

**Hudson/North Hudson Community Access Cable/Media (The River Channel)
Policy and Guidelines (5/28/2024)**

Mission

Hudson/North Hudson Community Access Cable/Media (hereinafter referred to as "River Channel") is operated by the Hudson/North Hudson Community Access Cable/Media Board (hereinafter referred to as "Joint Cable Board") The mission of the River Channel is to make local government and local information more accessible to the citizens of Hudson, North Hudson, and surrounding communities. The River Channel will promote citizen access, freedom of speech, exposure to local government and further government accountability by providing a direct link between local government, the cable television network and internet channels (YouTube and Facebook). It also aims to provide programs that may be of interest to area residents, such as Wisconsin programming, news, or information. The purpose of this document is to ensure that the public and government access television channels, internet channels, equipment, and facilities are managed in a fair and equitable manner.

The Joint Cable Board oversees the operation of the Cable Television Public Educational Governmental (PEG) channels 6 & 15 including the media channels YouTube and Facebook. This includes development of policies, approving of all financial transactions, staffing, programming, ensuring customer service standards, responding to franchise concerns. The River Channel Manager reports directly to the Joint Cable Board, manages the facilities and operations, working independently implementing the policies set forth by the board.

Government Programming Priorities

To meet this mission, the River Channel's activities will include the following prioritized programming and services:

1. Local governmental meetings.
2. Programs regarding local government services.
3. Reports to the citizens from elected or appointed public officials (e.g. Legislative Update).
4. Productions that feature community services, issues and/or special governmental meetings.
5. Productions concerning current events or community issues (e.g. Know Your Candidates).
6. Productions with a cultural or educational element.
7. State government meetings of special local interest.
8. Programming obtained from outside sources which furthers the River Channel's mission.

Programming fulfilling the mission of the River Channel shall be primarily informational in nature, but this does not preclude the cablecasting/streaming of events where some advocacy may take place.

Costs

The Joint Cable Board may recover the cost of production through billings. Other organizations may apply for the use of facilities and staff on a fee basis.

Coverage

All public meetings will be covered gavel-to-gavel, and no editing of any sort shall be performed. Exceptions to this include:

1. Addition of title and credit pages for cablecasting and streaming of replays.
2. Coverage lost due to technical considerations.
3. Deletion of footage from closed session title page.

Responsibility for Programming

Organizations utilizing the River Channel's facilities and resources bear sole responsibility for the contents and materials used in all programs produced by or for them. This responsibility includes obtaining all necessary releases from program participants, obtaining any required copyright clearances, and complying with all other policies and guidelines established for programming to be released on the River Channel's outlets. Such users shall sign a liability release form prior to the cablecasting of any information or program for that user. The liability release shall hold harmless the Joint Cable Board for any breach of copyright or other liabilities due to the negligence or error of the user agency. All programming except for meetings will carry a disclaimer of responsibility for their content.

Written information submitted to the River Channel from the public for inclusion in the electronic community bulletin board will be edited where necessary by staff to maximize the impact, clarity, and efficiency of the message.

Selection and scheduling of programs, and live events for cablecasting and streaming are solely the responsibility of River Channel's staff as per the priorities outlined above.

Retention of Programs

The River Channel will retain the recordings of meetings indefinitely on the YouTube channel as well as digital recordings at the studio. Requests for hard copies of such recordings will be granted and the River Channel has the right to require compensation for such as per the River Channel's rate structure. Nothing in the above is intended to excuse the River Channel from the requirements of the State of Wisconsin's Open Records Act.

All regular River Channel productions (i.e., regular meeting coverage) and all special video works produced by the River Channel may be under the copyright control of the Joint Cable Board unless one or more of the following apply:

1. Language in a grant, or other funding source which pre-exists the production of the work, establishes a different, related entity as the copyright holder.
2. An agreement is signed, prior to production of the work, granting ownership of copyright to a different, related entity, such as the funding source or the host or moderator of the program.

Limitations

Public comments made on Facebook, YouTube or Zoom are not considered part of the official meeting and are subject to being turned off or edited when deemed offensive. The facilities and resources of the River Channel shall not be used for the following:

1. Any advertisements on behalf of a political candidate. Note: this does not preclude the production by the River Channel of programming which includes the opportunity for all candidates for a particular elective post or proponents of all sides of an issue to appear in a fair and equitable fashion, i.e., Know Your Candidates.
2. Any advertisements including specific messages on behalf of or opposing any measure under consideration by the City, State, Village, County or School District. Note: This will not preclude the production of programming that provides information on such issues if all sides of the issue are available to be presented, or the production of programs where all sides of an issue are debated/discussed by their proponents/opponents.
3. **Any promotional material concerning products or services should be presented for the purpose of any solicitation of funds or items of value by other than government or non-profit groups.**
4. Any information concerning gambling, lotteries, gift enterprises, or the like.
5. Any material which constitutes libel, slander, pornography, violation of trademark or copyright, or which might violate any local, state, or federal laws, including FCC regulations.

Scheduling

Scheduling the use of cable programming time shall be the sole responsibility of the River Channel Manager. Scheduling will be in accordance with the Mission Statement set forth by the Joint Cable Board and the availability of equipment and staff resources.

Equipment Purchase and Replacement

Equipment purchased 100% for use in broadcasting/streaming from Hudson City Hall, North Hudson Village Hall and the station is authorized to be repaired or replaced by the Joint Cable Board. If possible, at least 3 quotes will be presented to the Joint Cable Board, along with the manager's recommendation.

Sometimes equipment that was purchased 100% by the Joint Cable Board may be given to another government body such as the St Croix County or the Hudson School District for use. That equipment will then be considered the property of that governing body.

Equipment used in broadcasting/streaming that is not considered the property of the River Channel may be replaced or repaired generally with prior approval of the Joint Cable Board. Usually, the repair or replacement is on a 50/50 split cost basis. At least 3 quotes will be presented along with the River Channel Manager's recommendation. In emergency situations that would affect broadcasting, any repair or replacement cost may be approved by the manager and then placed on the next Joint Cable Board meeting agenda.

Programs Submitted by the Public

The submissions of programs to the River Channel's cable programming can be made by residents of Hudson/North Hudson or at the discretion of the Cable Manager. Each program submitted for cablecast on the River Channel by a member of the public must be accompanied by a signed and dated Program Acknowledgement. Producers that are minors must have an adult co-signer. Any producer or parent co-signer who signs a Program Acknowledgement is responsible for all content within that program, and agrees to fully indemnify the City, Village, Joint Cable Board, and staff thereof, and hold the same harmless from all claims, damages and costs that may arise from the cablecast of the program covered by the Acknowledgement.

Any producer checking out equipment must be a resident of Hudson/North Hudson and sign a release form stating that the equipment will be used to produce programming for the River Channel. The River Channel Manager and/or the Joint Cable Board will have the final authority to determine eligibility for equipment usage. The River Channel Manager also has the authority to bring in outside programming that would be of interest to the residents. The River Channel does not allow public submissions to the YouTube and Facebook channels.

The River Channel Manager and/or the Joint Cable Board do not censor or pre-screen programming. Therefore, programming content must be identified in the Program Acknowledgement with sufficient particularity to allow the River Channel to properly categorize the programming. Programming is categorized to select the appropriate channel location and time for airing, and to allow inclusion of a disclaimer if staff deems it necessary. The Joint Cable Board and the River Channel Manager may require disclaimers to be added to the beginning and/or end of programming material.

Programming submitted by the public must meet the following requirements:

1. Public access to the equipment and facilities cannot not be used for direct financial gain or commercial purposes. Programs must be non-commercial and may not contain any solicitation of funds, advertising, or material that promotes a commercial product, trade, business, service, lottery, or gambling endeavor.
2. Programs must not contain any unlawful use of copyrighted material. Producers are responsible for obtaining all necessary copyright and other intellectual property clearances.
3. Programs must not contain any material that is libelous, slanderous or which constitutes an invasion of privacy.

4. Programs must not contain any material that is obscene.
5. Programs must not contain any material that violates any state or federal law.
6. Programs may not display or promote the illegal use drugs or alcohol. Coverage of community events may include alcohol consumption where alcohol is legally served.

Failure to comply with these requirements may result in immediate and permanent denial of further rights including the right to submit programming, content or use programming equipment and facilities.

Underwriting

Producers may receive underwriting support for programming. The term "underwriting" means a donation made to a Producer for which the donor receives a brief written acknowledgment at the beginning and end of the program(s). Underwriting support shall be solely to support the cost of producing a program or programs and shall not include a fee, payment, or commission to the producer. Any underwriting must be identified on the Program Acknowledgement.

Producers receiving underwriting can acknowledge the underwriting by a written message at the beginning and/or end of the program which states: "Underwriting for this program was provided by -- The Name of the Underwriter." No expansion of this statement is permitted. No voice-over is permitted.

Termination of Producer Submission

In the event the River Channel staff determines that a program violates any of the requirements above, staff may immediately cease cablecasting the program and notify the producer. River Channel staff may also determine that such violation warrants suspension of the producer's privileges. The producer will receive a written notice concerning the staff's determination and the period in which a producer's production rights will be suspended.

Any person that disagrees with a decision by staff may request a review and determination by the Joint Cable Board. Such a request must be made in writing within 30 days of the date of the staff's determination and directed to the Chair of the Joint Cable Board 901 4th Street, Suite 15, Hudson, WI 54016.

The Joint Cable Board will hold a hearing concerning any such appeal and issue a final determination within 30 days of the hearing. In the event of the staff's determination that a violation occurred is sustained, the suspension of producer privileges may be sustained or modified at the Joint Cable Board discretion. A producer may lose privileges permanently. All programs submitted will become property of the River Channel and stored for up to 1 year.

Producer Submitted Program Scheduling

The River Channel Manager has discretion over scheduling of dates and times for airing of programming. Replay of programming is left up to the discretion of the manager as the schedule permits. If a producer

is unable to obtain scheduling as desired, the producer may appeal the manager's decision to the Joint Cable Board. Submitters of programming material for cablecast must understand that the River Channel operates an automated system and channel space may be limited according to playback hours and availability. The following is generally the priority for program scheduling in the event of conflicts for time slots:

1. Regularly scheduled, repeat programming.
2. First run, Citizen-produced, programs.
3. Repeat, Citizen-produced, programs.
4. Sponsored programs.

Equipment and Facilities Use

Equipment or facilities must be reserved by producers in person at the River Channel office. Appropriate forms must be signed and submitted. Producers under 18 years old must have an adult co-sign all forms. The co-signer is responsible for financial or legal claims connected with the minor's use of the equipment or facilities. Producers under 15 years of age may use equipment and facilities only if accompanied by the co-signer during such use.

An equipment request should be submitted at least 2 days, but not more than 2 months, before the requested use and use will be subject to prior requests. The request must itemize the equipment to be used. The request form will be used to check the inventory when equipment is returned. Equipment will be available for pick-up and return by appointment during normally scheduled access hours. The units may be borrowed for up to 48 hours during the week and 72 hours over the weekend.

Producers using the River Channel equipment will always be under the authority of the River Channel staff concerning proper use of such equipment. Producers using the portable equipment must identify themselves to persons being videotaped and obtain permission before videotaping. Volunteers may not identify themselves as employees, agents or representatives of the City or Village, the Joint Cable Board, or the cable operator. Producers may not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol while using River Channel equipment or facilities.

Producers must immediately notify the River Channel of any damage to equipment sustained while in the Producers' possession. Producers will indemnify and hold harmless the City, the Village, the Joint Cable Board, and the cable operator from and against any damages, claims, causes of action including attorney's fees, liabilities, and costs resulting from their use of the equipment or facilities or the programming produced. Producers assume full responsibility for such equipment or facilities and will be liable for misuse, theft, or damage, other than normal wear and tear, which occurs while the equipment or facilities are in their possession.

Assistance from the River Channel Manager or a River Channel employee may be requested by those needing help with adding titles, credits, or disclaimers to the program they are submitting (subject to availability). The River Channel will not otherwise exercise editorial control over the content of submitted programs and will cablecast any program that is technically sound and does not violate any River Channel policies and guidelines.

Administration

The Joint Cable Board may, on a case-by-case basis, waive portions of these procedures and requirements as may be deemed necessary or advisable. The Joint Cable Board reserves the right to amend these rules at any time as is deemed necessary or appropriate.