

To: Mayor and Ross Town Council
From: Barbara Thornton, Executive Director, Marin Telecommunications Agency
Re: Video and Web Streaming Options for Ross
Date: December 5, 2011

I. Summary

Town Council discussion/action regarding available PEG funds for purchase of video equipment for Town Council Chambers, and discussion/action regarding Granicus discount through June 30, 2012 and of cost for initial software.

II. Discussion

Many cities and government agencies are increasing the transparency of government meetings by implementing the use of video and server equipment and services in order to facilitate web streaming and broadcasting on local community channels, often with indexing and links to meeting agendas and staff reports. In Marin the Board of Supervisors, the cities of Novato, Mill Valley, Sausalito and San Rafael are currently broadcasting and webcasting/streaming their meetings as are other government agencies such as Marin Energy Authority and SMART. In addition to Ross, the cities of Fairfax, San Anselmo and Larkspur are considering initiating meeting video services in the near term.

There are two key start up components required to establish meeting video services for Ross: 1) The design, purchase and installation of the video equipment which can be done by Michael Eisenmenger of the Community Media Center of Marin (CMCM); and 2) The Granicus solution which provides the capability to capture the video, link the agenda and staff reports to the video, along with other functionalities. The video or audio recording can then be played as a web stream, as an audio podcast, and broadcast on the local community TV channels (Comcast Channel 27 and AT&T U-verse Channel 99).

Prior to the 12/8 Council meeting, the CMCM will provide an updated quote for Ross video equipment installation for a couple of different camera configurations, given current recommendations for design and equipment. This is the work that can be covered by the MTA PEG fees. Ball park estimates for this equipment and work are –

- 1) A single camera setup is approximately \$10,000.
- 2) A multiple camera set up is approximately \$20,000-\$25,000, depending on installation requirements in Ross's chambers.

One of the concerns Michael Eisenmenger, CMCM, identified when he visited Ross previously was the current “sound system” in that it's not certain that it will capture the audio sufficiently for the video recording. If it does not, Ross may want to consider an improved microphone system.

The Granicus capability is what provides for recording the meetings and transmitting the video for web streaming, as well as the software that enables the linking of the video with the agenda

and staff reports, etc. The Granicus capability that facilitates the video recording and transmission, and linking of the video to the agenda and staff reports requires two suites:

1. Open Platform Suite
 - \$100/month if shared with other cities (which is likely).
 - \$380/month if not shared with other cities.
2. Government Transparency Suite
 - \$190/month, and \$6,800 up front cost (the upfront cost can be decreased if multiple Marin government agencies are trained at the same time, thereby sharing the training cost, e.g. if 4 cities train at once it would be \$425 per agency rather than \$1,700 for each agency and the upfront cost per agency would be \$5,525 rather than \$6,800.
3. If two Marin cities/agencies sign up by December 31, 2011 they would receive a 10% discount on the monthly rate and the upfront cost.
4. In addition, for the cities that sign up for Granicus in December the monthly fees are waived until July 1, 2012.

Summary of the estimated cost to Ross for Granicus Open Platform and Government Transparency Suites given optional discount offers:

1. Ross signs up by December 31, 2011, no other cities sign up by December 31, 2011:
 - \$6,800 upfront cost and \$290/month beginning July 2012.
2. Ross and another Marin city signs up by December 31, 2011 (provides 10% discount)
 - \$6,120 upfront cost and \$261/ month beginning July 2012
3. Ross and other Marin cities train at same time saves up to \$1,375 off upfront costs if four cities share joint training, less savings if fewer than 4 cities share.

Another element of the video services is how the video recording is handled, i.e. by staff with a few basic shots within the chambers and probably no titles, names, etc. Or alternately, Ross can contract with the CMCM or others to operate the equipment during the meeting and add in titles, names, etc. and provide transitions from one shot to another. The CMCM staff can do this work. Their rate is generally \$75/hour. If Ross engages the CMCM staff to do the video recording work, it helps support the CMCM with a revenue stream and supports the overall operations of the media center. The work can be done by others, although it wouldn't achieve a dual purpose of supporting the CMCM ongoing operations.

III. Recommendation

Town Council discussion/action regarding available PEG funds for purchase of video equipment for Town Council Chambers, and discussion/action regarding Granicus discount through June 30, 2012 and of cost for initial software if Ross signs up for Granicus suites by December 31, 2011.

Attachments:

- CMCM proposal for video equipment design, purchase and installation in Ross Council Chambers
- Granicus proposal for Open Platform and Government Transparency Suites