

PROPOSAL FOR NEW INTERNET-BASED LOCAL CHANNEL

Following up on discussions with the Jericho Selectboard in 2018/2019, and in response to the trend towards online video viewing, MMCTV would like to propose a three-town project - the creation of a new online television channel that would feature Jericho, Richmond and Underhill content. We welcome the towns in our cable service territory to consider working with us to create this new Internet channel that would feature the latest municipal/school board meetings, as well as hyperlocal cultural and educational programming made by MMCTV staff and volunteers.

While town residents can search for and find individual MMCTV meetings on demand online at Internet Archive's website, an Internet-based television channel would stream the most recent meetings at regular times, as well as community bulletin board information and other local content curated for our unique communities. This channel would be available online on MMCTV's website, as well potentially on other platforms. Important meetings and events can be streamed live.

This Internet channel would offer the opportunity for new messaging and greater public participation in dialogue and decision-making. For MMCTV it would help build what is likely to be mostly an online viewing future presence. We'd like to know if adding this channel, which is estimated to cost us \$11,000 in its first year and \$6,000 in subsequent years, is something the towns would be willing to help shape and/or support. Town input and/or financial backing would help us make this happen better and sooner.

BACKGROUND

Launched in 1997 MMCTV runs Public/Educational Channel 15 and Government Channel 17 on Comcast cable locally 24/7, producing over an hour of original programming a day on an annual budget of some \$160,000.

Local Comcast cable TV subscribers' contributions are our main revenue source, but subscribers have declined from 2355 in 2015 to 2302 in 2019. While our revenue increased between 2014 to 2017 (at a rate ranging from 3 to 6%), it decreased over 4% in 2018 due to a Comcast accounting change in 2018 and almost 2% in 2019.

Jericho viewers make up over 50% of our cable viewers, followed by Richmond. Underhill residents make up the smallest cable viewership group. By contrast, the majority of Jericho, Richmond and Underhill viewers could potentially view a streamed channel on the Internet (cable, fiber or DSL lines). While we do not have Comcast viewing figures, our Internet Archive viewership has reached some 20,000 plays in our first year on that platform. We first began streaming videos free of charge on demand on Vimeo in 2012.

COSTS

Due to our major investment in an HD-ready TelVue AIO Hypercaster broadcast server in 2018, adding an HD Internet-based channel would involve the following costs, not including our production or overhead expenses.

- Hardware: Telecast 2 TelVue Hypercaster HD Internet Streaming Encoder and Output Channel: \$5,207 (one-time fee)
- Software: TelVue Cloud Services: \$3,000/year
- *Optional:* Customized TelVue set up of Roku, Apple TV or Amazon Fire platform: \$3,000 (one-time setup fee)
- MMCTV Staff Labor (channel programming/in-house web development): \$3,000/year

Here are some links to examples of TelVue streamed channels, in Massachusetts:

Belmont GOV TV: <http://www.belmontmedia.org/watch/govtv>

LexMedia: <https://www.lexmedia.org/programming/live-streams/>

TIMEFRAME

We can launch the channel as early as mid-2020, with the following steps:

- Seek out and process feedback from local boards/town staff. *Late 2019/early 2020*
- Poll residents in person and online about viewing preferences, habits and needs. *Late 2019/early 2020*
- Develop a third channel schedule. Establish an HD channel landing page on MMCTV website. Research additional online platform options. *Late 2019/early 2020*
- Order and install TelVue software and hardware. *Early 2020*
- Launch and publicize new Internet channel. (Ideally this would coincide with the planned shift of our cable channels 15 and 17 to spots 1070 and 1084 on the Comcast dial.) *Mid-2020*
- Seek out and process public/stakeholder feedback. *Mid-2020 to early 2021*

DISCUSSION

MMCTV is eager to hear what our towns think of contributing to this project. I'd be happy to attend an upcoming board meeting to discuss this further and/or to schedule a meeting with representatives of all three towns.

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