

**CITY OF MADISON
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL
CORRESPONDENCE**

Date: July 27, 2010

To: Members of the Ad-Hoc Madison City Channel Committee
 From: Brad Clark, City Channel Station Manager
 Subject: Service and Personnel Cuts – Various Scenarios

Service Priorities

The following list is a rundown of how I prioritize all of the regular productions we do. Obviously, the most important thing we do is our coverage of the Madison Common Council – and the list (which is certainly open for debate and discussion) goes in order from there. This prioritization also largely informed the next section, which discusses budget and service cuts. There may be some inconsistencies, but I generally tried to adhere to the guidelines in our Mission Statement.

1. Regular meeting coverage
 1. Madison Common Council
 2. Dane County Board (fully paid for)
 3. Board of Estimates
 4. Plan Commission
 5. Alcohol License Review Committee
2. Public Affairs Programming
 1. Know Your Candidates
3. Select “Ad-Hoc” productions
 1. Meetings of particular public interest (e.g. Landmarks on Edgewater)
4. Regular Meeting Coverage
 6. Transit and Parking Commission
 7. Ped, Bike, Motor Vehicle Commission
5. Public Affairs Programming
 2. The Mayor’s Report
 3. District Reports
6. Regular Meeting Coverage
 8. Commission on People with Disabilities
 9. Water Utility Board
7. Select “Ad-Hoc’ Productions
 2. Special Public hearings (e.g. Mayor’s budget hearings)
 3. Programs promoting other City agencies (Health Awards, Police/Fire Recruit Graduations, Police and other news conferences)
8. Public Affairs Programming
 4. Senior Beat
 5. Conexion Latina
 6. Access: City Hall
9. Community Bulletin Board
10. Select “Ad-Hoc” productions
 4. Presentations such as Downtown Rotaries, CNI, DMI, Wis Academy, etc

Budget cuts

Based on expenditures of \$500,000 per year:

Note: The following line is from the City Channel Manager official Job Classification:

“Develop and/or review proposals for individual productions and series. Determine budget and priorities for each and insure compliance with City Channel policies and standards. Assign financial, staff, and technical resources in a manner which will optimize these resources.”

I take it that one of the goals I should attempt to adhere to in the charge that I have been given in regards to these scenarios would be to indeed “optimize resources.”

Further, the following line is from the official Job Classification for City Channel Production Supervisor:

“On a back-up basis, produce and/or direct programming for City Channel 12 and other City agencies, including the coordination of the actual taping and electronic editing of raw material into a finished product. Coordinate all aspects of production including equipment set-up and testing, photography, lighting, editing, scripting, etc.”

Plus, of course, every job description includes the line “Perform related work as required.”

I did not try to fix exact dollar amounts to potential service cuts; for one thing, there’s a good deal of disagreement over the exact costs of our coverage of various meetings and so on. I simply tried to use my best judgment and attempted to minimize the disruption of our services.

One area that I did not address directly below, but which could be looked at, is the use of part-time, work-study or hourly personnel to serve not only as crew members, but also Directors for much of our meeting and public affairs coverage. This was the structure that was in place, in fact, for City Channel for most of its existence.

Before 1994, there were only three permanent staff members – the Station Manager, the Production Coordinator, and the Programming Coordinator, and the remainder of the staff consisted of hourly and work-study employees. If this agency is going to be forced to realize significant long-term savings, a potential return to a similar personnel structure may be worth exploring. Such a structure was able to allow City Channel for many years to meet adequate levels of professionalism in our productions while realizing significant budget savings.

While it is of course crucial that our productions meet minimum standards of professionalism, it may be possible to use staff with less experience in many production roles. Let’s be frank: We cover meetings and “talking heads” public affairs programs, where the main goal of the Director is primarily to make sure our cameras are showing the person who’s speaking. If we are able to achieve and maintain our current level of professionalism using work-study and hourly staff running cameras and our audio board, it isn’t a particular stretch to achieve a very similar level of professionalism on virtually all of our regular production activities using a well-trained and supervised part-time staff.

Further, technology such as the robotic camera system in Room 201 of the City-County Building could potentially also be used in Room 260 of the Madison Municipal Building, substantially reducing the crew requirements for both meeting coverage and the production of our public affairs programs.

Let me be clear: The present staffing structure, with permanent employees, lends stability to the organization and is certainly greatly preferred. I offer the above observations mainly as a “last-ditch” option.

Also, in order to minimize cuts to staff and services, I looked at other sections of our budget that could perhaps be cut first:

The very first cut I would propose is to cut our closed-captioning of our coverage of the Madison Common Council. This service is budgeted at \$10,000 per year. This service was added at the request of then-Mayor Soglin in 1995 or so. It’s important to remember that the decision to add captioning was not based on any data nor input from the hearing-impaired community. To this day we simply have no idea whatsoever how many people (if any) avail themselves of this service. In fact, there have been substantial periods of time over the past 15 years or so when, because of concerns over our budget or for technical reasons, we have not provided this service – and to the best of my knowledge and recollection we have never received a single complaint or inquiry. In the current climate, I think this service should be the first to be cut.

I also looked hard at our purchased services and supplies and I believe we could cut an additional \$5,000 from these accounts by omitting Conference/Meetings (Object # 54630 - \$500); Training and Travel (Object # 54640 - \$1,000); Tuition (54650 - \$2,000); Advertising (54910 - \$500) and Schedules (54913 - \$500); and \$500 of our annual postage budget (55140 – reduce from \$1,000 to \$500). Therefore:

10% (or \$50,000):

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| Delete closed captioning: | \$10,000 |
| Delete other purchased services and supplies | \$ 5,000 |
| Delete Asst Pgm Coord: Salary and Benefits: | \$31,815 |
| Delete some work-study crew members from certain public affairs programming and other duties: | \$ 2,000 |
| Total Cuts: | \$48,815 |

Under this scenario: *No service cuts* (beyond a much less robust Community Bulletin Board)

20% (or \$100,000):

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| Deletions as above: | \$48,815 |
| Delete 50% Prod/Dir 2: Salary and Benefits: | \$32,674 |
| Delete ½ Prod/Dir 2: Salary and Benefits: | \$32,674 |
| Total Cuts: | \$114,163 |

Rationale for this scenario: Joe Schraven was made an LTE and then permanent 50% Producer/Director by utilizing money from our PEG fee allocation. I did this in order to try to reward Joe for his excellent work and above-and-beyond dedication to City Channel. In retrospect, it was probably a mistake to create this position whose funding was reliant solely on PEG fees.

Chris Lang is our Producer/Director whose major responsibility is “project work”; that is, the creation of public service announcements, training or recruitment videos for client City and other agencies. The history of this particular Producer/Director position traces back to 1994, and the intent was that the revenue brought in by billings for the projects this person worked on would pay for the position.

However: 1. With tightening budgets every year, fewer and fewer agencies are able or willing to set aside money in their budgets for such projects (unless they receive federal or state grants, for example);

2. If the future of Madison City Channel is to *not* charge agencies (at least not General Fund agencies) for such project work, obviously we will be bringing in less revenue.

Service cuts under this scenario: Minimally 2 or 3 “Ad-Hoc” productions per month, such as Downtown Madison Rotary, Wisconsin Academy, Dane Dances, Madison Opera Up Close; some reconfiguring of the duties of remaining staff would be needed to provide Director coverage of meetings such as the Madison Common Council (currently directed by Joe). Some Directing duties, on an at least interim basis (Board of Estimates, Commission on People with Disabilities), may need to be assigned to other permanent staff (including Senior Staff).

30% (or \$150,000):

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| Deletions as above: | \$114,163 |
| Delete 1/3 Programming Coord: Salary and Benefits: | \$ 26,147 |
| Delete ¼ Cablecast Prod Tech: Salary and Benefits: | \$ 17,523 |
| Total Cuts: | \$157,833 |

Rationale for this scenario: Could some duties of these positions be handled either by Information Technology staff or additional duties for Senior Staff (equipment research and recommendations, Payroll, Master Control programming?) If we ceased providing our monthly program schedules in printed form, presumably that would lessen some responsibilities of the Programming Coordinator.

Service cuts under this scenario: Minimally an additional 2 “Ad-Hoc” productions per month (productions such as Summer Diversity Picnic, perhaps Police and Fire recruitment graduations; certainly more presentations by outside groups such as DMI or CNI, YWCA, TEMPO Madison); also most likely ceasing production of public affairs programs such as “Conexion Latina,” “Senior Beat,” and “Access: City Hall.”

40% (or \$200,000):

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| Deletions as above: | \$157,833 |
| Delete additional work-study/hourly crew members: | \$ 5,000 |
| Delete 1/5 Production Supv. Salary and Benefits: | \$ 18,292 |
| Delete 1/5 Station Mgr: Salary and Benefits: | \$ 21,425 |
| Total Cuts: | \$202,550 |

Service cuts under this scenario: Probably an additional 2 “Ad-Hoc” productions per month. Perhaps ceasing coverage of Water Utility Board, Commission on People with Disabilities.

50% (or \$250,000):

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| Deletions as above: | \$202,550 |
| Restore 1/3 Programming Coord: Salary and Benefits: | \$ 26,147 |
| Deletions as above: | \$176,403 |
| Delete ½ Programming Coord: Salary and Benefits: | \$ 39,220 |

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| Sub-Total Deletions: | \$215,623 |
| Delete ½ Producer/Director 1: Salary and Benefits: | \$ 15,924 |
| Sub-Total Deletions: | \$231,547 |
| Restore 1/5 Production Supv. Salary and Benefits: | \$ 18,292 |
| Deletions as above: | \$213,255 |
| Delete ¼ Production Supv: Salary and Benefits: | \$ 22,864 |
| Sub-Total Deletions: | \$236,119 |
| Restore 1/5 Station Manager: Salary and Benefits: | \$ 21,425 |
| Deletions as above: | \$214,694 |
| Delete ¼ Station Manager: Salary and Benefits: | \$ 26,781 |
| Total Cuts: | \$241,475 |

Service cuts under this scenario: An additional “Ad-Hoc” production per month?
 Perhaps ceasing coverage of Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Motor Vehicle Comm and Transit
 and Parking Commission