

## **CATV MEETING - DECEMBER 12, 2013 / AGENDA**

### **1. 2012-2013 Funding Allocation Cuts**

a. I contacted both cities regarding the funding cuts that are proposed for this year asking them to reconsider the severity of the cuts (50%). I asked them if they would consider reinstating \$15,000.00 per city to allow us to do improvements to the broadcast equipment in both facilities. I have not yet received a response.

b. Both city facilities need upgrades that would cost around \$15,000.00 to \$20,000.00 per city. Please refer to the quotes from Access AV in New Hampshire. Included is a Tricaster, all in one production suite, 2 monitors and a production desk. The less expensive quote would require converters to convert from SD to HD. Other changes would be made at a later time ie; cameras and transmitters back to the station. There are advantages to spending a little more for the higher quote as less changes would have to be made when we upgrade the cameras at a later time. We are currently broadcasting in SD with no prospects of broadcasting in HD at this time. Procurement of an HD channel could be a item for discussion in upcoming franchise negotiations with Time Warner. Additional upgrades to GFTV and city facilities will be needed in the future in the form of improved transmission capabilities, (current transmitters are the original analog modulators that were installed when the station was built in 1999 and our signals are converted to digital at the Lewiston head end) the addition of HD cameras at both city halls and some HD upgrades to the station. This would include purchasing a new video broadcast server from Telvue which would cost approximately \$60,000.00. (3 Channels)

### **2. Employee Insurance Changes**

Follow-up from last meeting - After consulting with Debbie Grimmig I found out that if we stay with what we currently have the cost would be the same for the POS plan. If we change to the POP plan the station would save several thousand dollars per year and the employees would have higher co-pays and deductibles as well as higher co-insurance payments.

**3. Board** - There are still openings on the board for both cities. 3 members from each community are needed to fill the slots. The cities are requesting updated info regarding membership and responsibilities for the board members. They would like the information submitted right away for the purpose of distribution to new city council members who have been recently elected.

**4. This Year's budget** - We are on track this year for expenses and hope to maintain the projected budget. Some capital improvements have been completed. We have had some equipment failures and have had to replace some equipment. Our fund balance as of the end of fiscal 2012 - 13 is about \$134,000.00. This will be reduced by about \$60,000.00 if the funding cuts take place this year. This would leave us with approximately \$70,000.00 to \$75,000.00 in our fund balance going forward. This information is based on the end of year financial report provide by the City of Auburn.

**5. Upcoming budget year 2014-15** - The next budget should be on track with previous years with anticipated increases in rent (5%) and potential normal increases in health care costs for employees. We will know better after the first of the year. I would also like to recommend that we consider the upgrades to the city facilities indicated in item 1 of this meeting agenda.

**6. Equipment Considerations** - Editing computers are complete and in service.

Our DVD duplication machine is broken and we had to purchase a new one. We purchased a factory refurbished one with DVD and Blu-Ray capability on a Black Friday deal for \$1500.00.

The regular cost would have been \$4800.00. This will allow us to produce some material in High Definition. Other equipment considerations for the future are the purchase of some new cameras, flat screen monitors for the production areas and upgrades to the signal delivery system to Time Warner.

**7. Media Distribution** - After the first of the year we will no longer automatically provide DVDs for guests on shows. We make the shows available on our website and many of the DVDs we make are not being picked up. We will still make discs available for a minimal fee and producers will still be able to get a free disc their shows. Some programs may be available in HD in the future and we would charge a fee for the Blu-Ray discs that we will produce. This policy change should help to reduce the cost of media for GFTV.

**8. Employee benefits** - After reviewing the City of Auburn vacation and sick day policy it was realized that after extended times of service the amount of vacation time is increased. Brian and I have both worked here longer than 5 years and should result in a slightly higher allocation of vacation time. Does the board want us to continue with the current policy or adopt the city policy?

**9. LAEGC COMMITTEE** - A committee was established to discuss ways to continue funding LAEGC in the future. The committee came up with an 8 point plan which included utilizing Great Falls TV in item #3. Recommendations were made to incorporate GFTV with LAEGC as part of the marketing strategy. (Please refer to handout) Part of the suggested plan would put GFTV under the control of LAEGC and possibly relocate the station to make it more accessible to citizens and oversight by the Growth Council. GFTV would assist the Growth Council with its' media technology to make PSA's to promote the twin cities. Additionally GFTV would be utilized for marketing the twin cities to business interests for the purpose of enticing them to locate here. The stations technological resources and staff would be utilized by the Growth Council for marketing and promotion. These ideas were presented to both city councils with Lewiston ready to accept all 8 points in the plan and Auburn having issues with certain points in the plan. Some felt that it all makes sense and others had concerns. Some councilors felt that relocating the station would have negative consequences for GFTV ie; cost of relocation, breaking a longstanding relationship with the community college, and increases in expenses related to relocation and operations. The cities are still in discussion about the 8 point plan and no final decisions have been made at this time. It is the view of the station manager that the recommendations would not be appropriate for the station. The mission of community access television is to provide the public with government, educational and community offerings through the cable system. The community TV goal is to provide education and equipment resources to members of the public who wish to produce programs to air on GFTV. The franchise agreement between the cities and Time Warner Cable prohibit the use of PEG stations from carrying commercial programs of any type with exception being sponsorship contributions by commercial entities. The proposed changes could alter the current mission of PEG access and re-purpose the station for some commercial activities. GFTV could assist the cities with general promotional material without altering its current location or mission. This activity should be for general promotional purposes only and should not be used in commercial activities or promotions. GFTV was not consulted in any way during the discussions and became aware of the committees activities by watching city government meetings. We will continue to update you as more information is available.

**10. Next Meeting** - We would generally meet in March for our next meeting. We may want to consider meeting in February to discuss the upcoming fiscal budget as presentation of the budget typically occurs in March. This would allow us time to discuss budget implications and to make necessary changes.

**Happy Holidays and best wishes for the upcoming new year!!!**