

Vermont Access Network

1/17/23

MEMO TO: Senator Anne Cummings and Members of Senate Finance Committee

FROM: Lauren-Glenn Davitian, CCTV on behalf of Vermont Access Network (VAN)

RE: VAN Legislative Update + Agenda

Thank you sincerely for your support of VAN's FY23 General Fund request. These funds have been distributed to Vermont's 24 community media centers to offset the decline in cable revenue and assure continuity of operations, including public meeting coverage, media education, and local programming that has become even more necessary with the decline of local newspapers in our state.

This biennium VAN is working on two fronts. The first is a continuation of our bridge funding strategy, which for FY24 is a one-time General Fund request of \$1 million (see attached). We are also continuing our efforts to develop a state policy alternative to the cable franchise fees that can sustain community media and local information services in the years ahead. We are expecting a bill to be introduced in the House in the coming weeks.

State general funds have been invaluable to our ongoing work to build community and maintain the local communications structure. Thank you!

Community Media Highlights of 2022:

- **Hybrid public meeting coverage** was institutionalized in communities across the state, assuring remote public participation in local decision making.

- **Media education** delivered to students of all ages, improving the literacy and critical view of community members as they consume news and information.
- **Production of 18,000 hours +** of local government, education and public programs that help to inform and connect Vermonters in a time when other local news and information outlets are declining.
- **Increased community support** (donations, underwriting, grants), thus diversifying community media revenue options.
- **Legislative support (\$900,000)** to augment the decline of community media's primary funding source, cable franchise fees. Thank you!

We are happy to brief the committee or any member individually, at your convenience. I can be reached at davitian@cctv.org and 802.777.7542



Legislative Update

Community Media is an Essential Service

In FY21, the Vermont Legislature identified public, educational and government (PEG) access as an “essential service” for Vermont through its continuing coverage of public health messages, ongoing access to public meetings, connecting communities and preserving local identity. In recognition, the Legislature provided financial support for pandemic operations and funded a PEG Study to help plan for the future of community media.

The PEG Study, released in January 2021, confirms the inevitable decline of cable revenue in Vermont (PEG’s primary funding source) and increasing costs necessary to meet increasing demand for public meeting coverage and community communications.

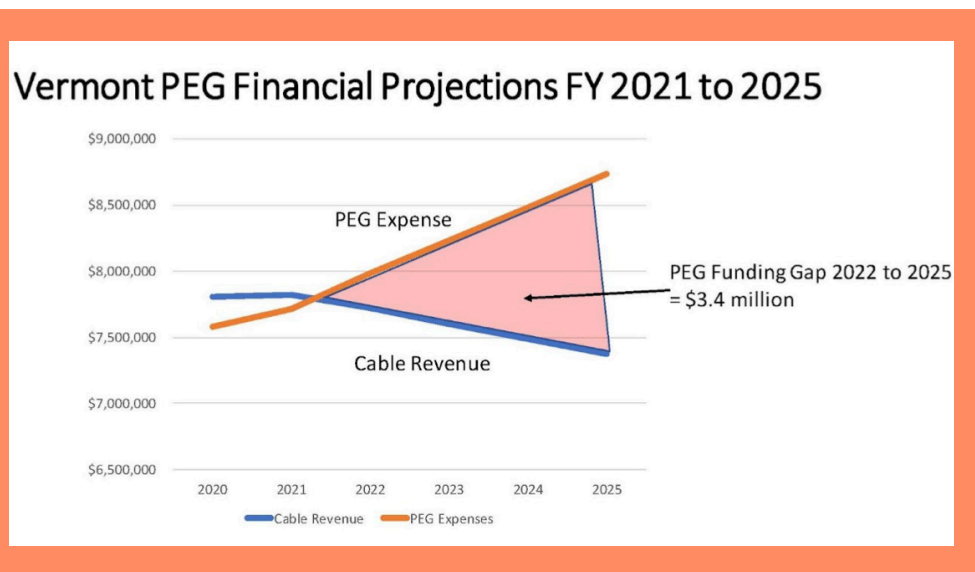


The PEG Study recommended that the Legislature use its authority to restructure Vermont’s telecommunications taxes and take a new look at how public benefits, like PEG, will be funded.

During recent meetings with key legislators, VAN was encouraged to develop short-term funding requests while continuing to work toward the longer-term policy goal.



VAN’s Legislative Request



VAN’s four year funding request provides short term relief to meet community communications needs in all corners of the state, and lays the groundwork for broader policy change in Vermont’s telecommunications tax structure.

The request:

FY22 - \$300,000

FY23 - \$600,000

FY24 - \$1 Million

FY25 - \$1.5 Million

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Winter 2022 Update

What's Happening in Vermont Community Media

Happy Holidays!

from



Legislative News

For several years, the VAN community has been securing long term funding for PEG Access in Vermont. We have an exciting legislative agenda planned for the biennium (2023-2025). The VAN Board and Advocacy Working Group are working on an ambitious two-prong strategy this year, with Action Circles' strategic assistance. This includes a general fund request for \$1.1 million and a new policy bill to provide long term funding for PEG access as franchise fee revenue declines. Representative Avram Patt of Worcester has agreed to be our bill sponsor! With your support we can garner additional operating funds and ensure a future revenue source for PEG.

If you'd like to learn more or be more involved in this process, please reach out to Lauren-Glenn (davitian@cctv.org) or anyone else on the Advocacy Committee, which also includes Angelike (angelike@mmctv15.org), Jess, Tammie, Patrick, Samantha, Jamie and Christopher.

Job listings

Springfield Area Public Access TV is seeking a successful, dynamic candidate who is a strong spokesperson with a creative vision and solid financial and budgeting skills. The Executive Director is highly visible in the community and will promote the "SAPA TV" mission among the Towns of Springfield, Weathersfield and Chester, VT. More info is [here](#).

GNAT is looking for **Media Education Coordinator**. More info is [here](#).



Media Education Coordinator
Media Education & Youth Development

We're Hiring

- Create and implement media training workshops
- Mentor students and community members
- Produce video content

gnat.tv

The graphic features a green and blue diagonal triangle in the top-left and bottom-right corners. The text "Media Education Coordinator" is in green, with "Media Education & Youth Development" in a smaller font below it. The "We're Hiring" text is split into two rounded rectangular boxes, one green and one blue. The "gnat.tv" logo is centered at the bottom.

The VAN Board needs you!

The VAN Board is looking for a new member. The board meets monthly, via conference call, the fourth Tuesday of each month. Email Angelike (angelike@mmctv15.org) if you are interested.

2022 ACM-NE Nor'Easter Award Vermont Winners



This year's award ceremony was held at the North Andover Historical Society in North Andover, Massachusetts on Saturday, November 12. Congratulations to all the winners. VAN AMOs proudly represented our state! Northwest Access TV, Media Factory, Brattleboro Community TV and GNAT-TV all took home awards.

More AMO News



CCTV Center for Media & Democracy / Town Meeting TV

CCTV Center for Media & Democracy is wrapping up our preservation work with the Northeast Document Conservation Center as part of our ongoing archival efforts. Over half of the 40,000 assets in the CCTV Archives have been digitized and a large part has been made available to the public.

Vermont Council on the Arts. One of our goals is to learn and reflect on concrete ADA techniques and strategies which we can apply to our accessibility work going forward.

We invite you to join us on Thursday, December 22nd for our 2022 Solstice Celebration - in person at our studio: 294 N Winooski Ave in Burlington! Celebrate with us and recognize the outstanding work of local media makers and Town Meeting TV champions. All are welcome — stop by for food, friends, & fun! We hope to see you there.

CAT-TV



From The [Bennington Banner](#): Lisa Byer, Executive Director at CAT-TV, is celebrating 25 years. Byers started as an administrative assistant in 1997 and never imagined she'd end up as the executive director 25 years later.

"I just kept doing things that needed to be done," she said, adding that she can't believe how the time has flown by.

"When I started here 25 years ago, I never expected that I would find a career and a community that I loved as much as I do," Byer said. "I'm glad to still be here."

Congratulations Lisa! Lisa was honored with a Town of Bennington Proclamation, a State of Vermont Proclamation, and a recognition from the SW Vermont Chamber of Commerce.



Northwest Access TV

Northwest Access TV is gearing up for an ambitious winter season, streaming more than 80 live local high school basketball and hockey games. We'll be streaming games from four different locations throughout Franklin County and airing them on our [YouTube page](#) for all to watch LIVE. We have an amazing staff ready to take on the challenge and several volunteers behind the microphones waiting to lend their voice to the broadcast.

Northwest Access TV is also pleased to announce that staff and producers earned awards at the Alliance for Community Media Nor'Easter Video Festival. [Paul in the Studio](#), a home shopping network parody on using public access services and the [Enosburg Opera House Holiday Special](#) each took home first place finishes while Northwest Access TV as an organization was named a finalist in the Overall Excellence category. A huge congratulations to all involved with the videos submitted.

HCTV

Elizabeth Rossano, Executive Director of Hardwick Community Television will be going on maternity leave this winter. Should you need to connect with HCTV, Jim



NEK-TV

NEK-TV helped the town of Glover install a projector, large screen, owl camera and sound system to be able to combine virtual guests with in person guests for their town meetings and select board meetings. As a result they have been able to increase community involvement (especially during winter months), record their own meetings for public access television airing, stream them live on their website and have guest speakers virtually as well as present presentations to the town. They even have town movie nights planned for the future.



BCTV

Nolan Edgar, Production Manager - Nolan has moved up to a new position after a long history with BCTV, starting in 2010 as a high school producer, intern in 2012, summer camp staff in 2013, field producer in 2015, and Content Manager from 2017-present. He is a graduate of the Windham Regional Career Center and CCV Digital Filmmaking Programs. We are excited to see Nolan's scope of expertise at the station widen even further as Production Manager in his role assisting members and staff in creating local content.

Van Wile, Content Manager - Van is a 2021 graduate of Keene State College in Film Studies and Video Production, and has experience providing technical assistance to KSC students and staff. He is very detail-oriented, which is a requirement to put local content on our channels and publish the schedule on a weekly basis. You'll also find Van assisting editors, being part of the BCTV crew, and producing the Brattleboro Selectboard Meeting.



PEGTV

PEGTV's community holiday greetings can be viewed [here](#) with more to come over the next week. Greetings are from producers, municipal & school boards, and local organizations & businesses.

PEGTV's [Courcelle Scholarship](#) press release will go live on January 3rd! If you know Rutland County high school seniors who will be attending high education in communication related majors, let them know about this scholarship. Information will be updated for 2023 by the press release.



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