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# WCAT

Public, Educational, Government Programming

## Westford Select Board PEG Update

January 28, 2020



# WCAT Mission

- Provide core PEG services as described in the MOU with the Town, recording and archiving
  - Select Board, School Committee, Planning Board, etc.
  - Annual Town Meeting, Special Meeting coverage
  - Ad Hoc Town Requests, ie. Strategy Meeting, Stormwater
- Provide services most valued by the Westford Community as budget sustainably allows
  - Public Interest and Educational Programming
  - Training, Tech Assistance and Community Outreach
  - Community News

# Source of Funds

- 2020: WCAT forecast \$471K; 8% decline from '19
  - Declining Subscriber Revenue, Caution re Investments
- 91% of '19 income: Cable Subscriber fee revenues
  - Income from Subscriber fees is forecast to continue its slow decline going forward (cord-cutting)
  - 2019: 4% Investment Income; 5% Fundraising
- Westford CAT Staff and Board efforts have created some additional sources of revenue and 2020 budget includes a small increase in this area
  - \$30K 2020 Dollars forecast. \$26K 2019 Dollars Actual.

# 2020 Budgeting

- 2018-19 Board approved deficit spending
  - \$64K loss in 2018, \$22-42K loss in 2019 projected
  - 2020-22 Outlook indicates 6%-10% shortfalls
- 2020 Level Expense Budget would yield \$65K+ LOSS
- Board directed ED that balanced 2020 budget was essential to sustainable path for WCAT .
- WCAT is lean. Non-personnel expenses low.
  - 2019: 70% Total Compensation, 12% Occupancy, 18% Operational Expenses
  - Re-locating WCAT Studio not viable short term.

# Budget Choices

- Principal 2020 decision was between
  - Maintain existing Technical staff providing core service
  - Cut all staff to Part-Time proposed; BOD rejected
  - News Division with Full-Time professional journalist
- News Director FTE created Jan. 2015; not in MOU
- Many communities provide local news through a network of volunteers with light editorial support
- The BOD determined that the most sustainable way to provide the best mix of community services was through elimination of the full-time journalist position

# WCAT Future

- Board will support plans that best meet Westford's needs in a sustainable way. Member meeting 2/5.
- News will remain important in PEG programming
  - In-house coverage (ie. Kevin LaCoste, Stormwater, etc.)
  - Volunteer produced, or via Internships (WCAT model)
- Community participation invited in our search for a new Executive Director. Search Committee formed.
- WCAT and new ED will seek extensive community input on best mix of WCAT services
- Sustainability is key to high performance