

Imagine what would happen if government council meetings no longer allowed public comment. It would upset, both in principle and practice, our whole way of life. Community television is in danger of just such a lopsided paradigm and also cuts the public out of government dealings.

As you may or may not be aware, Tualatin Valley Community Television (TVCTV) comprises three aspects under the acronym PEG. That is, Public Access in which individual community members from all walks of life have the opportunity to express themselves; Education, currently a feed from Portland Community College (PCC) televised classroom programs; and Government, in which council meetings, public service announcements and programs that generally promote the best aspects of the various jurisdictions are televised.

The Public Access aspect is at risk. The Metropolitan Area Communications Commission (MACC), who oversee and funds the operations of TVCTV, contends that there are no longer funds to continue operations at current levels. And the level to which it wants to reduce the public's opportunity to exercise their First Amendment Rights is, quite frankly, not only injurious to your constituency and community, but insulting and self-serving.

We community producers refute MACC's contention, and challenge them to creatively resolve this issue. That is what the attached proposal is all about – a viable alternative that will save Public Access and stay within MACC's budgetary constraints.

We ask for your review and feedback of this proposal. We ask that you let MACC know how you feel about this prior to Thursday, October 28th, when the full MACC will vote on the future of Public Access television. We ask for your support in sustaining a public voice within the context of PEG. Thank you.

Sincerely,

The Save Public Access Committee, on behalf of TVCTV producers, volunteers and the general public.

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TVCTV Public Access Program counter-proposal for the Metro Area Communications Commission Meeting, October 28, 2010

by the "Save Public Access Committee"; a pending Oregon Political Action Committee

Producers and members of the community served by the TVCTV station have formed the Save Public Access Committee, or SPAC. Its purpose is to safeguard values dear to Oregonians such as freedom of speech and to offer educational, original and insightful information to the public, unfettered by the censorship and restrictions of the corporate media. SPAC also represents those unable to speak or participate in related hearings and discussions. SPAC's overall objective is to work with government and non-profit media organizations to create, manage and preserve Public Access television.

Public Access productions are unique, entertaining and provide educational and training opportunities not available elsewhere. Public Access has become part of Washington County living.

PEG Jurisdictions should continue to look at Public Access as an investment rather than an expense. Recognized programs such as "Leverage" and "Portlandia" employ personnel who trained and acquired expertise with Public Access.

Further, having met with the Governor's Office of Film and Television we can state that they support our efforts and appreciate the value of the output of Public Access.

Some SPAC members belong to OMPA (Oregon Media Production Association). OMPA helps create jobs and supports many independent film and TV programs. Public Access productions share the spirit embodied in University education. That is not to just inform but educate. And this benefits all Oregonians.

This document is our response to the five (5) options MACC presented to the Commissioners. After carefully reviewing all the information provided, we concluded that the MACC staff's solutions do not meet reasonable and affordable criteria, nor would they save Public Access in any meaningful way.

Our proposal represents an affordable solution, adapting the requirements of Public Access within the framework of MACC's relocation and consolidation of offices, as follows:

1. Reduce studios from three to two – eliminate the live link studio
 - a. Shares space such as conference rooms and restrooms
 - b. Calls for only an additional 500 sq ft for the medium studio

2. Reduce staffing from four (4) FTE to 1.75 FTE:
 - a. A Lead/Supervisor and Production Assistant
 - b. Includes retaining the current Production Assistant who is fully trained and can provide general studio and production assistance
 - c. This is equivalent to 2 part time employees for a total of \$65,000 a year for both. Another option is one (1) full time and one (1) part time employee, assuming a shared responsibility with Production Services.
 - d. Eliminates about \$250,000 from the Public Access budget in salaries and benefits (an estimate, only, as no actual salaries/benefits are available)
 - e. Reduces costs by employing part time staff.
3. Reduce studio availability to 28 hours weekly
 - a. From 40 hours to 28 hours
 - b. 5 pm to 10 pm, Tuesday through Friday, and 10 am to 6 pm Saturday
4. Reduce the number of edit systems from 7 onsite and 3 mobile to 4 onsite and 3 mobile
 - a. Reduces the space needed for edit bays to what MACC has already recommended
 - b. The retained and already trained Production Assistant will in turn provide training and general production assistance
 - c. Allows for a majority of edit needs to be met by the community
 - d. Allows for all of Production Services editing (what little is required) to continue
5. Continue live feed capability (at no additional cost), sponsored programming and community programming submissions
6. Continue ongoing Public Access series, such as Westside Cultural Alliance
 - a. Provides continuity of community programs
 - b. Allows for the Public and Community TV coordinator to continue producing long-standing programs like Water Spot, Conversations with Dr. Don, Orwell Today and other programs that have been in production for over five (5) years

7. Allow access to the Commission and Conference rooms as available
 - a. To be used for training, presentations or meetings
 - b. There is no cost for their use
 - c. Use can be scheduled allowing for PEG/MACC priority
8. Retaining the two (2) FTE for training:
 - a. Allows for the training of new producers and students
 - b. Ensures the continued quality and volume of submissions
9. Equipment checkout continues to be available. (If the mobile studio is retained it will continue to be rented out.)
 - a. Allows Public Access producers to continue non-Production Services programming of PEG events, topics and activities.
 - b. Public Access volunteers can serve as a backup Production Services when needed
 - c. Allows MACC clients like Virginia Garcia that utilize public access field producers to share critical healthcare information and broadcast presentations from the former Governor, US Senators and Representatives.
10. Retain public access broadcasting on channels 21 & 23 and Community Access Network (CAN) on Ch. 11.

While our proposal is similar to MACC's option #5, ours includes a considerable reduction in staff, space and hours of operation. It also represents a reasonable attempt to comply with PEG's request on September 9th that MACC find a way to have a fiscally acceptable program that retains the benefits enjoyed by PEG through Public Access.

MACC knew for 18 months that TVCTV needed to relocate, but chose not to share this information with PEG, the public and the people directly affected by the move. Thus, MACC prevented the volunteer producers and TVCTV staff from having time to gather the necessary information and resources to develop an alternate plan prior to the proposed September 9th vote. Nevertheless, we feel that what we are proposing here will work.

The finance committee contended that the drastic cuts to Public Access are motivated by the economy. And yet some of MACC's recommendations, while nearly eliminating Public Access, are based on inflated projections and policy changes that appear not to correspond to the actual costs and requirements of

Public Access. We are also puzzled about why MACC chooses to retain 100% of non-Public Access staff at their current salaries and full time status. Several positions do not seem to require full time staffing and appear heavy on administration. There also seems to be space allocated for employees who work mostly, if not exclusively outside the office. We encourage PEG to require a full audit of MACC's combined staffing and space requirements to ensure that public money is spent efficiently. We do not believe it is.

Note that the government access program, tied with MACC, represents what appears to be nearly 85% of the operating budget - which means that the weight of our recommended Public Access budget will be small compared to the total costs of MACC. We are confident that our proposal will result in opportunities for overall savings for all jurisdictions.

In summary, by general agreement and public testimony, Public Access provides significant value to the PEG jurisdictions, to the public, and to special interest and minority groups who depend on Public Access to address their respective communities. Thousands of residents watch, learn, are inspired and educated by the programs of Public Access Television. In addition, citizens and Oregon government officials and leaders use Public Access to communicate topical ideas and information. Multnomah County though also affected by the economy, still ensures that Public Access remains a priority investment.

This proposal reflects the actual experience and knowledge of the Producers and volunteers at TVCTV. They have been directly involved not only in their own productions but also as volunteer crew members and in various other studio functions. Therefore our proposal is based on actual hands-on knowledge and expertise as opposed to the MACC's options presented that are based on an untested assessment of actual operations. This alternative plan can be implemented at a fraction of the cost, staff and space that MACC is suggesting. Please make the motion, and vote on our (SPAC's) proposal.

Thank you.

Submitted by the Save Public Access Committee
Representing producers, volunteers, viewers and
supporters of Community and Public Access Television

Please submit questions to Dennis Gleason; Founding Director.

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www.SavePublicAccess.org