, and Parks & Halfpipe Supervisor Devon McCluskey. We looked at a location at the bottom of the park & pipe area, where there is a shop & maintenance shed. They were very supportive of working with us and indicated that they wanted to make it happen. We now have a letter from Okemo’s Senior Director of Operations, Eb Kinney, granting us permission to erect an antenna on their site. This is what the FCC would need in order to amend our permit. We also talked with them about the space needs for the transmitter & other equipment; they are willing to allow us to use a small portion of space inside their climate controlled shop area for a rack & cabinet. We also toured Kevin Kuntz’s property on South Hill, where there is an existing tower & antenna for cellular service. While this would be an excellent location, due to various complicated & extenuating circumstances, it would be considered a long shot.

Buildings & Grounds / Equipment / Infrastructure

- Phone System: If you recall, we were due for a switch over of our VOIP system from Comcast to TDS in early July; this was going to result in substantial monthly savings, for which we budgeted. However, numerous delays have ensued, involving miscommunication and just plain old poor communication (there is irony in that, of course, considering communications IS, in fact, their business). Now here we are, nearly 4 months later, and there is still confusion on their part on how to make it work. I am losing confidence.
- Ludlow Town Hall AV Upgrades: The re-installation of equipment, installation of new equipment, and various fixes have been completed. There are still kinks to work out - some of which will be resolved after tomorrow, when we are bringing back one of the installers for a training day on the new house sound system in the auditorium. We (FOLA and OVTV) are splitting the cost of the training day; we need to be able to train others to use the systems (both upstairs & downstairs). The Town is spending a total of \$30K on the systems. A lot of my time has been spent helping to manage the project and oversee the work. Together with the Town & FOLA, we are making all of the necessary improvements. It's been a long road but I am pleased to report that the results so far have been positive.

Production

- Community Event Coverage: We have been fortunate to have the addition of a new volunteer, Shawn Kershaw, helping to cover community events. We have teamed her up with Sarah - the two of them have covered several events in recent months, including the chamber of Commerce 'Best of Summer" festival (which Shawn organizes), and more recently, the Reading Fall Festival, Ludlow Chili Cook Off, & Mount Holly Cider Days.
- Tasty Twist with Sammy B: Sammy continues to be prolific, cranking out new episodes of his series, bringing a lot of new people into the door, mostly local musicians, but also some business owners too.
- Election Coverage: With the general election now just 2 weeks away, things have heated up of late as far as candidate interviews, forums, and other activity. In the last week alone, we have had several candidates come into the studio to be interviewed and/or read statements. All of our election programming (whether produced through us or elsewhere through one of our "sister stations" can be found here: <https://okemovalley.tv/election-coverage>

Community Engagement / Fundraising

- Volunteer Appreciation: I want to publicly thank Shawn Kershaw for enthusiastic volunteerism. Having her hosting on camera & interviewing people at these events has added a fun dynamic to the coverage.
- Cavendish After School Program: We have committed to a weekly video club program at CTES, picking up where we left off in the Spring. We kicked it off last week and will be there every Thursday through May. TRSUs After School Program will be providing some compensation for our work.
- New Grant Award: We received another grant, towards the final phase of the build-out! This one is for \$5,000 from the Vermont Mutual Insurance Groups' charitable giving fund, and brings the total received through grants up to \$36,500.
- Youth Media Collaboration: Last month, Sarah, Rebekah, & I met with Lauren Ingersoll from BRACC at the new teen center in Chester, to start planning for our youth media collaboration. The project is focused on starting with youth-led podcasting, and building from there.. We were joined by 2 students who have expressed interest in getting involved. The next step is a field trip for interested students & educators to visit us on the next in service day, on the Friday before Veterans' Day.
- Membership Drive & Underwriting: We have a few new members since last month, but certainly not many. We continue to plug memberships, and we may want to regroup & pick up where the Community Engagement Committee left off with ideas & plans for the drive, but attention also needs to be turned towards our underwriting campaign. That has run on the calendar year, so we should be gearing up for the campaign soon. Donna Lubrano, our development & fundraising consultant, will be joining the Board

meeting to help lead a discussion on how we might integrate underwriting with local fundraising for the build-out.

- Merchandising: We have our stickers. Those at the meeting should take some.
- Advertising: I have been asked by Ludlow Rotary Club if we would like to advertise in their 2025 calendar. A 1"x2" display ad is \$160. I think it is worth having a discussion among the Board on what to prioritize with our modest advertising budget (which includes things like merchandising, signage, etc., in addition to the program schedules on the interactive program guide on cable TV).

37C Main St. | Ludlow, VT 05149 | www.okemovalley.tv