



# Director Report

## September 2024

### Administrative

- Finance: Wendell has continued reconciling the accounts. We will soon have a Finance Committee meeting with Bob to go over Treasurer duties & discuss a plan for the development of formal accounting policies.
- Strategic Planning: As mentioned previously, Newt was going to look into the “Non Profit Capacity Building Grant” from VT Community Foundation. This would be for hiring a consultant to help manage the strategic planning process. It does seem like this would be a good option for us, rather than relying on someone to volunteer.
- Policies & Procedures: At last month’s meeting, the Board did a first reading of the first two policies: Statement of Purpose & Corporate Structure. At the upcoming meeting, there will be a 2<sup>nd</sup> reading of these, with consideration of approval. Following this, there will be a first reading of the next policy, Membership. We will then keep up with this format for subsequent meetings.

### Buildings & Grounds / Equipment / Infrastructure

- Rewiring & Neatening Up: Bill Marcinkowski did some for us at the end of last month. He re-wired the lobby TV so that the signal is coming straight out of our routing switcher, rather than Comcast (which translates to a cleaner feed & better quality). He also started cleaning up the wiring behind the master control rack. He will be back soon to finish the job. He is also working on re-wiring the AV system at Plymouth Town Office (see below for more info on that, under “Collaboration”).
- Phone System: There are still delays with the switch over to TDS. Originally scheduled for the beginning of July, there have been multiple mis communications and mis-starts with this job. Hopefully it will be sorted out & completed soon.
- Comcast Delays: There has been no word from Comcast in response to the fiber optic connection & upgrade of our channels to HD. This has now been delayed for over a year at this point.
- VTel: There are two noteworthy items related to VTel: 1) The signals for our TV channels sometimes lag; this has been an ongoing problem, and there does not seem to be a great solution nor explanation for it. I sometimes monitor the other PEG channels on their system (which is possible because VTel carries all of our stations to all of their customers), and none of the other channels seem to have this problem. 2) Vtel has sent out notices to all of their TV subscribers, encouraging them to get rid of cable TV and instead using their internet service to stream video (i.e. “cut the cord”).

### Production

- Meeting Coverage: Over the past month, we have provided coverage of 16 local government meetings. It goes without saying that this is a core part of our work and the services that we provide to the community.
- Tasty Twist with Sammy B: Sammy has kept up with his busy schedule of bringing in fellow musicians (and now also business owners) in as guests for his series, “The Tasty Twists”. There has been a lot of interest in and attention to these shows.

- Other Studio Productions: We have had several others using the studio in recent weeks, including Cavendish librarian Amy McMullen, Paula VanGuilder, “The Average Daves”, Ludlow Municipal Manager Brendan McNamara, & Kelly Stettner (from Black River Action Team & the “Cavendish Crawlers” culvert survey project).
- “Pro Bono” Productions: Aside from the regular meeting coverage that we provide week in & week out, during the past month we have provided pro bono productions for the Reading Energy Committee, Plymouth Folk & Blues Festival, and Cavendish Fletcher Community Library.
- Volunteer & Other Community Productions: Local members from the Windsor Co. Republican Party borrowed a camera to record a political rally & candidate talk in Chester recently. Bob Greenawalt provided coverage of Rob Roper’s recent political talk at Ludlow Town Hall (“Strong Vermont Voices”). With the Yoh Theatre Players back in action at Woodstock Union HS, Claire McKey Berkman has resumed her behind-the-scenes videos. Regular weekly church services have been coming in from St. James United Methodist, United Church of Ludlow, & Calvary Church in Proctorsville.

### **Collaboration**

- Ludlow Town Hall: At long last, the re-installation & fixes on the AV systems are getting done (both in the auditorium & the 1<sup>st</sup> floor conference room). This has been on the to-do list for over two years, ever since there were problems with the original installation. The crew from Unique Media Solutions was there last Wednesday and will be finishing up this Wednesday. The Town is using ARPA funds to have the systems re-wired and re-installed, with new equipment. We partnered with FOLA (Friends of Ludlow Auditorium) to manage the project. It included new workstation desks & chairs for the auditorium balcony. Scott Stearns from FOLA & I spent the better part of two days putting the desks & chairs together (note that if you order a desk from Staples, it is often worth it to pay them to assemble it).
- Plymouth Town Office: Along the same theme but in less dramatic fashion, there was a slight issue with the installation of the AV system in Plymouth Town Office (the system was installed, then broken down & put into storage during renovations on the building, and then re-installed after the renovations were complete). The installer cut all of the slack on the cable, which did not leave enough for us to move the set up to its new location. Since I helped them to manage this project, and lobbied for them to make the investment, I feel that we need to make it right. Instead of bringing back the original installer (who is out of the Boston area), I am assigning it to Bill Marcinkowski. He will be doing that on Thursday (when he will also be coming to the station to work on the re-wiring of the master control rack as noted above)

### **Community Engagement / Fundraising**

- Grant Award & other applications: We have received a \$3,000 grant from The Windham Foundation, towards the build out. We should be hearing back in the near future from Vermont Mutual Insurance Group Charitable Giving. We are submitting an application within the next week to Mascoma Bank Foundation. We have now received over \$30K in grants, to go along with our approx. \$80K “building fund”.
- Youth Media Collaboration: We hosted a meeting on this topic late last month, just before the start of school. There is interest in moving forward, as a collaborative project between Okemo Valley TV & BRACC (Black River Area Community Coalition), with participation from Green Mountain Union HS & River Valley Technical Center. The plan is to start off with podcasting, then build from there.

- River Valley Technical Center: We are in discussions to have a student in the Audio-Video Production program work with us as part of the school's work-study placement program. Rebekah & I participated in an advisory committee meeting at the school last week with the Department head (and former Okemo Valley TV Board member), Zachary McNaughton, and instructor Jared Gunnell (who used to run SAPA-TV).
- Membership Drive: The Community Engagement committee met recently to review the process of membership recruitment & renewal. We walked away from that with marching orders, which will be relayed to the Board at the upcoming meeting. In the last couple of weeks, since that meeting, we have secured two new members. Thank you to our own Sammy Blanchette for becoming a "Director" level member.
- Merchandising: One of the things we discussed during the committee meeting was the need for some type of merchandising to provide to new members. I ordered 3"x3" stickers with our logo and a QR coder for the "ways to watch". All members will receive that. We will build on our merchandising over time; this is just a first small step.

## **Radio**

- Low Power FM: The radio advisory group has continued to meet. Carmine has been running analyses on the prospective antenna sites, while also inquiring with property owners. Bob's list of requests was reviewed; responses are forthcoming. We are also now part of an online meet-up group with other community radio stations throughout the State. Carmine participated in a recent meeting with them. Moving forward, the meetings, which are organized by the Vermont Association of Broadcasters (VAB), will be held monthly. Incidentally, I met the Executive Director of VAB, Wendy Mays at the tech center advisory committee meeting last week. She expressed enthusiasm over our start-up project, as well as that of Mount Mansfield Community TV. There is a very strong collaborative feeling among this group.

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