

**TO:** ALL COUNTY PERSONNEL  
**FROM:** ROBERT WEISMAN  
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR  
**PREPARED BY:** PUBLIC AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT/CHANNEL 20  
**SUBJECT:** GENERAL POLICIES AND GUIDELINES FOR CHANNEL 20  
**PPM #:** CW-O-050

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**ISSUE DATE**  
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January 16, 2015

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**PURPOSE:**

To provide general guidelines and policy direction for the use and operation of Palm Beach County's Educational and Government cable access television station. To establish general criteria to be used by Palm Beach County in the selection of programming for presentation on County Channel 20.

**UPDATES:**

Future updates to this PPM are the responsibility of the Director of Public Affairs.

**AUTHORITY:**

- Florida Statutes, Section XXXVI, Chapter 610.109, as may be amended

**POLICY:**

Palm Beach County's Educational and Government Channel was established by the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) to inform area residents through video programming about their County Government and the services it offers. The station operates under the jurisdiction of the BCC, through the Public Affairs Department, and under the State granted cable/video franchises issued to providers serving Palm Beach County.

The responsibility for developing policy and reviewing program content for conformance with these guidelines lies with the Director of Public Affairs. Programming submitted from sources outside state, local and national government agencies will be reviewed by the Director of Public Affairs or his/her designee. The Station Manager will administer the programming and operation of the channel.

Programming for Channel 20 is selected to meet the needs of its viewing community. Channel 20 enables the County to provide topical information to citizens, improving the relationship between the residents of Palm Beach County and their government. Channel 20 is restricted to governmental and educational programming. All programming must be suitable for viewing in public educational institutions on non-controversial topics. Channel 20 is not a public access station.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

The objectives of Palm Beach County's Educational and Government station are:

- A. To televise public meetings, including but not limited to County Commission meetings, Solid Waste Authority meetings, zoning hearings, planning hearings, public hearings, workshops and Commission on Ethics meetings.
- B. To provide public service information to the residents of Palm Beach County.
- C. To inform the residents of Palm Beach County of the various functions and services performed by their governmental and educational entities.
- D. To provide live or prerecorded coverage of special events conducted by governmental agencies.
- E. To post information on the channel's electronic bulletin board about various governmental agencies and services offered.
- F. To assure the continued access to government and educational programming through cable television in Palm Beach County.
- G. To extend guidance to educational institutions seeking to use cable television.
- H. To develop continued cooperation and communication with State franchised cable/video service providers to maximize benefits of the educational resources and activities in the area.

### **GUIDELINES:**

#### **A. Program Policy**

- 1. Government programming shall offer direct, non-editorial information regarding the operations and deliberations of the local governments of Palm Beach County. Announcements for other governmental agencies may be permitted with the approval of the Director of Public Affairs if space allows on a first come, first served basis.

2. Education - Programming shall offer educational and instructional content of interest to persons of all ages in the community and shall be appropriate for public educational institutions.
3. All programs submitted for telecast on County Channel 20 must have broadcast quality audio and video, must be clearly labeled with exact length of program, location of any black and white segments, and whether the media submitted contains the entire program or a segment of a program.
4. If an individual submitting programming to County Channel 20 does not hold the copyright to such programming, written permission from the copyright holder for audio and/or visual utilized in the programming must be provided. Anyone submitting programming for review bears full responsibility and liability for any copyrighted material.

### **PROCEDURES:**

- A. Modes of Cablecast** - The County's Educational and Government Station shall utilize six telecast modes.
1. Live - Live coverage of events originating from County offices shall be provided. This generally will consist of telecasts of the County Commission meetings, hearings, and other public meetings of general community interest.
  2. Tape Delayed - Many public meetings and events will be videotaped for telecast at a later time/date. Some public meetings or events, such as County Commission meetings will be telecast live and subsequently replayed, in full or highlight form during the week.
  3. Locally Produced Programs - original programs shall be produced by the channel's staff to communicate the functions, operations, activities or programs and services provided by commissions, councils, departments, agencies, boards, and committees of local governments located in Palm Beach County.
  4. External Programs - Many prerecorded educational programs about local, state and national government are available and may be obtained for local telecast.
  5. Character Generated Announcements - During all hours of operation when no other programming is scheduled, a character generator or graphics application shall display current messages of interest to the public.
  6. Local Affiliates - Additional programs previously shown on commercial broadcast channels may be shown on the County's Education and Government Station subject to the approval of the Director of Public Affairs or his/her designee.

**B. Access Policy** - The County's Educational and Government Channel is not a public access channel. Access to telecast shall be restricted to government functions and operations and educational programming. Non-government requests for use of facilities and program time must be specifically authorized by the Director of Public Affairs or his/her designee. Appropriate programming includes:

1. Public Meetings - All public meetings of government policy-making or advisory boards and commissions are appropriate for telecast.
2. Information Programs - Any local government agency or department may submit requests to have a program produced for its own use and to be telecast on the channel. These programs may present services provided by the agency or department and/or communicate information to the public. The department requesting the service will be charged through a journal voucher or chargeback based on an hourly rate for production, editing time, equipment use, tape, media materials and other services requested. Local governments and other outside agencies will be billed by the County. County Departments and Agencies supported by the General Fund are not billed for these services.

Municipal government agencies and departments utilizing the channel's facilities and resources bear sole responsibility for the contents and materials used in all programs produced by or for them. The responsibility includes obtaining all necessary releases, fully executed by an authorized signer able to bind the municipality or department, from program participants, obtaining any required copyright clearances, and complying with all other policies and guidelines for programming to be telecast on the channel. Such users shall sign a liability release form provided by the Public Affairs Department prior to the telecasting of any information or program for that user. The liability release shall hold harmless Palm Beach County/ Educational and Government Channel for any breach of copyright or other liabilities due to the negligence or error of the user agency or department.

Local municipal government entities shall be charged a fee for the broadcasting of local municipal government functions. Fees may only be waived by the Board of County Commissioners during a board meeting or by the County Administrator.

3. Public Debates - Requests for access to facilities or channel time to stage a debate shall be denied unless part of an overall programming strategy is to elicit viewpoints consistent with equal time provisions (see section M.5). Additional information and specific ground rules, as required, shall be established by the Director of Public Affairs or his/her designee for each program prior to implementation.
4. Character Generated/Graphical Messages - Announcements for the character generator or graphics application may be submitted in writing by any government agency or non-profit organization that receives funding from County Government.

Requests from County funded or supported non-profit organizations should be directed through or in-conjunction with an appropriate County department to assure the message is related to the County funding objective/priority or mission. The message must be timely and current. Requests to air announcements must be submitted seventy-two hours in advance of the desired telecast date, except emergency County announcements. The Director of Public Affairs or his/her designee shall be responsible for insuring the appropriateness of messages and may edit same to provide clarity and to maximize the use of the character generator.

If material is determined to be unsuitable for inclusion in the program sequence, the material may be returned to the sender along with a brief written account of the reason(s) for the decision and, where appropriate, offering assistance in making necessary changes to qualify same for inclusion.

Emergency messages will be given priority over all other announcements and programming.

Requests for announcements concerning civil emergencies shall only be made by the Board of County Commissioners, the County Administrator, the Emergency Operations Center and/or the Director of Public Affairs.

5. Program Log - A daily log shall be maintained to record all programming telecasts.

**C. Video Programming Disclaimers** - All video programming, whether live or pre-produced, shall be identified by producer or source of programming credits at the end of the program. Programs obtained from external producers shall also carry a disclaimer of Palm Beach County's responsibility for their content at the end of the programming when deemed appropriate by the Director of Public Affairs or his/her designee.

**D. Editing Policy**

1. Public Meetings - Any live public meeting (meetings held by local governing bodies and meetings of their agencies and boards) telecast shall not be edited or subjected to editorial comments. Live meeting coverage shall be from gavel to gavel except for technical interruptions. Supplementary information on agenda items to aid viewer understanding may be provided.
2. Departmental Programs - Any program prepared or submitted by an individual governmental agency may be edited to maintain continuity with approved guidelines and telecast requirements.
3. County Bulletin Board - Messages for display on the County's Electronic Bulletin Board may be edited to provide clarity, to optimize use of available data storage capacity and screen format.

4. Errors - Should human error result in the telecast of incorrect information over the channel, Palm Beach County and its employees shall not be liable for the inaccuracy of the information.

**E. Sponsorship/Endorsements** - At no time shall the County's Education and Government Channel endorse consumer products and/or services.

1. Any individual, business, organization or institution that donates goods and services to the channel for its programs may be acknowledged in accordance with the procedures found in Part C of the Procedures section of PPM CW-O-053.

- a. The audio and/or video credit shall begin by stating:

“The following program has been made possible in part

by \_\_\_\_\_.”

or

"This program has been made possible in part  
by \_\_\_\_\_.”

2. All contributions of goods and services, and volunteers and interns must be recorded on a sponsorship disclosure form provided by the Public Affairs Department.

**F. Promotions** - Promotional announcements for government sponsored events are acceptable for telecast. Promotional announcements for events in government facilities such as parks, the Government Center, and recreation facilities are acceptable. Promotional announcements for events, charities, or outside organizations which the government has no official interest of sponsorship shall not be allowed. Any questions regarding message appropriateness shall be resolved by the Director of Public Affairs or his/her designee.

**G. Use of External Resources** - To maximize programming, every attempt shall be made to use community resources to facilitate program production.

An arrangement may be made with local or regional public educational institutions to recruit interns to assist the station manager of the Channel to produce public meetings and other County programs. Prerecorded programs or films from other sources consistent with appropriate local use will be sought to supplement regular programming.

**H. Telecasting Hours** - It shall be the goal of the channel to offer continuous programming. The general approach shall be to utilize live and prerecorded programs as the primary

source and the county bulletin board during periods where it is not possible to air such programs.

- I. **Retention of Recorded Programs** - Archives of locally produced events or public meetings other than Board of County Commission meetings shall be retained according to State and County policy as established by Records Retention. The program archives will be retained for a period not less than two years. Copies of Board of County Commission meetings shall also be retained consistent therewith. Any requests for longer retention should be made in advance. The recordings shall not be considered an official meeting record and there shall be no liability for inadvertent content erasure or omissions. County departments and agencies are responsible for obtaining duplicate media files and maintaining any archives of such meeting recordings. Such requests for copies must be made utilizing the request form provided by the station.
- J. **Video copies** - Copies of any Educational and Government Channel programs, including County meetings, shall be provided upon request in writing to authorized County employees or departments. Copies of the Board of County Commission meetings shall be provided to any citizen who requests a copy. Fees for the duplication will be consistent with Florida Statute 119.07, the Public Records Act and County PPM# CW-F-002.
- K. **Copyright** - Palm Beach County retains the copyright to all programs produced using the channel's equipment. This includes government access producers, interns and free lance (contract) producers. All programming shall so state at the end of same. Any request to alter this policy shall be submitted in writing to the Director of Public Affairs.
- L. **Prohibited Use** - The County's Educational and Government Channel shall not be used for the presentation of:
  - 1. Any advertising which promotes or endorses the sale of any product or services offered (see paragraph E for further direction regarding endorsements)
  - 2. Any promotional material concerning products or services presented for the purpose of any solicitation of funds or items of value for any reason;
  - 3. Any material which is obscene, indecent, or defamatory as defined by law;
  - 4. Any material which would violate any federal state, or local law;
  - 5. Controversial subjects are not appropriate for telecast on Channel 20. Inasmuch as different viewpoints are appreciated, including unpopular or unorthodox issues or ideologies, Channel 20 is not a public access station and is not a forum for debate. The programming should be educational/instructional rather than advocative or denigrating. Only programming suitable and appropriate for viewing in the public school system is acceptable;

6. Any advertisements on behalf of a political candidate or measure on a ballot or which includes specific messages on behalf of or opposing any issue under consideration by the Board of County Commissioners. This does not preclude production of programming which complies with the equal time provisions; however, Channel 20 is under no obligation to provide such programming. The opportunity for all candidates for a particular election post or proponents of all sides of an issue to appear in a fair and equitable fashion must be available. Further, this does not preclude the production of programming by the station which provides background information on such issues if all sides of the issue are presented or the production of programs where all sides of an issue are debated/discussed by their proponents/opponents;

6. Any material which promotes religious beliefs or religious philosophies, teaches, or proselytizes a particular religious viewpoint. (Churches and religious organizations may submit programming so long as the program is not religious in nature; and

7. Material that is libelous, slanderous, or an invasion of privacy.

**N. Access to Individuals With Disabilities** - Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act and the rules promulgated thereunder, appropriate steps shall be taken to afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy the benefits of, a service, program or activity conducted by a public entity. Primary consideration shall be given to the requests of the individual with a disability as to what types of aids and services are necessary.



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**ROBERT WEISMAN**  
**COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

**Supersession History:**

1. PPM# CW-O-050, issued 8/1/1993
2. PPM# CW-O-050, issued 10/22/2009