



April 29, 2019

To the Saco City Council:

I send my apologies for not being there in person to deliver a presentation, but a TA athletic event is taking place at the same time this evening. Thornton Academy TV is steadfast in maintaining its close relationship to the city of Saco to provide content for our citizens and provide opportunities for students to learn skills to use in the future. For fiscal year 2020 we have asked for financial support to continue this mission.

For nearly 20 years, TATV has served as the city's educational/government channel. In addition to creating content focused on Thornton Academy and our academic, arts and athletic events, we have supported the city in airing city council meetings and other city events over the years.

This past year, we have endured struggles with our physical equipment in regards to the airing of our programming. For almost five years, we have been working with the city to attempt to navigate the complicated world of renegotiation with Time Warner/Charter/Spectrum, which includes a list of capital items for replacement. The current hardware unit which is tasked with taking the video files and playing them on our channel has not been fully functional since the fall. The unit has not been replaced since TATV began in the year 2000 and is not even in production anymore by the company we bought it from. Recently, we have finally received the correct documentation from the company which should compel Charter to replace the unit free of charge. With the unit not functional, the public access station from Old Orchard Beach has been running in its place. Most of TATV's efforts have gone towards live streaming events, which garners thousands of views online and still pushes the positive message that Saco is a great place to live, work and go to school. Note that the live city council meetings are still airing, as the unit at City Hall still seems to be working.

With the new hardware in place hopefully by the summer, TATV can continue to fill the airwaves with relevant content. We acknowledge that the city is currently deciding what to do with local television, specifically how many channels to carry, and where to house the new hardware broadcasting unit. TATV is willing to support the city on whatever it decides and will always strive to produce high quality content for Saco citizens.

The money we are requesting this year is \$12,500. This figure is a 0% increase from previous years. TATV uses the money to replace and supplement equipment. We have attempted to be frugal and deliberate in how we spend the money from the city. While in general broadcasting equipment in 2019 offers great value for the technology, the costs for high quality, durable equipment is still a challenge to keep up with. For example, a setup consisting of a professional HD camera, a tripod and wireless microphone setup can still cost upwards of \$4,000. Other items such as licenses and podcasting equipment, plus providing students with

an opportunity to handle modern equipment used in the world of broadcasting and movie making, makes budgeting wisely a priority. I understand that the city receives upwards of \$250,000 from cable franchise fees and we ask for only about 5% of that to run the station - but as a former city councilor I also appreciate the pressure to use those funds for the general fund to help keep property taxes lower. These factors are why we have asked for only what we have received in the past.

Our program ebbs and flows with numbers of students participating depending on the year. We have to constantly evolve as technology (specifically, video production and cameras) becomes easier for students to utilize just from their ipad or smartphone. The Board of Trustees at Thornton Academy has continued to support our program in terms of space and financial backing, but we also know that the city of Saco is an integral part of keeping our station and program flourishing. For us, success isn't just measured by the content we produce and post for the public at large, but the impact that we make on our students.

We have some great success stories of TATV alumni such as Justin Chenette (current state senator), Tyler Cadorette (reporter/weatherman at Channel 8 WMTW), Zachary Greateon (music video producer in Los Angeles, CA) and Calvin Christoforo (soon-to-be graduate heading to Syracuse University, home of one of the premier sports broadcasting programs in the country). All of these young people have benefitted from the financial support generously provided by the city.

TATV would like to thank the council for your consideration of our FY20 funding request. I would also like to personally thank City IT Director Ryan Pinheiro for his steadfast help as we try to acquire our new hardware unit. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Jeff Christenbury
General Manager, TATV