

# FairTV

## Fairfield Education and Government Public Access Television

### Minutes of July 12, 2012 FairTV Committee

#### Sullivan Independence Hall, Lower Level Conference Room

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 pm by Chairman Jim Kennelly. In attendance were committee members Mr. Kennelly, Howard Jacobson and Jody Eisemann. Town MIS Director Don Leslie and FairTV Executive Producer Gery Speno were on hand to provide reports as needed to the committee. A representative from the League of Women Voters, Meg Francis, also attended as the organization's monitor of the system.

**Reading and approval of the minutes of the last meeting were waved as a suitable copy was not available.**

#### **Old Business:**

The committee received an update on the funding levels in the town accounts that contain funds from FairTV's annual grant funding from Cablevision of Southern Ct through the 2010-2011 GATA/CAC2 Grant process from Mr. Leslie, who also serves as a Fairfield Representative on the CAC2.

The two accounts funded all operations of the system for the last twelve months. Mr. Leslie announced that the combined accounts contain \$4,081. The committee took no vote on this matter however the sense of the body was to ask Mr. Leslie and Mr. Jacobson to clear with CAC2 the committee's desire to carry over those funds because a planned installation of fixed camera mounts has now been deemed unnecessary. The funds would instead be set aside to increase the hours of content on the two broadcast channels. The CAC2 representatives agreed to carry this request forward in September when CAC2 meets again.

#### **New Business:**

1) Committee voted 3-0 (Moved by Jacobson, seconded by Eisemann) to accept the grant for 2011-12 that FairTV has been awarded as of June 15th, 2012 from Cablevision through CAC2 in the amount of \$24,000. Letters addressed to Mr. Kennelly from Marlene Silverstein, GATA subcommittee of CAC2 on file for public review--each lists the \$12,000 allotted to FTV's two broadcast channels under the CAC2's grant framework.

2) Committee voted 3-0 (Moved by Jacobson, seconded by Eisemann) to accept

funds from the Town of Fairfield for the 2012 budget in the amount of \$25,000 that was part of the 2012-13 fiscal year starting July 1.

3) Committee voted 3-0 (Moved by Jacobson, seconded by Eisemann) to APPROVE proposed budget for 2012-13 of \$49,000.

Items in that budget, in order of amount, will be:

- I) Labor payments for 2012-13 for all three channels of the system (\$44,000)
- II) PEG Central Fee (\$3000)
- III) Equipment and materials for the year ahead. New mic kits, cables, a background, rolling cart, hard drives, carpets, tape, batteries (\$2000)

(NOTE: Dollars for overage will be considered for inclusion in current year after CAC2 September meeting.)

4) Committee voted 3-0 (Moved by Jacobson, seconded by Eisemann) to create the position of FairTV System Manager with a list of duties and set annual compensation. (Please see below of amended duties list). Compensation packages of the other two system managers in CAC Region 2 were discussed to develop context for salary amount of \$34,000 annually. Currently Mr. Thomas Castelot of Soundview Community Media receives in excess of \$100,000 annually in compensation. Mr. Ron Davis of OGAT (Orange Government Access Television) receives \$60,000 in annual compensation. All committee members agreed that duties listed were worthy of far higher compensation however that this was the best the Committee could offer at this time. The position is like that of a 1099 contractor, no benefits are to provided no taxes of any kind will be withheld. 26 equal payouts will run from July 1, to June 30.

The Station Manager position's duties, length of service (one year, renewable annually, cancelable on 30 days notice base on criteria laid out in title creation document, see below) were reviewed at length and compared to other equivalent positions in the region. It was the committee's belief that the duties and terms of employment gave the committee reasonable control over the actions of the SM and reasonable protections to the SM that the committee would have oversight authority based on a reasonable set of professional criteria.

After the language was amended to reflect suggestions from Mr. Jacobson, Ms. Eisemann and Mr. Leslie, the matter was put to a vote.

In the course of this discussion, the committee also examined the possibility, raised by Mr. Speno and Mr. Leslie, of some small mileage allowance for the SM and producers because of the significant use of private vehicles involved in the work, and the possibility of a volunteer intern or trainee assisting the Station Manager in the hauling and set up of equipment. No action was taken, but it was

the sense of the committee that such support might be possible depending on the outcome of the CAC2 meeting in September allowing the re-use of 2011 funds in 2012. (Because FairTV laborers are not town employees with appropriate commercial driver's licenses, the possibility of requesting a town vehicle for this purpose was considered but then rejected.)

5) Committee voted 3-0 (Moved by Jacobson, seconded by Eisemann) renew the position of video producer with a set per/hour rate of \$25. This rate remains unchanged from 2009. Two video producers already working for the station may be available again this fall. If producers are needed, Chairman will once again reach out to local university and high school Media departments for applicants as has been policy since 2009.

6) Committee voted 3-0 (Moved by Jacobson, seconded by Eisemann) to promote Gerry Speno, FairTV's longtime Executive Producer, to FairTV System Manager. Mr. Speno presented his resume (available for public review upon request) that included his most recent two plus year service as producer and executive producer for FairTV. Additionally his resume showed a decade-long involvement in the effort to promote the concept of town specific education and government access programming and a multi-decade career in audio and video media production.

Mr. Kennelly explained that with introduction of live broadcast coverage, his role as broadcast scheduler and on demand scheduler had to be folded into the work of the person shooting live meetings because the broadcast software requires taped broadcasts to be interrupted during live broadcasts. Having two individuals coordinate these duties would have been cumbersome and lead to scheduling errors. Thus Mr. Speno took on these duties and the job of uploading files to the FairTV On Demand Service since he would now operate the broadcast scheduling system, which is tied to the FairTV On Demand uploading system.

Essentially, Mr. Speno had, in Mr. Kennelly's words, taken on the very involved role of System Manager months before receiving any compensation for this work or even being afforded the official title.

Both Mr. Jacobson and Ms. Eisemann lauded Mr. Speno's service to the committee and the town of Fairfield and congratulated him following the vote promoting him to the position.

Questions from the League of Women Voters Representative, Ms. Francis, focused the future of the FairTV Committee going forward under the new administration. Mr. Kennelly and Mr. Jacobson both indicated their interest to continue as part of the committee if asked to do so but both also insisted that the new charge of the committee and any new structure should protect the committee from undue political influence.

Mr. Kennelly announced that he would request an opportunity to present a Power Point presentation to the BOS at their Aug. 1 to layout the past history of the committee explain the rationale for a new FairTV oversight structure now that the work of the operational committee is essentially complete, and to press the BOS to elevate FairTV Committee from it's status as simply an ad hoc committee to an entity that is written into the Town Charter of Fairfield with voting membership that is equally drawn from the town's Democratic, Republican and Unaffiliated voting populations.

Ms. Eiseman said she was frustrated by the stranglehold Soundview Community Media had on public access programming due to politics and connections and said she that the most fun she had was helping end that in 2009 here in Fairfield on the FairTV Committee when she rejoined in 2009 and hoped that would continue.

Mr. Jacobson said that anything less than "full independence" for a future FairTV Committee would be a "disaster" and what I've been fighting against all these years."

Mr. Jacobson then made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Eisemann. Meeting was adjourned at 9:05 pm.

Note: The next meeting was not set by the committee because it is unclear when and if the Board of Selectmen will create a successor entity but members noted that new decision of the CAC2 regarding this year's overage, would likely require a meeting then to officially re-purpose those funds.

These minutes were submitted to the members, the Board of Selectmen and the Town Clerk for dissemination to public at 4:58 pm, July 13<sup>th</sup>. An edited version to correct some noted typos, was distributed at 6:00 pm on the 13<sup>th</sup>.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jim Kennelly  
Chairman, FairTV

### **Proposed Duties: FairTV System Manager**

1) Provide live and recorded coverage of all FairTV Government "primary schedule" meetings, i.e., BOS, BOF, RTM & TPZ.

2) Act as secondary video producer for FairTV Education, ensuring that BOE meetings are covered should a FTVE producer cannot cover a meeting.

3) Record events assigned in addition to this “primary schedule” above. These will comprise the “secondary schedule” which should be formalized monthly by the committee or the chairperson, if designated by the committee

4) Maintain/update the system’s broadcast schedule based on criteria of “live first, most recent first, primary schedule first, and “weekend interest block programming.”

5) Keep FairTV On Demand as current as possible, preferably within 12-24 hours of live or recorded broadcasts. Oversee all PEG Central-related matters.

6) Assign submitted programming to the regional Public Access Channel as appropriate based on the established standards for each of the three PEG channels.

7) Provide training and technical assistance, including internships, to individuals and groups interested in developing content for FairTV based on approved requests made to the FairTV Committee or its successor entity.

8) Purchase needed incidental materials and bill the committee for them. Such items would typically be batteries, tape, carpets or cables. These are small items, which no one item should exceed \$50 or total items for a month exceed \$100 without prior authorization by the committee or in an emergency notification of the Committee Chairperson.

9) Maintain the system’s equipment and do all necessary software and firmware updates to ensure its proper function.

10) Interface with the Town IT Department and the Fairfield Public Schools regarding any broadcast technology related concerns such as network use, software issues or service upgrades such as new hardware in town facilities.

11) Report to the FairTV Committee or its successor entity at each of its regularly scheduled meetings on the operations of the system.

12) Maintain a list of needed hardware and software for the system's annual grant requests. This list should be submitted by November one of each year.

13) Update the FairTV website as needed.

14 Carry out any and all reasonable duties requested by the FairTV Committee throughout the year—this may include offering counsel on possible E Channel producers to be hired, suggest fair labor rates based on prior experience in covering a town or schools event such as a parade or graduation when such funds must be expended.

### **Service Agreement/Compensation**

The System Manager will serve for a term of one year, with the option of annual renewal by the FairTV Committee or its successor entity. The System Manager may be removed by a vote of the FairTV Committee or its successor entity for cause with 30 days notice for the following reasons:

- Non-performance of duties
- Improper Conduct while in the performance of said duties.
- Any criminal acts in the course of duty, (ex: petty larceny, embezzlement)
- Failure to perform duties in accordance with FairTV Committee directives

The System Manager shall be paid an annual compensation of \$34,000 to perform these duties from July 1 through June 30 of each year. Payment will be provided in 26 equal disbursements from the accounts of FairTV. A schedule of

payments will be presented to the Fairfield IT Department Director to forward to the Department of Finance for the cutting of all checks. The System Manager is considered 1099 contractor and in no way does this agreement bind FairTV, The Town of Fairfield or the Fairfield Public Schools to treat the System Manager as a full-time employee which would require expenditures not covered under the labor portion of the funds awarded to FairTV.

The System Manager may receive additional compensation for work done outside his specified duties if approved by the FairTV Committee and if the agencies seeking such work provide the funds to FairTV for such payment.