



CITY OF WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

Michael V. O'Brien
City Manager

cm2008sep18165119

Attachment for Item # 10.12 A

September 23, 2008

TO THE WORCESTER CITY COUNCIL

COUNCILORS:

I respectfully submit for the information of your Honorable Body the following update on the allocation of funding for the Public, Educational and Governmental (PEG) Access Channels, including the status of the contract with the City's public access television provider, WCCA, Inc.

I requested the Cable Television Advisory Committee (CTAC), in conjunction with members of my Administration, review the current entities receiving PEG funds associated with the Cable License upon execution of the Renewal Cable Television License with Charter Communications this past spring. This review included analysis of national best practices and models, determination of capital needs, development of performance standards, identification of strategies to ensure financial accountability to the subscribers and the development of long-term plans for enhancing access and strengthening outreach to residents.

After review and deliberation of those recommendations, it is my intention to further enhance the City's government access channel (Channel 12) to offer increased programming and a greater level of coverage and service to bring City government to the people. In addition to expanded coverage of public meetings at City Hall, my administration intends to afford City Council the ability to broadcast Standing Committee meetings from neighborhoods throughout the City on Channel 12. The City is also



pursuing enhance Channel 12 coverage during emergency situations such as snowstorms, tropical weather, and extreme heat/cold. A comprehensive report outlining my administration's strategy utilize PEG funding to take government to the people will be submitted in the coming weeks and will likely include recommendations for display monitors in City Hall to broadcast Channel 12, updated camera and broadcast equipment, a vehicle to support mobile broadcasts, computer and editing hardware and software, and improved infrastructure in City Hall.

Adhering to this commitment, I have developed an allocation formula that will seek to address these goals of bringing better access to residents and those subscribers who fund the cable license revenues. I have determined the following course of action with respect to the cable license fee revenues and capital payments:

1. The PEG Equipment/Facilities Funding allocation will be 60-20-20. Thus, of the \$500,000 payment to the City for equipment and facility funding, the PEG entities will receive the following:
 - a. 60% Public Access or \$300,000
 - b. 20% Educational Access or \$100,000
 - c. 20% Government Access or \$100,000
2. The cable license fee revenue allocation for the five-year term of the current Renewal Cable Television License with Charter Communications will be:
 - a. Calendar Year 1: Through December, 2008 the allocation formula will remain the same as the prior license agreement:
 - 60% Public Access
 - 20% Educational Access
 - 20% Government Access
 - b. Calendar Year 2: Commencing January 1, 2009, the allocation formula will be:
 - 55% Public Access
 - 20% Educational Access
 - 25% Government Access
3. Years 3 through 5: the allocation formula will be addressed based on identified needs and measured performance of each of the access entities.

This new approach to the allocation process and the utilization of cable revenues will involve coordination of multiple municipal departments and cooperation among the City Administration, Worcester Public Schools, and WCCA, Inc. This approach will include performance measures, evaluation tools, benchmarks, strategic planning, and targeting of resources and will provide for enhanced accountability and fiduciary responsibility for all PEG entities.

To ensure a seamless transition for WCCA, Inc., the City has offered WCCA a contract that will take effect October 1, 2008, ensuring a continuous contractual relationship with WCCA, Inc. and provide the organization funding continuity over the full term of the agreement.

I will ensure that the cable license fee revenues support increased and innovative programming, vital community and neighborhood outreach, and the ability to bring government and services to the people while holding all parties accountable to reasonable performance standards.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. O'Brien", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael V. O'Brien
City Manager