



POLICY AND PROCEDURE MEMO

NO. 5.007
DATE: 7/12/2016

SUBJECT: ROCHESTER GOVERNMENT CHANNEL
GENERAL POLICY

D. W. F. H. H. H.
CITY MANAGER

I. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this document is to provide overall guidance and direction to staff and volunteers engaged in operation of the Government Channel. The Government Channel's Mission is to make local government more accessible and transparent to Rochester residents.

A. Channel Designation

The City of Rochester will establish a Government Television Channel, which shall be known as the "Rochester Government Channel" or "RGC". This channel will be established on cable channel 26. The term RGC applies to channel 26, and the on-line content delivered by the City of Rochester.

B. Channel Administration

General day to day operations of the government channel, including oversight of policies and procedures, are overseen by the City manager or designee. Policies are reviewed by the Government Channel committee and adopted by City Council.

II. PROGRAMMING POLICY

The City of Rochester's Government Channel is not the same as a "Public Access" channel. Programming shall be generally limited to serve city functions and operations.

A. Types of acceptable programming include:

1. Emergency notification from municipal departments and state authorities that concerns the community will be given a priority.
2. Live cablecasts and or recorded cablecasts of municipal government meetings, including "video on demand" of meetings via web and future content platforms. Generally, this will consist of: City Council and Planning Board meetings and workshops, Police Commission, Zoning Board of Adjustment, and School Board. Other municipal meetings can be considered as staff time and schedule allows.

Meetings of official public record, which are broadcast live, are shown gavel to gavel and are not edited for content. Meetings in which there are



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long delays for recesses or executive sessions may be edited out of repeats/playback, providing original copy is not edited.

3. **Bulletin Board Messaging.**
Municipal departments may use the bulletin board to post messages including, but not limited to community emergencies, public meeting schedules, dog licensing, car registration, voter registration, road construction detours, water/sewer work, and information on programs offered by the library and recreation departments. Announcements of events and activities must be sponsored in-part by a municipal department. Announcements from County, Federal and State agencies are permitted as staff time and cablecast schedule permits.
4. **Educational, Outreach Programming and Public Service Announcements.**
Programming produced by staff serves the objective of creating a better understanding of municipal government functions and services, as well as illustrating issues that impact municipal functions and our community. Public Service Announcements must identify the City of Rochester and City Department, where appropriate, as sponsor or producer.

Programming concerning county, regional, and federal government will be given consideration as time and scheduling allows.

5. **Other Programming.**
The RGC upon occasion will air special programming such as city sponsored events, budget hearings, and election night results. Other requests from administration will be considered if event meets policy criteria outlined in this document. Candidate's forums produced by a non-partisan group are allowed when the format allows for all candidates or sides of an issue to be heard on an equal basis and within the same presentation format and of equal time.
6. **Programming produced by an outside agency.**
Programming whose subject matter addresses goals and concerns of the municipal departments, or local state and federal government, may be considered, subject to approval by city staff, and as scheduling time allows. Example: Public service announcements produced by the Ad Council on seat belt safety. Storm Water produced by the Storm water coalition and UNH.



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B. Programming Restrictions

The following types of programming are prohibited from broadcast on the Government Channel by State and Federal law:

1. Political / partisan programming, (except within the context of official public meetings).
2. Promotion of political and candidate events outside of City of Rochester public meetings or forums.
3. Forums hosted by a partisan group.
4. Candidate's statements or commercials for any public office.
5. Commercial Programming - Commercial programming, including paid advertising material.
6. Copyrighted material will not be broadcast unless clearances have been obtained and documented.
7. Programming that contains material that violates local, State or Federal statutes.

C. Use of City Equipment

City-owned video and related production equipment shall be restricted to use by City personnel or authorized volunteers for City activities. Loaning of equipment for personal or outside agency use shall not be authorized.

D. Recorded Meeting Access

Updated document forthcoming
Edits made March 2022 - CP



1. ~~DVDs of meetings are generally retained for a period of up to one year, but retention period is subject to change to meet storage needs, costs and changing technologies. Requests for copies of recorded meetings on DVD can be made through the City Clerk's Office for a fee.~~ Previously broadcast public meetings are available to view on line for free, 24/7, at www.rochesternh.net. Free internet access and ability to watch public meetings on line is available at the Rochester Public Library during their open hours.

2. Retention and Ownership of Recorded Media

Digital recordings shall be the property of the City of Rochester. It shall be a general policy to not retain all recordings of produced programs, meetings, and recorded events. Recordings of Public



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Meetings shall not be considered an official record of any meeting and there shall be no liability for inadvertent erasure or omissions.

3. Human Errors

In the event of human error or technical difficulty results in the failure to broadcast or record a public meeting, or in the event human error results in the broadcast of incorrect information over the RGC, the City of Rochester, its officers, employees and agents shall be held harmless.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

A. Editorial Rights

The Service is an operating entity of the City of Rochester and, as such, reserves the right to identify any material as unsuitable for production or distribution and to submit material for review to the Legal Department prior to broadcast.

B. Appeal process

Requests that are a departure from established policy is subject to approval by the City Manager, who shall, if necessary, direct questions of appropriateness to the City Council for resolution. A significant departure from established policy is subject to authorization by the City Council and review by the Legal Department.

IV. AMENDMENTS

The policy established herein for the use of the City's government access channel may be amended as required upon the recommendation of the City Manager and approval of the City Council.

Upon initial adoption and any subsequent amendment by the City Council, the City Manager shall promulgate such administrative procedures as are necessary to ensure the efficient operation of the City's government access channel in compliance with this policy.