

GATCom regular meeting (Government Access Television Access Commission)

Minutes for November 24, 2020

This meeting was held by teleconference. YouTube recording with annotations for missing audio is at <https://youtu.be/Q6W7w--2EKk>.

Present: Theresa Bahner, Mary Hill, Aldon Hynes (*on the road*), Tobenna Nwangwu

Also present: Pua Ford (coordinator & clerk)

1. **Call to Order** – Bahner called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm.

2. **Approve October 27, 2020 minutes**

Motion to approve the minutes for October 27, 2020 (Hill/Bahner).

Discussion: none.

Vote to approve: Bahner, Hill, Hynes

Abstain: Nwangwu

Motion approved.

3. **Coordinator Reports**: Ford reviewed the written reports and pointed out corrections in the 2021 meeting dates submitted to the Town Clerk's office. The previous vote was on the understanding that fourth Tuesday of the month starting at 7:30pm is the regular meeting date and time.

4. **Business**

a. *Operating budget submission*

Motion to approve the proposed FY22 operating budget as presented (Hynes/ Hill).

Discussion: Ford answered questions about the draft budget documents. This department benefits from the Cable Advisory Council grant program to cover any capital or other equipment expenses. The audio project for the Center Gym, based on CAC grant funds, still has to be put out to bid. Upgrading the 20-year-old transmission equipment supplied by Cablevision could be bought with grant money but installation depends on Cablevision/Altice technical staff—that may be delayed by pandemic restrictions.

Vote to approve unanimous.

Motion approved.

b. *Governance of WGATV/Continuation of this commission.* No one had time to follow up on intended research from Ford's list of contacts (*memo attached*). Commission members briefly stated how they felt about dissolving this commission. Hill preferred to keep the commission. Hynes said there was benefit in the Town having one less commission to keep track of and find volunteers to appoint, but the benefit was minimal. Nwangwu asked if dissolving the commission would save the Town money; if not, he favored keeping the commission. Bahner feels that having the commission is better, the budgets are conservative, and commission discussion is fair and open

Motion that the GATV Commission should stay as it is, because the benefit of the commission to the government access channel outweighs any perceived benefit to the Town; this topic can be put up for review later, based on the Town's needs. (Hynes/ Hill).

Discussion: none.

Vote to approve unanimous.

Motion approved.

5. *Motion to adjourn at 8:08pm (Hill/Nwangwu)*
Approval unanimous; meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Pua Ford

Next scheduled meetings:

December 8 (to be cancelled since the budget proposal is approved)
January 26, 2021
February 23, 2021

Memo: October 29, 2020
From: Pua Ford, WGATV coordinator
To: GATV commission, Mica Cardozo
Re: governance of WGATV and other Governmental Access channels in other Connecticut channels

History: In 2000, WGATV was started by a volunteer ad hoc committee (GATVOC – O for oversight), most members affiliated Democratic voters. Inspired by Orange’s OGAT, which took an active part in recording Amity (financial crisis, referenda) & distributing copies to Woodbridge & Bethany. WGATV programming produced by GATVOC members until they had no time to do it, hired coordinator.

2005 – LWV Amity & BRS PTO held forum with First Select & WBOE candidates, recorded on WGATV equipment. WGATV was urged to play that DVD more frequently because parents reported not seeing it. First Selectman Marrella objected to overplay, asked if GATVOC should be replaced by a bipartisan commission. 2006 – GATV commission ordinance.

Other town G channels, hearsay, contact info:

	Email	Phone	What little I know
Orange, Ron Davis	rdvideolab@aol.com	203-799-7017 (business)	OGAT committee oversees (“they let me do whatever I want”), Ron is a contractor to the town.
Milford, Kara Flannery	kara@karaflannery.com	917-880-7292	Kara heads the MGAT committee (term expires 12/31/20), don’t know if they have a new coordinator/producer. Aldermen appointees, multipartisan. G&E channels
Fairfield, Gerard Speno	speen@optonline.net , fairtv@fairfieldct.org	? Town Hall = 203-256-3000	FairTV – G&E channels. “The FairTV Commission was established by Town Ordinance to oversee the development and operation of educational and government access television in Fairfield.”

			See About the Commission —looks same as Woodbridge's
	Email	Phone	What little I know
Area Nine Cable Council – G&E channels in 10 towns	Jim Cameron, Darien, jim@mediatrainertv.com Hal Levy, Westport, hlevy@datacut.com Don Saltzman, Weston, ???		Area 2 CAC grant program is based on A9CC grant program. Darien TV79 Advisory Board – other members & contact info Hard to find Weston info, but they have a Vimeo collection . Westport Office of Information Technology includes G channel
West Hartford, Jennifer Evans	jennifer@westhartfordct.gov	860-561-7955	Town-specific 3-channel nonprofit W.Hartford Community Interactive , volunteer board of directors, housed in town hall (rent-free)
Wallingford, Scott Hanley	salexhan@gmail.com	860-302-0997	WGTV gave template Policies & Procedures to OGAT. Under direct control of the mayor.
Trumbull, Lara Walden Also Donna Girot (former coordinator) who moved to VT, donna@catv8.org - (802) 359-4705, 203-258-8086	trumbulltv@trumbullps.org		Charter grants towns E channels, Trumbull uses one channel for both E&G programming. All budget from town. Housed in high school, overseen by town commission . Former first selectman Herbst used to ask for special programming, threaten budget cut.
Groton	<i>(could not find specific contact information)</i>		Groton Municipal TV is part of town library , but not mentioned in description of library board . Delayed establishment of 3 rd -party regional nonprofit Southeastern CT Television (SEC-TV)—each has one channel. SEC-TV includes G programs from other area towns.

Pros and Cons of different governance in Woodbridge:

	Pro	Con
Citizen oversight (commission, ad hoc committee)	They watch the channel at home & can give feedback. Some have technical expertise and advice. Can advise in avoiding partisan perceptions (knowledge of local political forces). <i>Commission defined as bipartisan.</i>	<i>Commission:</i> difficulty finding members, getting quorum (& business delayed without quorum). Coordinator time in filing agendas, minutes, reports.
General administration	perception of nonpartisan management coordinator time saved probably no difference in getting bid process, P.O.s, etc. faster	Current administrative officers do not live in town, do not watch the channel, do not have tech knowledge of TV, cable. Feedback on what should or should not be recorded?

Questions

Could an advisory committee meet ad hoc for tech issues, advice?

Can Board of Ethics address partisan perceptions?

Current commission might need Exec. Session to discuss some past situations.