



**Borough Of Somerville *Somerset County***  
**Serving Our Community**

Tel. (908) 725-2300 Fax (908) 725-2859 \* 25 West End Avenue, Somerville, N.J. 08876

**VILLEtv**  
***Somerville Educational and  
Governmental (E&G)***

***Television Station  
Policies & Procedures***

Revised March 7, 2005

**VILLEtv: Somerville Educational and Governmental (E&G)  
Television Station Policies & Procedures**

**I. Mission**

The Borough of Somerville, in cooperation with community and area resources, including local schools, will operate an education and government cable channel which will feature programming designed to celebrate the diversity of its residents and inform and educate them on topics of local interest in order to help them identify and bond with the community, its governing institutions and each other.

**II. Objectives**

In order to fulfill this mission, the following objectives are established for VILLEtv:

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- A. Develop educational and governmental programming to address the needs, concerns and interests of Somerville residents;
  - B. Broadcast quality programs which are in conformance with community standards;
  - C. Foster a cooperative effort between the Borough and community and area resources, including local schools, on projects serving the interests and needs of all Borough residents;
  - D. Stimulate residents and students to be involved in the production and broadcasting of innovative community oriented programming;
  - E. Provide a bulletin board which airs notices from government agencies and non-profit organizations in the Borough and neighboring communities which may be of interest or service to Borough residents;
  - F. Bring into the homes of persons with disabilities or shut-ins numerous Borough and area educational and non-profit activities in order to insure that they remain an integral part of our community.

**III. Program Sources**

Program material may emanate from:

- A. VILLEtv volunteer staff.
- B. Governmental and educational organizations.
- C. Area residents or non-profit community groups as approved by the Somerville Cable Television Committee.
- D. Sources outside of the Borough submitting programming requested by a committee or unit of the Borough government or an element of the educational community and which is in conformance with these policies and procedures.

**IV. Editorial Control**

- A. The final decisions concerning the editing and broadcasting of a program rest with the Somerville Cable Television Committee for all programs from all sources.
- B. VILLEtv is not obligated to air material submitted from any source or to air productions or bulletin board submissions in their entirety.

**V. Program Content Guidelines**

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The Somerville Cable Television Committee has the right to reject any program or announcement submission deemed in violation of these guidelines or which is, for any reason, deemed not suitable to the mission of VILLEtv.

The Somerville Cable Television Committee will not knowingly allow the airing of a bulletin board announcement or a portion of a program containing material which:

- A. Is contrary to local, state or federal laws.
- B. Violates state or federal law relating to obscenity or which, when considered by an average community viewer, would be offensive to the general viewing public.
- C. Contains profanity which, when considered by an average community viewer, would be offensive to the general viewing public. This specifically includes a prohibition on the airing of those words that the FCC prohibits from being broadcast on over-the-air networks.
- D. Is a direct or indirect presentation of lottery information, gaming or games of chance.
- E. Represents a solicitation or appeal for funds other than for VILLEtv.
- F. Is libelous, slanderous or an unlawful invasion of privacy.
- G. Is copyrighted or trademarked or subject to ownership or royalty rights without necessary releases, licenses or other lawful permission.
- H. Promotes any single religious belief or represents a portion or all of a religious service conducted by a church or religious organization. This shall not preclude the airing of:
  - 1. A school concert containing religious music;
  - 2. A documentary educational program explaining the beliefs or history of more than one religion;
  - 3. A concert or other musical program conducted in a church setting by a group or individual not affiliated with that church.
- I. Is an advertisement by or on behalf of officially announced candidates for public office.
- J. Constitutes advertising to promote the sale of commercial products or services.
- K. Is conducted in a private business establishment unless it is part of a governmental or non-profit event or a VILLEtv authorized educational program or series.
- L. Contains any inappropriate spoken or physical behavior which could improperly or unfairly injure, violate or insult other persons or groups or is contrary to generally accepted community standards.
- M. Presents demeaning or derogatory comments about, or representations of, individuals or groups based upon ethnic or racial origin, gender, religious belief or sexual orientation.

The Somerville Cable Television Committee has the right to reject any program or announcement submission deemed in violation of these guidelines or which is, for any reason, deemed not suitable to the mission of VILLEtv.

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**VI. Electronic Bulletin Board**

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- A. The bulletin board is a mechanism for the airing of public announcements or messages that are non-commercial and deemed to be informational to borough residents. These messages include the announcement of events or services sponsored or conducted by governmental, educational or non-profit community groups or organizations.
  - B. Announcements of events or services sponsored by governmental entities or non-profit community organizations from neighboring communities may be placed on the bulletin board if programming and editing time permit.
  - C. All notices must be approved by the Somerville Cable Television Committee or its designee. VILLEtv reserves the right to edit any such message.
  - D. Personal ads will not be accepted.
  - E. Ads for political campaigns will not be accepted.
  - F. Announcements may not contain references to:
    - 1. Lotteries or bingo games; or
    - 2. Alcoholic beverages or cash or open bars.
  - G. Meetings of non-profit, non-governmental groups may be announced; however announcements of internal organization meetings (ex.- a finance committee of XYZ Club) will not be carried.
  - H. The starting times and locations of religious services conducted by religious organizations within the Borough may be posted on a religious services page.
  - I. All messages should include the name of the event (ex.- a spring bazaar and luncheon) or service (ex.-flu shots), the name of the sponsoring organization, date, time, location, costs and contact person, phone number and website.
  - J. The design of the screen including the colors, character fonts, style and layout of the announcement will be decided by VILLEtv.
  - K. Requests must be dropped off at or mailed to the VILLEtv, 25 West End Avenue, Somerville, N.J. 08876. Announcements may be transmitted electronically for approval by VILLEtv.
  - L. All requests must be received at least two weeks prior to the requested air start date. Acceptance is solely at the discretion of the Somerville Cable Television Committee.
  - M. The Somerville Cable Television Committee has the right to reject any message deemed not to be in conformance with these policies and procedures or the mission of VILLEtv.

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**VII. Cable Productions**

- A. Air time is available solely for the purpose of educational or community programming that is non-commercial and is in conformance with these policies and procedures.
1. Educational programming is a program from any governmental, educational or non-profit source designed to inform or instruct viewers about matters which fall within the purview of the VILLEtv mission and objectives.
  2. Community programming is a program featuring an activity of a unit of Borough government or an event sponsored by an element of Borough government or a product which is requested for airing by a unit of Borough government to inform, educate or entertain Somerville residents on matters which may be of local interest.
- B. All programming shall be reviewed by the Somerville Cable Television Committee or its designee and is subject to editing to insure that it is in conformance with these policies and procedures and scheduling requirements.
- C. An independently produced program is any program that is neither a taping or broadcasting of an activity of a unit of the Borough nor an event in the Borough taped at the request of the Somerville Cable Television Committee by persons acting in the capacity of a VILLEtv production team member. Before airing an independently produced program, the producer must complete and sign a VILLEtv Producer Agreement and Indemnification Form accepting full responsibility for the program content, saving harmless VILLEtv, the Borough, and the Somerville Cable Television Committee members from any loss incurred in the defense of any claim or suit and certifying that the program is in full compliance with these policies and procedures. Independent producers developing programs at the request of a unit of Borough government or the Somerville Cable Television Committee must certify on the Producer Agreement Form that VILLEtv has first and unlimited use of the program.
- D. A program taping and/or recording of the voice of a paid performer will only be aired upon receipt and approval by the Somerville Cable Television Committee, or its designee, of a VILLEtv Performer Release Form which, in part, waives any right to compensation from VILLEtv for the broadcast of all or any portion of the performance.
- E. Liability for an unauthorized use of copyrighted material shall rest solely with the producer.
- F. The Somerville Cable Television Committee has the right to reject any program submission if it is deemed not suitable to the VILLEtv mission or not in compliance with these policies and procedures.
- G. Program proposals are required for all independently produced programs. If possible, proposals should be submitted in advance of program production. The proposals must:
1. Include a justification indicating how it relates to the mission and objectives of VILLEtv, its potential value to the community, its goals and target audience.
  2. Be accompanied by a certification that the producer has read these policies and procedures and that the program will be in compliance with them.
  3. Be submitted at least 21 days in advance of the proposed airing time. If the program does not accompany the proposal, the earliest airing will be at least 21 days after receipt of the program to allow time for editing and scheduling. These time frames may be modified by the Somerville Cable Television Committee in accordance with production or broadcast needs.
  4. Proposal requirements may be waived when a program is produced at the request of the Somerville Cable Television Committee.
- H. All media submissions must be properly labeled and contain program title and length, name of producer and sponsoring organization and the home and work telephone numbers of the producer.

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- I. VILLEtv is not responsible for any lost, stolen or damaged video tapes or other media submissions.
- J. All media must be picked up by the sender within 21 days of airing. After such time has elapsed, the media will be discarded by VILLEtv.
- K. A live broadcast violating these policies and procedures will be terminated immediately and may resume only when the activity returns to compliance.
- L. A broadcast of a meeting of any governmental policy making or advisory body or committee will only be edited to the extent that formal breaks in the meeting or any profanities or obscenities are deleted.
- Requests to delete comments or other portions of the meeting will not be honored.
- M. Persons acting in the capacity of a VILLEtv production team member creating a tape or other media on behalf of the Somerville Cable Television Committee shall complete a "Work for Hire Agreement" form acknowledging the "work for hire" capacity and agreeing that any created media is the property of VILLEtv.

**VIII. Sponsorship**

- A. The Somerville Cable Television Committee may accept sponsorship or support for all programs or services broadcast on or furnished by VILLEtv
- B. A sponsor may donate money, equipment, operational supplies, programming or services toward general VILLEtv operations or toward a specific VILLEtv production, service or broadcast function. Such donations become the sole property of the Somerville Cable Television Committee.
- C. Monies donated to VILLEtv shall be placed in a fund dedicated to the operations of VILLEtv. In the event that VILLEtv ceases operations, all remaining funds and all equipment owned by VILLEtv shall be turned over to the Borough of Somerville.
- D. Sponsorship does not convey any right to the sponsor or donor to censor, alter or influence program content.
- E. Program providers or sponsors may not advertise on VILLEtv by the use of commercials as that term is traditionally used in advertising. Programs or bulletin board submissions containing material may be rejected or edited to conform with these policies and procedures. Deemed by the Somerville Cable Television Committee to be commercial in the traditional sense.
- F. Sponsorship announcements are not commercials and cannot be used to persuade or influence viewers, to advocate for public issues or candidates or as a call to action.
- G. The Somerville Cable Television Committee is authorized to establish rates for its broadcasts, programming and services up to the following maximum rates:
1. \$100 per hour for underwriting bulletin board operations;
  2. \$200 per hour for exclusive sponsorship of a program;
  3. \$50 for each congratulatory (ex. Happy Birthday John Smith) or memorial message; and
  4. \$50 for each media item reproduced for any individual or organization. Monies donated toward general VILLEtv operations and equipment, operational supplies, programming or services donated to the Somerville Cable Television Committee are not covered by these rate limitations and may be acknowledged in bulletin board slides as the Somerville Cable Television Committee deems appropriate. Rates established within these maximums by the Somerville Cable Television Committee shall be published in the same manner applicable to the

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announcements of public meetings.

- H. Sponsorship announcements may be produced by the sponsor or VILLEtv in a format and on media established by the Somerville Cable Television Committee. Control over content rests solely with the Somerville Cable Television Committee or its designee.
- I. Volunteers or organizations securing sponsorships, donations or support for VILLEtv operations may not receive any form of compensation for this service.
- J. Sponsors have the opportunity to be the exclusive sponsor of a program by contributing the full sponsorship rate.
  
- K. Sponsorship of a particular program may emanate from more than one of the same kind of business.
- L. The costs of cable productions or bulletin board operations may be under-written in whole or in part by corporations, businesses, non-profit organizations or individuals. Such support may be acknowledged as follows:
  - 1. When a program is funded, the program may contain, for each funding source, a 20 second billboard within a 30 minute time slot (ex. This program was made possible in part by XYZ Restaurant). Alternatively, acknowledgement could be a 10 second billboard display at the start and the conclusion of the program. The billboard can only display name, address, logo, picture of the facility of a corporation, business or non-profit organization and other data deemed appropriate by the Somerville Cable Television Committee.
  - 2. When the bulletin board operation is underwritten, a notation acknowledging the sponsor may appear at the base of the bulletin board, technology permitting, for a period of time determined by the Somerville Cable Television Committee. Moreover a billboard display acknowledging this support may be carried at least once during each bulletin board cycle.
  - 3. Acknowledgements of donations or support may take the form of a congratulatory or memorial message as requested by the contributor.
- L. The Somerville Cable Television Committee has the right to make appeals for funding or support for VILLEtv operations or programming.

**IX. Program Scheduling**

- A. All program scheduling will be approved by the Somerville Cable Television Committee or its designee.
- B. Whenever possible, the committee will attempt to honor specific requests for broadcast dates and times.
- C. Subject to Somerville Cable Television Committee adjustments, broadcast priorities will be as follows:
  - 1. Live events (ex.- school sports or musical programs).
  - 2. Borough Council meetings.
  - 3. Board of Education meetings.
  - 4. Borough sponsored events.
  - 5. Borough government committee meetings.
  - 6. Other programs of specific community interest approved for broadcast by the Committee.
- D. The Somerville Cable Television Committee will attempt to broadcast live or tape Council, School

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Board or Borough government committee meetings or sponsored events as requested, personnel and equipment availability permitting. When such resources are limited, priorities for live broadcasting or taping will be in accordance with subsection C above.

- E. Emergency Management announcements made by Borough Emergency Management officials will, equipment permitting, be broadcast on a priority basis overriding all other scheduling decisions.

**X. Facilities and Equipment**

- A. VILLEtv is a local, non-profit cable access television production and broadcast operation wholly owned by the Borough of Somerville and operated by the Somerville Cable Television Committee.
- B. VILLEtv broadcasting will emanate from the Somerville Borough Hall.
- C. Access to VILLEtv editing or storage areas in Borough of Somerville facilities will be subject to Borough policies and procedures.
- D. Access to Borough of Somerville facilities for the purpose of taping or producing activities or events will be in accordance with Borough policies and procedures.
- E. Equipment and supplies purchased by or donated to the Somerville Cable Television Committee will remain the property of the Somerville Cable Television Committee regardless of its location.
- F. Access to the broadcast equipment located at the cable insertion point in the Somerville Borough Hall will be strictly limited to persons updating programming and scheduling or performing maintenance on such equipment as approved by the Somerville Cable Television Committee.
- G. VILLEtv equipment may only be used for the production or taping of events or activities approved by the Somerville Cable Television Committee. Access to this equipment should be available to:
  - 1. VILLEtv production team members; or
  - 2. Independent producers approved by the Somerville Cable Television Committee.
- H. A VILLEtv Portable Equipment Request Form shall be used when any equipment is removed from the Borough of Somerville facilities or storage areas.
- I. A log developed by the Somerville Cable Television Committee must be located in each area where must VILLEtv equipment or supplies is stationed. Persons using such equipment at the work station sign in and out when the equipment is used.
- J. Any equipment that is damaged or malfunctions must be reported by the person using the equipment at the time of the incident on a VILLEtv Incident Report Form. The form must be submitted to the Somerville Cable Television Committee.

**XI. Production Team**

- A. The Somerville Cable Television Committee may establish a volunteer group, the VILLEtv Production Team, to assist in the production and broadcasting of VILLEtv programming.
- B. Volunteers need not be residents of the Borough of Somerville.
- C. Volunteers may be of any age; however persons under the age of 18 must have a VILLEtv Student Release Form signed by a parent or guardian providing consent for them to participate in VILLEtv

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- production or broadcast activities.
- D. Persons volunteering shall complete a "Work for Hire Agreement" Form acknowledging that when they are performing services for VILLEtv in the capacity of a production team member they will be considered to be in a work for hire capacity and agreeing that any media created while working in that capacity is the property of VILLEtv.
  - E. Production team members may be involved in activities such as filming, editing, writing, narrating, interviewing, bulletin board creation, program development and scheduling.
  - F. Training and/or certification processes for the use of equipment by production team members or others will be determined by the Somerville Cable Television Committee.
  - H. Production team members may only tape or perform other services for activities or events approved by the Somerville Cable Television Committee.

## **XII. Technical Standards**

- A. All media submitted must be in a format approved by the Somerville Cable Television Committee.
- B. All media submitted for broadcast will be reviewed for technical quality standards and may be rejected for airing if deemed by the Somerville Cable Television Committee to not meet broadcast technical standards.
- C. VHS tapes will be accepted provided that the picture is of good quality and the audio signals are audible and free of distortion and excessive hiss. Since such tapes must be converted to a DVD form, a delay in broadcasting may occur.
- D. All media must have 30 seconds of black at the beginning and end. Black is a synchronous signal generated by a sync generator or the output of a camera with its lens cap on.
- E. Media for a 30 minute or a 60 minute time slot should be 28 or 58 minutes in length respectively.
- F. Media shall be labeled in accordance with standards determined by the Somerville Cable Television Committee.
- G. Submissions not meeting one or more of the above mentioned technical standards may be rejected by the Somerville Cable Television Committee or its designee.

## **XIII. Technology Purchases**

- A. The Somerville Cable Television Committee may purchase equipment, operational supplies, programming and/or services required to carry out the mission and meet the objectives of VILLEtv.
- B. Equipment purchased will be capable of broadcasting in a DVD format.
- C. Such purchases will be made in accordance with Borough of Somerville purchasing policies and procedures from a fund dedicated to the operation of VILLEtv.

**Effective March 7, 2005**