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November 22, 1996

Introduced By: Jane Hague

jc

Proposed No.: 96-991

ORDINANCE NO. **12543**

AN ORDINANCE adopting the operating and funding policies for the king county government access cable channel.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

SECTION 1. The operational framework, approved by the Government Access Channel Oversight Committee, and dated October 7, 1996 and attached as attachment 1 to this ordinance, is hereby adopted as the operating policies of the government access channel.

SECTION 2 Operation of the government access channel, known as King County Civic Television, shall be fully funded by cable television franchise fees, grants and donations, as well as fees for service between King County Civic Television and other agencies. Each year, the manager will submit a proposed budget to a subcommittee of the government access channel oversight committee consisting of its citizen members. This subcommittee shall review and recommend the budget. It will then be submitted for consideration in the legislative branch budget in a manner consistent with the

1 county's budgeting process. Beginning in 1998, the  
2 operational budget for King County Civic Television should  
3 not be less than 25 percent of the expected annual revenue  
4 from cable franchise fees.

5 INTRODUCED AND READ for the first time this 25<sup>th</sup>  
6 day of November, 1996. Passed by a vote of 10-0  
7 PASSED this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of December, 1996.

8 KING COUNTY COUNCIL  
9 KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

*Loise Miller*

VICE Chair

12 ATTEST:

13 *Gerald Suter*  
14 Clerk of the Council

15 APPROVED this 13<sup>th</sup> day of December, 1996.

16 *Ray Locke*  
17 King County Executive

18 Attachments:

**Policy Framework**  
**King County Government Cable Access TV**  
**October 7, 1996**

**General Policy Areas**

**Section 1) Name.**

The name of the King County Government Access Television station will be King County Civic Television and it will be identified as CTV.

**Section 2) Fairness.**

Programming will be fair, accurate, balanced and without regard to partisanship or ideology.

**Section 3) Purpose of the Channel.**

King County Civic Television's primary purpose is to provide information about King County government, services, policies, and programs that enhances public understanding and encourages citizen involvement in regional government and local issues. The mission statement and goals for the channel, drafted by the Ad Hoc Citizens Committee in 1993 and adopted by the Council in Ordinance 12022 in 1995 are:

"The King County government access cable television system belongs to the citizens of King County and exists to serve citizens directly. In its development and operation, the government access cable system will be guided by the following principles:

- a) The system shall be used to increase citizen dialogue about the development of county policies;
- b) The system shall be used to make government decision making more accessible to citizens;
- c) The system shall be used to provide information of direct value to citizens;
- d) The system shall be used to foster debate of ideas and diversity of viewpoints;
- e) The system shall make use of creative solutions and a multiplicity of current and emerging technologies to comply with these principles;
- f) The system shall be as independent as possible in its operation and funding to insulate it from influences which may stifle the public information goals reflected in this statement".

**Section 4) Compliance with Federal, State, and Local regulation.**

The channel will be operated in a manner to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations.

**Section 5) Community Ascertainment and Needs shall be determined and met.**

Citizen involvement is important to the success of the government access channel. Therefore, under the direction of the Channel Oversight Committee, CTV management and staff will conduct surveys and ascertainment studies on a regular basis for use in planning programming and services that accurately reflect the changing needs of the

community. At a minimum, the staff of the government channel will conduct a survey of cable subscribers every two years. When possible, this survey should be done in cooperation with the cable franchisee to reduce costs. Results of all surveys and ascertainment reports will be made available to the County Executive, County Council, and the Presiding Judges of the Superior and District Courts and will also be available as a public document.

#### **Section 6) Programming Policy.**

CTV will cablecast programming provided by government agencies and other production entities, as well as programming produced internally by CTV staff.

Only programming that is consistent with overall CTV policy will be cablecast or produced in cooperation with CTV. The manager of CTV is responsible for the scheduling of programs consistent with adopted policies. Programming decisions will be made in a manner that reflects the importance of all three branches of King County government: executive, legislative, and judicial, as well as the separately elected county officials.

Programming will be scheduled according to the following priorities:

- a) announcements or programs concerning emergencies and other timely issues that affect the public safety and health of the community;
- b) public proceedings and meetings involving King County elected officials;
- c) programs and meetings that help explain county policies and programs;
- d) programs that educate and inform the public or assist in improving the quality of life for King County citizens;
- e) public meetings or programs of other governments including federal, state, regional, and local governments, that affect residents of King County;
- f) programs and informational series or one-time special or non-regular informational programs;
- g) programs that highlight the cultural and historic resources of King County;
- h) public service announcements;
- i) programs produced by other agencies or citizens about public policy issues that have an effect on the citizens of King County.

The following program restrictions apply to CTV:

- a) Programs containing obscene or defamatory material will not be cablecast on CTV. Channel management and the Oversight Committee recognize that programs with artistic or social merit may contain content or language considered objectionable to some viewers. Community standards of good taste will be adhered to at all times.
- b) Programs containing copyrighted materials will not be cablecast without proper copyright authorization. Producers of programs other than King County are responsible for obtaining all necessary copyright clearance and shall hold King County and CTV harmless in any case of copyright infringement.
- c) Programs which have as their primary purpose to promote commercial/profit-making services, products, trade or business will not be cablecast.

- d) Video and audio quality of all programs must meet acceptable cablecast standards. The Station Manager shall determine which programs meet acceptable standards.

### **Section 7) Production and Programming Values.**

#### **A) Meetings, events, news conferences:**

Meetings of government boards and events including government officials shall be shown in their entirety and unedited whenever possible. Because of time constraints, it may be appropriate to re-broadcast only portions of meetings dealing with particular subjects of public policy importance. When that is done, the entire portion of a meeting dealing with a particular subject shall be shown without editing. While the content of the meeting and any presentations given at the meeting should be the primary focus of the broadcast, standard production values such as wide shots, cutaways, and displays of data may be used at the discretion of the producer to help provide context for the viewer. Use of such production values shall not distract from the content of the meeting nor shall they lead to a distorted view of what occurred at the meeting.

#### **B) Pre-Produced Programming:**

All programs produced by the government access channel staff, contracted by King County agencies for playback on the channel, or submitted by any outside agency or person for playback, shall explain issues and policies in a fair and balanced manner and meet the following criteria:

- a) Are consistent with CTV programming policies and procedures;
- b) Contain factual and explanatory content that reflects a balanced presentation of points of view;
- c) Any professional production values and techniques are used to aid in the explanation and understanding of complex issues, policies, and programs while not distracting from the factual message;
- d) Contain useful, relevant information for the citizens of King County;
- e) Programming submitted to CTV may be modified or edited as appropriate by CTV staff to meet scheduling standards, technical standards, and, policy standards;
- f) Videos produced by citizens relating to topics of county government may be submitted to CTV for preview by programming staff;

The decision to schedule and air programs will be made by the Station Manager. CTV management reserves the right to refuse to air programs that do not meet program standards in keeping with the intent of CTV's policies and procedures.

#### **C) Live Coverage:**

CTV understands the importance of presenting public information in a timely manner. Whenever possible, events that are enhanced through "live" coverage, will be cablecast live. Other programming or events will be delayed and cablecast on a tape delayed basis as long as they do not lose their newsworthiness over time. CTV programs will carry a visual disclaimer of "live" or "taped." This information will be displayed at appropriate

times throughout the program. Should incorrect information be carried over a live event, CTV shall not be liable for the inaccuracy of the information.

**Section 8) Election Programming and TVW programming feeds.**

**A) Election Programming:** CTV shall not be used for the purpose of assisting a campaign for election of any person to any office or for the promotion or opposition to any ballot proposition. For the purpose of providing fair, balanced information on candidates and issues, CTV will provide direct, non-editorial information to the citizens of King County about elections, candidates, and issues. Election programming may include coverage of candidate forums and issues forums that meet the general fairness criteria of these policies; a video voter's guide (based on adopted county code and state law) and, character-generated election returns.

**B) TVW Programming:**

In mandating that the King County government access channel carry at least four hours of TVW's programming daily, the county council recognizes that TVW's purpose includes programs of a political nature. CTV shall have no editorial control over TVW's programming decisions.

**Section 9) Public Records and Access to Programs.**

Videotapes of public meetings are not retained and are not public records of meetings. Videotape programs produced for CTV may be requested by and distributed to other government access television channels. A nominal fee to cover costs of reproduction may be charged. With permission of station management, all or portions of videotapes of meetings may be made available to broadcast stations for use on newscasts consistent with CTV's copyright policy. Video from the channel may not be used for commercial purposes. Any tapes distributed by CTV will contain the following information on its label: "Copyright: King County Civic Television (insert year). All rights reserved. Copyright law prohibits the reproduction or transmission in any form or by any means, whether mechanical, photographic, or electronic, of any portion of this video tape without the express permission of CTV." This same copyright shall apply to programs aired over the channel and a statement of copyright will be aired regularly on the channel.

**Section 10) Staffing.**

Adequate resources are important for the operation of CTV. Staffing will be done utilizing permanent staff, contract and temporary employees, and current county employees with backgrounds in video and broadcasting. Ordinance 12202 places operational responsibility in the Legislative branch.

Operation of the station shall rest in a division separate from council personnel, policy, and administration staff. The station manager will be hired for a three-year term and will have full authority to make decisions on daily programming and scheduling practices consistent with CTV's adopted policies.

With regard to funding, the budget for CTV shall be submitted on an annual basis and upon the advice and recommendation of the citizen advisory members of the Government Cable Access Oversight Committee consistent with the normal county budget process..

Establishing a reliable funding mechanism will enable CTV to become the model for quality government access programming by creating interesting, relevant, and timely programming. In order to cover CTV's broad range of programming services, cable franchise fees should be dedicated to the greatest extent possible for the operation of CTV.

**Section 11) Logs.**

Logs of programs cablecast on CTV shall be kept and will be public documents.

**Section 12) Complaint Procedure and Appeals Procedure.**

Complaints regarding CTV programming decisions shall be submitted to the station manager on a timely basis and shall be acted upon in a timely fashion. Those persons with questions and concerns may contact the station manager by calling or writing to:

**Station Manager  
King County Civic Television  
King County Courthouse, Room 1200  
Seattle, WA 98104  
Phone# (206) 205-0771  
Fax# (206) 205 - xxxx**

If any viewers, or other persons, disagree with the station manager's decision regarding their complaint, he or she may appeal in writing to a sub-committee of the Government Cable Access Oversight Committee, made up of the three citizen members. The decision of the sub-committee shall be decided by a simple majority and will be the final appeal. The sub-committee will attempt to resolve the written appeal based on the appeal itself and any interviews it deems necessary. Whenever possible, the sub-committee should rule on the appeal within thirty days of its filing. Such appeals shall be served at the following address:

**King County  
Office of Cable Communications  
700 - 5th Avenue, Suite 2300  
Seattle, WA 98104**

**Section 13) The Government Access Channel Oversight Committee will periodically review these policies and will recommend changes to the Council and Executive.**

The policies will be reviewed, at a minimum, on the following schedule:

- Review #1; Completed by March 31, 1997
  - Review #2; Completed by March 31, 1998
  - Review #3; Completed by September, 30, 1999
- And every 18-months thereafter.