

TOWN OF WOODBRIDGE GOVERNMENT ACCESS TELEVISION COMMISSION

POLICIES

[Approved by GATCom on November 28, 2006]

I. PREAMBLE

Woodbridge Government Access Television (WGATV) is an electronic media production and distribution facility. It is supervised by the Government Access TV Commission (the Commission) of the Town of Woodbridge, which is comprised of five members, appointed by the Board of Selectmen in accordance with the Town Charter.

The primary goal of WGATV is to make local government more accessible and understandable to the residents of Woodbridge. Through the production and distribution of programming which covers a broad range of government information, this service will strive to assist local viewers to understand how local government operates, what town services are available, how to better utilize town services and how the activities of town government affect the community.

The secondary goal will be to provide a vehicle for town government access to the cable television system (or other electronic media) for such vital uses as training, data transmission and new opportunities for public communications.

II. OBJECTIVES

1. To provide information about programs and services offered to the Woodbridge community by town departments and town-funded agencies;
2. To expand community awareness of local government and its decision-making process;
3. To inform residents about the organization of town departments and agencies;
4. To expand the availability of programs and services by transferring some presentations and educational materials to videotape or other electronic media;
5. To enhance existing public information materials through cablecast or other electronic media presentations;
6. To assist with internal training of town personnel by transferring some presentations or educational materials to videotape or other electronic media;
7. To provide emergency information in the event of disaster or widespread disruption of government service.

III. PROGRAMMING POLICY

Government access materials are to meet the same standards of accuracy and objectivity which characterize existing public information materials produced by town departments and agencies.

A. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. Supervising Authority

WGATV is under the direct supervision of the Commission, which is responsible for daily operation and oversight.

2. Production and Distribution Policies

WGATV will provide direct, nonpartisan information to the citizens of Woodbridge concerning the operations and deliberations of the town's governmental entities and information of general civic importance to the community.

a) Primary Priorities

1) Local governmental legislative meetings:

Town Meetings
Board of Selectmen
Board of Finance
Woodbridge Board of Education;

2) Local governmental commissions, boards, and committees:

Inland Wetlands Commission
Planning and Zoning Commission
Human Services
Etc.

3) Display information regarding meeting schedules of local governmental commissions, boards and committees

4) Display information regarding agendas of local governmental commissions, boards, and committees

5) Display information regarding services and programs offered by town departments and town-funded agencies

6) Special programs or townwide events

7) Programs regarding town services:

Recreation, public safety/crime prevention, fire safety, highway maintenance, animal control, tax assessment/collection, health services, elections, youth, town records/permits, veterans
Etc.

- b) Secondary Priorities
- 1) Reports to citizens from elected or appointed public officials:
 - First Selectman
 - State officials
 - Federal officials
 - Etc.
 - 2) Programming obtained from outside sources to supplement locally produced government programming:
 - Public Service announcements
 - Display information regarding noncommercial community events taking place in Woodbridge
 - State or federal government meetings of special local interest
 - Special productions which feature community services provided by private, nonprofit organizations which are funded, in part, by the Town of Woodbridge
 - Connecticut Television Network (CT-N) productions
- c) Production and Distribution Prohibitions
- Programs which contain, in whole or in part, any of the following subject matter will not be produced or distributed.
- 1) Commercial Message or Material: Anything promoting a product or service, with the primary objective of producing a monetary profit for a specific organization or individual, will not be produced or distributed.

Note: This is not to preclude incidental mention of a business or product as part of a program where the primary purpose is to disseminate information of public benefit. Business, individuals and organizations may be acknowledged for assistance in the production of a program or the provision of other means of support.
 - 2) Political Campaigning: WGATV will not be used for political campaigning by individuals or organizations seeking public office or legislation. Neither will the channel be used for the solicitation of funds for political purposes.

Note: During the three (3) month period preceding an election, programs which feature elected officials who are candidates for re-election will not be produced or distributed. This will not preclude their participation in

public meetings or special forums of public debate. [See page 5, “Statements by Individuals,” (3)]

- 3) Religious Material: Program material which would advocate a particular religious belief will not be produced or distributed. Religious organizations or ideals may be mentioned as incidental information as part of a program.

Note: This is not to preclude the appearance of an individual representing a particular religion as part of program which provides general information. This will also not preclude the distribution of announcements of public events which are sponsored or conducted by religious organizations. [See page 5, “Community Information Messages”]

- 4) Violation of Law or Regulation: Program material which constitutes libel, slander, violation of trademark or copyright, or which might violate any local state or federal laws, including regulations of the Federal Communications Commission, will not be produced or distributed.
- d) Controversial Subject Matter: Programs which contain controversial subject matter must provide an opportunity for opposing views.

B. PROGRAM PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION PROVISIONS

1. Public Meetings

- a. All public meetings of the town’s commissions, boards and committees are authorized for electronic media recording and distribution.
- b. All public meetings may be recorded and distributed in their entirety, gavel-to-gavel. Recesses will not be recorded and distributed. Explanatory information identifying agenda items and individuals may be provided to aid the viewer.

2. Informational Programming

- a. The primary entities eligible to request program production or distribution will be town government departments;
- b. The secondary entities eligible to request program production or distribution will be private, non-profit agencies to which the town contributes funds to carry out specific town-sanctioned services;
- c. Production and distribution requests will be subject to the review of the Commission for compliance with the policies herein and technical and logistical considerations. The decisions of the Commission may be appealed to the BOS.

- d. The following criteria will be applied by the Commission when considering a production and/or distribution request:
 - 1) The program must support the purposes and objectives of local, state or federal government.
 - 2) The program must pertain to a specific service or program provided or funded by local, state or federal government.
 - 3) The program must provide information of general civic importance.
 - 4) The program must adhere to the goals and priorities set forth herein.
- e. Written permission for the use of copyrighted materials must be authorized in advance by the materials owner and obtained by the department or agency sponsoring the local use of the materials.

3. Community Information Messages

- a. Information for distribution to be displayed on the “Community Information Message Display” may be submitted by any government department, town-funded agency or bona fide nonprofit organization which serves the residents of Woodbridge.
- b. Messages submitted must announce events or services which are noncommercial, open to the general public, and do not discriminate based on age, sex, race, religion, national origin or physical impairment.
- c. Messages submitted must not solicit funds. They may however, provide general information about a specific fundraising event.

4. Statements by Individuals

- a. Statements by members of the general public and elected officials will be permitted in the regular discourse of a public meeting (pursuant to the rules of such meeting) or as participants in a panel discussion.
- b. WGATV will provide equal time and format opportunities for both the executive and legislative branches of local government and opportunities for federal and state legislators who represent Woodbridge.
- c. Statements by announced candidates for public office will be permitted in the regular discourse of a public meeting (pursuant to the rules of such meeting) or within a forum of public debate with other declared candidates under the oversight of a non-partisan third party using mutually agreeable ground rules.

IV. ENDORSEMENTS

At no time will WGATV endorse specific brand name products or service providers.

V. EDITORIAL RIGHTS

WGATV is an operating entity of the Town of Woodbridge and, as such, reserves the right to identify any material as unsuitable for production or distribution, as determined by the Commission.

VI. WARRANTY

The Town of Woodbridge, its officers, employees and agents do not warrant the accuracy of any information distributed by WGATV.

VII. REVISIONS

This policy document and the associated procedures shall be subject to change, revision and amendment which shall be approved at a meeting of the Commission and so enacted by a majority vote of its Commissioners.