



Trustees 2020-2021

Bob Duthaler Pres.- 2020

Dave Garb VP – 2021

Dave Ambrosy

Recording Sec.- 2021

Linda Besink Treasurer- 2020

Anthony Pagliuco

Corresponding Sec. – 2020

Jeff Arban- 2021

Lee Beckerman- 2020

Stephanie Gibbons- 2020

Darryl Love- 2021

Your Municipal Communication Resource

Connecting Your Town to Your Residents

Finish Strong

The end of the year is in sight. Less than three months to go and we will be done with 2020. I am sure I am not alone in saying “I can’t wait for 2020 to end”. But until that time, we still have a lot of things to do in 2020. Even through this pandemic and an anything but normal way of living, things continued to move forward. The question is did you? Did you move forward or did you stand still?



I am happy to say that JAG and the board continues to move forward. We understand, perhaps now more than ever, the importance of keeping the organization moving forward, staying on top of concerns that face our members and growing the organization. I can’t stress enough both my and the boards’ commitment to this organization.

In this newsletter you will learn of a new Ad-Hoc Committee that is chaired by your Vice-President Dave Garb. He will let you know about a new Leadership Development Committee, its role within our organization, how it interfaces with other committees and more. I urge you to read his article and look for continued updates from this committee. The Leadership Development Committee will be a driving force to help grow and move this organization forward by providing the necessary tools for the board, committees and the organization.

As I mentioned last month, the Membership Committee will be reaching out to our members to let them know all the things the organization is doing for our members, ask what you need from your membership and to make our members aware of everything that JAG has to offer. It has come to both the boards and membership committee’s attention that not all our members might be aware of everything that our organization has to provide for its members. Please take the time to answer their questions, reach out to them with your questions and explore all this organization has to offer its members.

The External Relations Committee continue to bring in exciting vendors and presentations to our monthly meetings and this month is no exception. Please join us at our next General Membership Meeting on October 28th at which Cablecast will do a special presentation to our membership. Please look in this newsletter for an article crafted for our membership by Cablecast to inform you of their latest offerings. Again I feel it’s important to point out that the External Relations Committee continues to do extensive work on the JAG website: www.jagonline.org along with posting on our social media accounts on a regular basis. I ask you to follow and like JAG on our social media platforms and to sharing our post as well. Links for all our social media accounts can also be found on our website and on this page. Please answer the call from this committee as they try to gather information from our members to post in our password protected section!

The JAG Awards Committee understands the importance to bring to light all the great videos and work our member stations create each year. They also understand that not all stations, independent producers or volunteers operate at the same level. The committee will be exploring different categories and levels to try and make a level playing field for all who enter. Start going through the videos you have created and prepare them to enter the NEW JAG Awards!

Inside This Issue

New Leadership Development Committee	pg2
General Meeting Agenda	pg3
Feature: Cablecast	pg4
Membership: <i>Understanding Member Benefits</i>	pg5
Legislative: <i>Verizon Franchise Renewal</i>	pg6
Volunteers	pg7
Bits & Bites	pg8
Spotlight: West Milford	pg9
Committees Corner	pg10

General Meeting Schedule 2020

Oct. 28- Virtual

Presentation- Cablecast

Dec. 2- Virtual

Presentation- DeSisti

Jan. 27, 2021- TBD

REORGANIZATION

Presentation- JVC

Feb. 24- TBD

Presentation- TelVue

Mar. 31- TBD

Presentation- TBD

Apr. 28- TBD

Presentation- TBD

May 27- TBD

Presentation- RUSHWORKS

Jun. 24- TBD

Presentation- TBD

Sept. 29- TBD

Presentation - Varto

FOLLOW US ON:



Bob Duthaler, President

The Production Committee currently has a survey to all members about contributing to Access New Jersey. The committee is working on the idea of bringing back this popular show from the past. This show highlights special events, people or happenings in your community that might be of interest to a wider audience. By sharing these segments with JAG, the committee is able to create a magazine format show in which several segments from our members are concentrated in one thirty-minute show. I urge you to participate in the survey, think of ways you can contribute to this program and when the time comes, we ask that all member station air the show as well.

Currently I am in the process of reforming the Conference Committee and exploring ways to get more members involved and bring the best possible outcome during this pandemic. Part of this process includes the idea of holding a Virtual Conference. To that end, I urge all members, their staff, volunteers (and anyone who reads this) to answer the following questions:

- a. Should JAG Hold a virtual conference in the spring?
- b. Would you attend a virtual conference?
- c. Would you pay to attend a virtual conference if the rate was reasonable?
- d. What is the ideal number of days the conference should take place in?

Finally, as I mentioned each month in my article, JAG as an organization is a very social group. Face to face interaction at this point continues to not be possible but there are work arounds. I encourage you to take part in these events, webinars, monthly virtual meetings, impromptu online gatherings and perhaps an online happy hour! Stay Home, Stay Safe and make the most of this time with your family and loved ones.

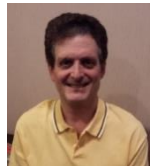
Bob Duthaler
President, Jersey Access Group

JAG Creates a New Committee

Committee Update

Dave Garb, Leadership Development Committee Chair

At the JAG's Annual Retreat, held this past August, It was decided by the executive board that a new committee needed to be established. This committee would aid all the other committees with communicating JAG's messages to that of our member communities.



Hence, the Leadership Development Committee was formed.

This new committee is composed of the Chairs or Vice Chairs from their respected committees, as well as those individuals that are knowledgeable in areas to make this Leadership Development Committee (LDC) succeed.

To understand the communication needs for the LDC, we will be looking back into our Policy and Procedures to help guide JAG forward. LDC will be working closely with External Relations, Membership and Production, in order to promote the JAG brand, relate what we stand for, and help increase our membership.

One way we will help to accomplish this, is that the LDC will work in unison to create or rewrite our marketing documentation so that will be clear and uniformed.

We will also be taking our marketing ideas to production in-order to create messages into an electronic format that we are all very accustomed to. In time we will be reaching out to all of our members to discuss the importance of joining a committee with you, and putting your skills to use for JAG's future, as well as that of Access Television.



P.O. Box 164, Metuchen, New Jersey 08840

Web Site: www.jagonline.org ♦ E-mail: JAGinfo@jagonline.org

NJ Chapter of NATOA & Affiliate of the NJ League of Municipalities

GENERAL MEETING AGENDA – 12:12pm Start Time

Wednesday, October 28th Phone #: (727) 731-9722

Join the online meeting: <https://join.freeconferencecall.com/bduthaler>

12:12-12:20p.m. *Welcome*

- Call to Order & Additions to Agenda [Chair or vice chair if chair not available].
- Approve minutes of June 2020 meeting [JAG Secretary or as designated by the president].
- Member Introductions [Roll-Call by Chair]
- Welcome new members [Membership Chair].

12:20p.m.- 12:50p.m. *Discussion* TBA

- Future Topic Ideas

12:50-1:40pm *Presentation*

- Cablecast, Randy Visser, Sales Engineer

1:40pm-1:50pm *Committee Reports* Attached

- Standing Committee and Ad Hoc Participation/Members Update – Report from Vice President
- Standing Committee Reports
 - Executive [Bob Duthaler Chair, Dave Garb Vice Chair]
 - *Report Highlights and Questions*
 - Finance [Linda Besink Chair, Jeff Arban Vice Chair]
 - *Report Highlights and Questions*
 - Production [Lee Beckerman Chair, Anthony Pagliuco, Vice Chair]
 - *Report Highlights and Questions*
 - External Relations [Geoffrey Belinfante Chair, Dustin Dumas Vice Chair]
 - *Report Highlights and Questions*
- Ad Hoc Committee Reports
 - Membership [Stephanie Gibbons Chair, Darryl Love Vice Chair]
 - *Report Highlights and Questions*
 - Legislative [Dave Garb Chair]
 - *Report Highlights and Questions*
 - JAG Awards [George Fairfield Chair]
 - *Report Highlights and Questions*
 - Leadership Development [Dave Garb Chair]
 - *Report Highlights and Questions*
 - Conference [TBD]
 - CLOSED

1:50p.m.-2:00p.m. *Continuing Business*

- Vote on amendment to the bylaws (To change term of Trustee from two years to three years)

2:00p.m.-2:15p.m. *New Business*

- Discussion & Assistance: Who needs help?
- Nominations for Board Trustees (5 seats)
- Other New Business

2:15p.m. *Announcements/next meeting.... Adjournment*.

Stay Safe! Stay Home!

Register for the JAG website by sending an email to bduthaler@jagonline.org

Look For Webinars and Ongoing Virtual Social Hang/Happy Hour Sessions throughout the Fall.

The next meeting is Wednesday, Dec 2nd.

Details can be found in upcoming JAG Newsletter.

Cablecast Community Media Offers New Tools and Paths for Content Distribution Feature

By Randy Visser, Sales Engineer, Cablecast

What a difference a year makes. Last Fall I joined a group of JAG members for your December 2019 meeting. It really was a pleasure getting to see everyone in-person at the meeting. We were able to share ideas about a range of topics important to all of the PEG organizations, and I was able to demo our Cablecast Play-out server for the group. And...we all enjoyed some delicious Italian food together. Remember sharing food with friends? Remember sharing thoughts with other people, in a room, without masks ?



Ten months have passed, and we're all living in a different world. The need to communicate with one another is more critical now than it's ever been. And, from what I'm seeing in the marketplace, local PEG services are suddenly being used in new ways to help our communities monitor and participate in the important decisions coming before our local leaders. I've rejoined my own town's Communications Committee as we re-assess our video communications infrastructure and review how we distribute this important content to our local citizens. Again, what a difference a year makes. Suddenly, the email threads are growing long as more people jump into the discussions; Why can't we see what's happening in the High School on our local channel? I can't find the links on the town's web site to watch the meeting replays (Video On Demand). How can I watch these meetings if I no longer subscribe to cable TV? Sound familiar?

My job as a sales engineer for Tightrope's Cablecast Community Media division gives me a unique perspective on how our communities are responding to the kinds of questions I raise. Every day I talk with people like you who are working to find the best, most efficient way to connect organizations, and individuals, with their community using our legacy cable TV system. That's right, I'm referring to the "legacy" of cable TV in our country. You know the pitch. We collect Franchise Fees for the use of our community's right of ways. In exchange, we use some of these fees to manage "access" by non-commercial users under the headings Public, Educational and Government. These local PEG channel(s) form the technical pathways for us to share unique video content. But who's watching ?

In my little town the cable giant Charter/Spectrum came in and "slammed" our one PEG channel far up into the netherworld of an expanded digital network. If you didn't pay for the more expensive digital package, you probably could no longer watch our local programming. And even if you could, the image was compressed into a bad standard definition image. Our local council members complained that people were no longer watching, or engaging them as a result. What to do?

Well, in the State of Maine, we used our state organization (CTAM – Community Television Association of Maine) to introduce legislation that eventually became law forcing Charter (and all cable providers) to carry these PEG channels on the lowest tiers of programming, while providing an HD transmission path so that these local channels will match the technical quality of the other channels. Stay tuned as we wait for the First District Federal Court of appeals to hear the latest argument from the National Cable Television Association. If we prevail, the ruling will set a new national precedent and could eventually give JAG members an opportunity to request the same basic paths for content distribution in HD.

The other obvious solution is to provide new pathways for program distribution in our communities including live streaming and VOD to emerging video platforms like the internet, and Over The Top (OTT) platforms like AppleTV/Roku. Cablecast has responded with new tools to provide one-button distribution of your content to these emerging TV platforms. We also "spun up" a new cloud service for customers struggling with the distribution of Zoom meetings. Screenweave Live will take your meeting feeds and distribute the content to any platform you may be using, including Facebook or YouTube Live, while also pushing the content directly into your server and out to your cable provider, your web site, and AppleTV/Roku. We're able to provide this "heavy lifting" in the cloud through our Reflect service at a super competitive price providing a seamless delivery system for all of your content. I'm looking forward to seeing everyone, virtually, at your upcoming October 28th meeting. I look forward to continuing some of the conversations we started last year, and demonstrating some of the new features we're releasing on the Cablecast platform. We'll also provide some great gifts and new "swag" for participants, so please join us, and let's make this year a memorable meeting for all the right reasons. No masks required!

Stephanie Gibbons, Membership Committee Chair

2020 has been a year of constant change for JAG. It has forced many JAG members out of necessity to take new leaps in communication in the virtual world. As an organization JAG has also had to make changes, that includes handling our monthly meetings and developing new services.



The Membership Committee is making a commitment to re-engage with our members. We have several goals for this endeavor: 1) We want to talk with you one on one, establishing a dialog with our members. 2) We want to re-affirm all your contact information and know that you and the appropriate officials are receiving the information that JAG is sending out. 3) We want to remind you of all the benefits your membership in JAG entitle you to. 4) We want to know which benefits you are using and if their value to you and your media facility. 5) We ask for your help by contributing to the building of a library of franchise agreements and policies & procedures that will be a valuable resource for our members.

By the way did you know that there are a few new benefits that JAG established just this year because of the COVID 19 pandemic? Those new JAG benefits are marked with an *.

Below is the list of JAG Benefits. Please take a look and think about if they are a benefit to your media facility.

JAG Member Benefits

JAG WEBSITE provides information that can help streamline your community media- operation and a database of JAG's documents.

MONTHLY MEETINGS provides a forum to discuss best practices, problem solving strategies, and supporting municipal communication infrastructures.

JAG E-MAIL NETWORK facilitates communication among members and provides members a way to address any related issues —from ads for staff positions to technical troubleshooting.

SHARED PROGRAMMING helps members get their programs out to a broader audience through the use of a shared server.

MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER provides information on communication issues, updates on committee activities, vendor product updates, and schedule of meetings, webinars, and other conferences.

MEMBER ASSISTANCE provides opportunities to address member needs including technical support at members meetings and speaking as an advocate before the managing body of your media operation.

PRODUCT DEMONSTRATIONS provides members with updates from vendors on the latest products specific to our industry.

***JAG WEBINARS** provides members with updates on legislative and operational issues

***VIDEO LIBRARY** provides members with the ability to review past vendor presentation and webinars

***JAG VIRTUAL SOCIAL HANG** provides members with a networking opportunity to participate in and informal roundtable with other members

NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES provides members with the ability opportunities to participate in meetings with various content providers and related agencies.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE provides members with the opportunity to speak with manufacturers, see the latest technology, and attend seminars providing assistance in community media operation and distribution of content on multiple platforms. www.easternvideoexpo.org

JAG VIDEO AWARDS provides members with the opportunity to be recognized for the work of their communities.

JAG RECOGNITION AWARDS provides the opportunity to celebrate the spirit of community leadership, dedication, and outstanding service.

DISCOUNTS on JAG conference registration, JAG Awards submissions, and NATOA annual conference.

NATOA WEBINAR access at member rate.

As you can see JAG offers its members quite a few benefits. But it's up to the member to take advantage of all that JAG offers. The membership committee wants to assist you in this effort by hearing your thoughts about how we are doing and what else we can do.

The Membership committee is in the transition of reallocating it's efforts by focusing on the current members of the organization and doing our best to serve your needs. The committee members will be reaching out to you soon so please answer our call so JAG can serve you better.

The following comments was sent to the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities.

September 29, 2020

Attn. BPU - Office of Cable Television & Telecommunications

RE: Comments on the Statewide Renewal of Verizon. BPU Docket No. CE20080516



JAG - the Jersey Access Group, the non-profit organization representing local government, educational and public television channels throughout the state of New Jersey would like to submit our comments into the record regarding Verizon's New Jersey Statewide Franchise renewal.

Local PEG (Public, Education, Government) stations are main source for community communications, news and involvement with our municipal government officials and school boards. These PEG stations provide important information directly to our local residents. This fact couldn't be more apparent than during the current pandemic. PEG stations throughout the state have had to creatively redefine themselves in order to get vital messages out from their respective municipalities to the general public.

JAG would like the following concerns specific to Verizon franchise renewal to be considered:

1. HD (High Definition) Television has been around for over 15 years. By 2009, all television networks had switched to this amazing technology, except for PEG. PEG has been denied this technology and kept in the SD (Standard Definition) bottomless pit. The problem is, SD has gone away. Replacement equipment is no longer being made and impossible to obtain. PEG stations already have converted to HD equipment for content creation and play back, but now need to downgrade their signal to a substandard level for Verizon.

The Federal Cable Act states that we (PEG facilities) are not to be treated any differently from any other network/cable channel. It is evident in this situation that PEG channels are.
2. To go along with the first point, PEG also has not been allowed to list their programming in the channel guides. In a time where people search programming guides and record programs from information listed in them, PEG channels have been left out. Again, PEG is treated differently.
3. Verizon never completed their buildout as originally proposed. Many municipalities are in limbo as to whether it will ever happen. Many smaller communities are still in need cable competition and high speed internet access as promised by Verizon.
 - a. There are many communities in which Verizon has started buildout and has yet to complete it. Leaving portions of a municipality's residents in the dark when it comes to local government communication, especially during a pandemic, when they do not have access to the local PEG channel.
 - b. Municipalities are often left to wonder were there local channel broadcasts to, as there is no clearly defined service map showing exactly were each PEG station broadcasts to.
 - c. The lack of complete buildout in a community has left many municipalities and their stations in limbo. Many stations are broadcasting on the Verizon FiOS network, but because cable service has not been completed in their town, they cannot even get service to see their own PEG channel at their facility for oversight and quality control.
4. Currently, most local governments and PEG station managers, have no local government contact information within Verizon that they can reach out to in case of an outage, broadcast issues and general questions. We strongly urge the BPU to demand that Verizon provide local contact information to municipalities, PEG Stations and JAG Members.
5. Verizon has not adequately provided the proper production and post-production equipment (cameras, microphones, edit systems and more) as outlined in the original systemwide franchise agreement. In locations where they began to setup these repositories for equipment and training, municipalities were not notified of them, there is not clear and concise information on how to gain access to them and equipment currently on hand at them is outdated or no longer available.

As outlined in the Board of Public Utilities Guide to Cable Franchise Renewal, "...is to examine the past performance of the cable operator and identify the future cable-related needs of the community." We are *not* advocating that Verizon be refused their franchise renewal; rather, JAG respectfully requests that Verizon be held accountable to their original agreements and keep up with currently technology and trends such as High Definition Broadcast of PEG channel. We believe this inequity must be rectified.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

David Garb Vice President, JAG-The Jersey Access Group
Chair, Legislative Committee

davegarb@paps.net

732-376-6030 Ext. 23538

Committees

Volunteerism

Rich Desimone, Managing Director

All committees have been updating their members and are all examining their work in the coming year. Next month's *Operation News* will include: The Production Committee's chair Lee Beckerman talks about the videos they produced for the NJ League of Municipalities and The External Relations Committee's Doug Seidel will provide information about the need to use social media to navigate communications in this COVID-19 world. *(New additions marked in red)*



Executive 2020 (as of 10.9.20) Meeting second Wednesday 12:00PM	Production 2020 Meeting first Monday 11AM	Leadership Development 2020 Meeting Schedule TBD
Bob Duthaler, President 2020	Lee Beckerman (Chair)	Dave Garb (Chair):
Dave Garb, Vice-President-2021	Anthony Pagliuco (Vice Chair)	TBA: (Vice Chair)
Linda Besink, Treasurer-2020	TBA: (Secretary)	Linda Besink: Finance Rep (Secretary)
Dave Ambrosy, Secretary-2021	Dave Ambrosy: Producer	Darryl Love, Membership Rep
Anthony Pagliuco, Corresponding Sec.-2020	Nick Besink	Anthony Pagliuco: Production Rep
Stephanie Gibbons, Trustee 2020	Dave Garb	Dustin Dumas: External Relations Rep
Jeff Arban, Trustee 2021	Robert Horvath	TBA: Legislative Rep
Darryl Love, Trustee 2021	Geoffrey Belinfante- Access NJ	George Fairfield: JAG Awards Rep
Lee Beckerman, Trustee 2020	Bob Duthaler	TBA: Conference Rep
Geoffrey Belinfante, External Relations		Bob Duthaler: Executive Rep
Rich Desimone: Managing Director Action Plan/Policies & Procedures/Bylaws		
Finance 2020 (as of 10.9.20) Meeting second Tuesday 11AM	Legislation 2020 Meeting second Tuesday 11AM	Conference 2021 Closed
Linda Besink: (Chair)	Dave Garb (Chair):	OPEN (Chair)
Jeff Arban (Vice Chair)	TBA: (Vice Chair)	OPEN: (Vice Chair)
Linda Besink: (Secretary)	Linda Besink (Secretary)	OPEN (Secretary)
Bob Duthaler: President	Bob Duthaler: NJLM	Linda Besink: Treasurer, Registration
Dave Garb: Vice President	Ada Erik: NJ Legislation	OPEN- Registration Manager
Lee Beckerman, Production Chair	Nick Besink	OPEN- Workshops
Geoffrey Belinfante, External Relations Chair	Dave Bandfield	OPEN- Affinity Lunch & topics
	Jeff Arban	OPEN- Marketing
		OPEN- P&D, Tec Support
External Relations 2020 (as of 10.9.20) Meeting third Monday 11am	JAG Awards (as of 10.12.20) Meeting first Monday 11am	OPEN- Photographer
Geoffrey Belinfante (Chair)	George Fairfield (Chair)	OPEN- Student Symposium
Dustin Dumas (Vice Chair)	TBA: (Vice Chair)	OPEN- Power
Geoffrey Belinfante (Secretary)	Valerie Stevens: (Secretary)	OPEN- Social media
Stephanie Gibbons: Membership	Dave Garb	OPEN- Video Production
Bob Duthaler: NJLOM Join Session, JAG Session, Booth Staffing and rooms, Web Site	Lee Beckerman	OPEN- AV Support
Doug Seidel-Social Media	Bob Nicholson	OPEN- Student Management
	Amanda Olsen	OPEN- Trade Show Set Up/AV Support
Rich Desimone: Managing Director JAG Newsletter Editor	Ronni Garrett	OPEN- Trade Show Set Up/AV Support
Outside Contract: JAG web site	Dave Bandfield	Rich Desimone: Managing Director Conference Coordinator
	Bob Duthaler	Outside Contract: Web Site, Program, Fliers
	Membership 2020 (as of 10.9.20) Meeting first Tuesday 1PM	Outside Contract: Audio Support
	Stephanie Gibbons (Chair)	Outside Contract: Web Site, Program, Fliers
	Darryl Love (Vice Chairs)	Outside Contract: Audio Support
	Linda Besink: (Secretary) Data Management	
	Bob Duthaler: List Serve	
	Dave Garb	

Bits & Bytes

JAG meeting schedule

- Oct. 20, 2pm, Virtual Social Hang hosted by Bob Duthaler (OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS)
 - Topic: Social Media Roundtable w/Doug Seidel & Dustin Dumas of the External Relations Committee
- Oct. 28, 12:10pm — General Meeting via virtual video service
 - Topic for Discussion: TBA
 - Presentation by Randy Visser, Sales Engineer, Cablecast
 - Committee Reports Q&A
 - Vote on amendment to bylaws (Trustee term of office)
 - Nomination of Trustees (5 seats)
- Nov. 2, 11am — Production Committee Meeting via conference call
 - COVID Testimonials/JAG Promo
- Nov. 3, 11am — Finance Committee Meeting via conference call
 - Updating JAG's Database
- Nov. 3, 1pm — Membership Committee Meeting via virtual video service
 - Delinquent Membership follow-up
 - Member Outreach
- Nov. 4, 1pm — JAG Awards Committee Meeting via conference call
 - Plan 2021 awards
- Nov. 10, 11am — Legislative Committee Meeting via conference call
 - Protecting Access Television Act support from federal legislators
- Nov. 11, 12pm — Executive Board Meeting via virtual video service
 - Action Plan Committee Reports
 - NJOM Sessions
- Nov. 16, 11am — External Relations Committee Meeting via virtual video service
 - Vendor Presentation/Website updates/Newsletter

JAG Spotlight:

Dealing with COVID 19 in West Milford

Geoffery Belinfante, External Relations Committee Chair

It has been demonstrated in this newsletter over the last several months just how important our Municipal and Access Channels are during a crisis. Our organization is made up of stations of different sizes and budgets—some have studios, full time staffs, and substantial budgets provided by their municipalities. Others are staffed totally by volunteers and receive no money from their municipalities to support their efforts. Our station in West Milford falls into this category..... (full article on next page)

JAG is proud to welcome DeSisti and Paul Distefano, Northeast Regional Sales Manager as a new Organizational Member.

Paul is scheduled for a presentation of DeSisti products at the December 2 JAG General Meeting. Details in next month's newsletter.



Organizational Members



HELMER, CONLEY & KASSELMAN, P.A.

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

Dealing with COVID 19 in West Milford

Geoffery Belinfante, External Relations Committee, Chair

Spotlight

It has been demonstrated in this newsletter over the last several months just how important our Municipal and Access Channels are during a crisis. Our organization is made up of stations of different sizes and budgets—some have studios, full time staffs, and substantial budgets provided by their municipalities. Others are staffed totally by volunteers and receive no money from their municipalities to support their efforts. Our station in West Milford falls into this category. A relatively new station by JAG standards, we're only five years old and it has been a struggle to get the town's mayor and administrator to recognize the value of the channel. We have made some progress in getting our municipal officials to recognize the value of our station, but ironically, the current health crisis has given us a chance to demonstrate the true value of the channel.



While most of the events that we would normally cover have been cancelled, there have been several things that we have been able to do that have kept our citizens informed and allowed us to prove our value to the township. Like most municipal channels, we provided the only window into the activities in the township by televising our town council meetings. These meetings were a combination of a live gathering in the council chambers with the mayor and a couple of council members and conference call number that could be used by both council members and members of the public. We streamed these meetings live so those wishing to participate from their homes were able to both follow the proceedings and call in to make comments at the appropriate time. Our solution did not include a Zoom type alternative, but rather just a speaker phone and a microphone in the council chamber—decidedly low tech, but it did the job. In addition, we used our Community Bulletin Board to provide graphic information on Covid-19 including hand washing instructions, food safety procedures, and testing locations. We also carried the Governor's press conference in its entirety each day to provide our citizens information from the state on the health crisis.

As in many towns, there are certain ceremonies that occur year after year that contribute a sense of normalcy. We at our little underfunded station here in West Milford helped people in the town feel that sense of normalcy by broadcasting a Memorial Day tribute from our Mayor to those who lost their lives in defense our country. We also carried our socially distant and sparsely attended 9/11 Memorial service so folks in our town can never forget.

With no library events to cover, no 4th of July fireworks or parade, no lectures at the local museum and no cooking classes at the Shop Rite, there has been precious little to remind people of life before the health crisis. WM77, in its own modest way, has delivered important information to a community in need of a sense of normalcy. The mayor has expressed her appreciation for the work we've done and we've even convinced the town to invest in a LiveU unit that will allow us to stream from any location within the township. Perhaps there is an upside to this pandemic, but I'd gladly trade the gains we've made for an end to the health crisis.



NJLM Virtual Conference
105th Annual



<https://www.njlm.org/300/Conference>

The NJLM Executive Board and Officers announce that the 105th Annual New Jersey State League of Municipalities Conference will be held as a Virtual Conference the week of **November 16-20, 2020**, providing League membership, exhibitors and other supporters of local government with an opportunity to engage with colleagues from around the State.

JAG will be providing two sessions. Details will be forwarded to the membership.

COMMITTEES CORNER

Standing Committee Reports

EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE: *Geoffrey Belinfante (Chair), Dustin Dumas (Vice Chair)*

We on the External Relations Committee have been spending a lot of time lately trying to update and improve our website. The home page now tells you when the next general meeting is to be held. We have updated the Mission Statement and the detail descriptions of the goals of the organization that goes with it; we added the latest President's Message, we posted new language on the Members Benefits page; we refreshed the membership list; and updated the list of upcoming meetings for the rest of the year. In addition, we are trying to gather Policies and Procedures and Cable Franchise Agreements to post in the members only section of the site. These documents become extremely valuable when we solicit new members and promote the "consulting" services of the organization. To date, I have received only three Policies and Procedure documents and no Cable Franchise agreements. It is important that we share this kind of information amongst ourselves to ensure the long-term success of municipal and community channels across the state. Please take a moment to find electronic versions of these documents and send them to me at geoffbel512@gmail.com.

We hope you will find the changes to the website helpful. If you would like to suggest any further design changes, or contribute to the marketing of the organization in any way, please join us on the External Relations Committee. Just email me at the address listed above.

FINANCE COMMITTEE: *Linda Besink (Chairs), Jeff Arban (Vice Chair)*

Once again we request all members to ensure the dues invoices will go to the proper person(s) by sending a quick note to the JAG Treasurer, Linda Besink, at lbesink@gmail.com. Please be aware that the 2021 dues invoices will be emailed out by November 1. Looking forward to an interesting and healthy 2021!

PRODUCTION COMMITTEE: *Lee Beckerman (Chair), Anthony Pagliuco (Vice Chair)*

The Production committee met on October 13th. Anthony Pagliuco volunteered as vice chairman of the committee and was approved by the membership.

A request for testimonials for the website highlighting stations innovations and uses pertaining to the Coronavirus epidemic was sent to the membership. East Brunswick has produced a segment with their Director of Planning and Engineering that will be forwarded to Woodbridge TV for branding. Brookdale Community College has stated they will produce a segment and Woodbridge is working to produce one as well.

Lee is working on a Newsletter article about the production of Conference Videos for the NJ League of Municipalities. The League will allow the videos to be released for internal viewing only by the membership. The league is planning to use the videos starting next year if the in-person conference is resumed.

Lee, Geoff and Bob will schedule a meeting this month to brainstorm a script for the "why join JAG" video based on the new JAG mission statement. Lee is working on ideas for a PSA on what stations are producing and new responsibilities they have since the shutdown.

A questionnaire was sent out to the general membership concerning a reboot of the "Access New Jersey" magazine program. A Total of Thirteen stations responded. Nine stations have said they could produce segments. Of the nine, three said they would need team help to produce them. The committee feels we would need more buy in to sustain a show. Lee is going to try and reach out to independent producers and stations that did not reply to the survey to see if there are more willing participants. Twelve stations said they would be willing to air the program.

COMMITTEES CORNER

AD HOC Committees Reports

Legislation Committee: **Dave Garb (Chair)**

This past month, the Legislative Committee was informed at the last possible moment, that there was to be public hearings regarding Verizon NJ's statewide franchise renewal. Their renewal is up in mid December of this year. The committee quickly acted to put together comments on our thoughts and concerns JAG and the PEG community has had with Verizon over this last franchise. We had 6 main points submitted as a written document to be officially added into the BPU's record.

Membership Committee: **Stephanie Gibbons (Chair), Darryl Love (Vice Chair)**

The membership committee will be reaching out to members to update their current information and to explain the benefits of being a JAG member starting in October. So expect to hear from a member of our committee soon. The membership committee is still looking for JAG members to help with this outreach effort. If you like talking to other members about JAG and find out what they think about the organization can you give us a few hours a week for the month of October/November? We want to thank the following members for volunteering to help this effort: Dustin Dumas-SomaTV, George Fairfield- Piscataway and Geoffrey Belinfante-West Milford.

If you enjoy being a member of JAG and want to help current & new members know more about the organization please consider joining the membership committee. Our next meeting is scheduled for Nov. 3. If you are interested please contact Darryl Love at DFLove@aol.com or Stephanie Gibbons at Stgibbons@verizon.net.

Leadership Development Committee: **Dave Garb (Chair)**

The newly established Leadership Development Committee (LDC) has started to evolve. The LDC was created to support all the other committees and help them to flourish. We recently had our first meeting to begin the process of developing this committee.

The LDC consists of representatives from all of the other committees. Our main objective is to improve communications between JAG and our member communities through the multitude of resources we have available to us.

More to come as things develop.

JAG Awards Committee: **George Fairfield (Chairs)**

JAG Awards Committee wants to hear from you! Keep a look out in your email for a questionnaire on what kind of programming you have been producing during the pandemic. This information is very vital for what direction the JAG Awards Competition will take. And remember, If you would like to be part of the 2021 JAG Awards Committee, please email George at gfairfield@piscatawaynj.org to receive the meeting notice.

Conference Committee: **Currently suspended operation**

Discussions have begun as to how JAG might address having a virtual conference.

Jersey Access Group, PO Box 164, Metuchen, New Jersey 08840

www.jagonline.org info@jagonline.org

New Jersey Chapter of NATOA and New Jersey League of Municipalities Affiliate

Editor-in-Chief: Rich Desimone, Managing Director Features Editor: Stephanie Gibbons