The Westford Board of Selectmen has appointed WestfordCAT as the Public, Education and Government (PEG) Access Provider in town.

**Mission**

To promote the use of local access to enhance a free and diverse exchange of ideas and interests that fosters community participation and educational opportunities.

**Commitment**

- Encouraging community involvement in the production of local access programs while maintaining a friendly, open and creative environment that will allow individual ideas to develop into collaborative productions.
- Maintaining an educational setting for WestfordCAT volunteers in an effort to advance their knowledge in multiple forms of media production and distribution.
- Encouraging the creation of unique programs to share with our community.
- Providing live coverage, recording and archiving of many of the Town of Westford Government meetings.

**Delivery**

- Offer training and technical assistance in the use of video production equipment.
- Supply access to production resources.
- Provide broadcast and streaming channel time on the PEG Channels.

**Governance**

- Governance is by a Board of Directors comprised of a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 11 members serving two year staggered terms, except appointed liaisons.
- The Westford Board of Selectmen, Westford School Committee and the Nashoba Technical School District School Committee may appoint a director to serve as a liaison with their organization.
- Remaining directors are elected by the Corporation’s membership.
Board of Directors as of December 31, 2017

- Ira Keltz, President
- Nancy Burns, Vice President
- Christina Sacco, Treasurer
- Tracey Tebrow, Clerk
- Paul Playe, Member-at-large
- Nina Cimini, Member-at-large
- Tom Clay, Westford Board of Selectmen
- Avery Adam, Westford School Committee
- Warren Adam, Nashoba Valley Technical High School Committee

Executive Committee

- Ira Keltz, President
- Nancy Burns, Treasurer
- Tracey Tebrow, Clerk

Financial Statement as of December 31, 2017

- Cash $346,841
- Short-term Investments $105,096
- Accounts Receivable $124,266
- Accounts Payable $4,719
- Franchise Fees $510,566
- Capital Grants $10,000
- Change in Net Assets $1,384
Letter from the President

Dear Friends,

It’s hard to believe that this is the last ‘Letter from the President’ that I’ll be writing for WestfordCAT’s Annual Report. When I first walked into the station 10 years ago this Fall, I had no idea how much I would fall in love with the organization, and how far we would bring it along with an amazing team of staff and volunteers throughout the years.

2017 was another incredible year for WestfordCAT. We continued to increase our visibility in the community through our weekly WestfordCAT News programs and our daily online news site. We have a great relationship with the Town of Westford in terms of meeting coverage and with Westford Academy as we hosted nine senior interns in May for their capstone projects. We won the coveted Roudenbush Trophy for best float in the Apple Blossom Parade for the first time. Our staff continues to gel as a group of strong professionals, putting out quality programming with volunteer producers and covering community events all year. Our beautiful expanded studio drew in more visitors and even provided space for other community organizations to host their own meetings.

This past year there were a few more changes to the WestfordCAT Board of Directors. Our veteran board member Nancy Burns served as our Treasurer and Tracey Tebrow did an amazing job as our Clerk. Paul Playe, from Eastern Bank, provided great experience in Finance and we benefitted from his background in community media. Nina Cimini joined the board as a member at large and had great ideas to share. We said goodbye to Carol Heidenrich, who had been the board liaison from Nashoba Tech, and welcomed her replacement, Warren Adam from the Nashoba Tech School Committee. His wife, Avery Adam, served another year as our liaison from the Westford School Committee and really encouraged us to get more involved with the schools. Kelly Ross’ reign, of almost nine years, as the Board of Selectmen liaison stepped down after his decision to leave the Board of Selectmen; he now has more time to hike the mountains of NH! Tom Clay from the BOS, another strong voice to have our concerns heard by the selectmen, replaced him. Finally, in December we welcomed Christina Sacco to the board, she stepped into the Treasurer’s role for 2018.

During the year, individuals and organizations provided valuable support by making donations of cash or services. In kind donations were received from our CPA firm, Anstiss & Co. P.C. who discounted their services making the audit of our financial statements more affordable.
Potential state legislation may impact PEG Access, as in past years. In 2017, both the Massachusetts State House and Senate debated a bill that would have required PEG channels to appear on the HD tier as well as in the electronic program guides. We hope that our representatives will continue to lobby for these measures next year. There is also a similar bill at the Federal level that was introduced in support of PEG Access in May of 2015. The Community Access Preservation Act, which was co-sponsored by Massachusetts Senator Ed Markey, was read twice in the US Senate and then referred to the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation where it remains today.

We continue to work with the Town of Westford’s Communications Advisory Committee to renew our Memorandum of Understanding with the Board of Selectmen. This MOU expired on 12/31/15 and was not renewed as of 12/31/17. We continue to operate under the terms of the expired agreement and fully expect to have a new MOU completed in 2018.

WestfordCAT will continue to build on our momentum and provide our community with the appropriate facilities, equipment, and services that will ensure the fulfillment of our mission and exceed community expectations. Thank you to everyone, including our supporters in the community, board and committee members, all the producers and volunteers, and the hard working staff who make PEG access in Westford better each year.

I’m really going to miss this place, the people, ...and the on-air screen time! I’m leaving the organization with a great board of directors, a very experienced and motivated staff, and a healthy balance sheet. I know that you will continue to amaze our town with all that you will be able to offer going forward.

Sincerely,
Ira S. Keltz, President
SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS
Lauren Horton, Executive Director

In 2017 we set out to improve the quality of our government meetings coverage with high definition camera upgrades in the meeting rooms at both the Millennium School and the Town Hall. We also expanded our ability to transmit live programming from any building that is directly connected to the town’s network, thanks to new programmable encoders that were provided to us by Verizon. We also upgraded our playback system, adding more memory, processing speed and storage capacity to handle the larger HD file transmissions.

Our online news site, WestfordCATNews.org, was updated daily with locally relevant content featuring online articles, pictures and video about people, organizations, issues and events of interest to Westford residents. Each Friday we introduced a new WestfordCAT News program on our public channels with interviews and timely hyper-local coverage and shared them online directly through our email subscriber list and also through social media sites. We continue to add new segments and invite the community to participate by submitting their own content or news tips and by anchoring segments.

Our youth programs included two fully attended summer camps in 2017 – one in June and another in August – for 20 area students. We also hosted nine Westford Academy senior interns and one Nashoba Valley Technical High School senior in the spring. And during the summer we had one college intern from University of Connecticut in June and two additional interns from Northeast Independent Living Program in August.

In 2018 we plan to add high end edit systems that can handle 4K and 360 video to the front area, separating it from the reception area with sliding glass doors. A new Smartlink projector and 90” display board and speaker system will provide a community meeting space for multimedia presentations as well as a virtual reality maker space. Watch for future announcements of public VR events where attendees can either watch immersive 360 video or interact with a variety of virtual reality games, experiencing first hand the wonders of this emerging technology.

Staffing

- Lauren Horton, Executive Director
- Joyce Pellino Crane, News Director
- Steve Edwards, Technical Coordinator
- Sarah Fletcher, Marketing Outreach Manager
- Patty Stocker, Production Coordinator
- Nick Woodbury, Production Technician
Lauren Horton, our Executive Director, had another very successful year leading our staff and managing our very busy studio. Her efforts to keep us current with the latest technologies and utilize IP streaming equipment to transmit live high definition video from any town-networked building has paid off with improvements to both the quality and quantity of new programming. WestfordCAT is now fully ready to operate on HD channels as soon as Comcast and Verizon provide us the opportunity.

Our Marketing Outreach Manager, Sarah Fletcher, continued her efforts to increase awareness of our organization in the community, adding new members, new sponsors and hosting events at the station. Her new role as president of the Westford Business Association offered more ways to promote WestfordCAT’s offerings to the larger business community.

Joyce Crane, our News Director, really shined in her role in 2017, producing daily content for our online news site and weekly segments for our news show. She did it all, from writing the stories, soliciting community members to share their stories, and working with the rest of the staff to create must-watch TV for Westford.

Steve Edwards continued to grow in his more technical role over the last year and is doing a great job keeping up with all of our high-tech equipment to make sure it's running smoothly. He is our lead studio technician and also trains our members on camera and video editing techniques.

Patty Stocker had a tremendous year both in front of and behind the camera. Her solid video editing skills contributed greatly to the quality and abundance of our local programming and especially in the production of our weekly WestfordCAT News programs. On a personal mission to increase the adoption rate of local shelter animals to almost 100%, she singlehandedly produced a weekly pet of the week program for the Lowell Humane Society.

Nick Woodbury provided consistent coverage of our government meetings, and assembled weekly program schedules for our three channels. His ever-willing attitude to go on location and record video when asked contributed to the quality of our news show and the responsiveness to community needs.
Sponsors

In 2017 WestfordCAT had 15 new and renewing business members who enjoy the marketing exposure offered in the sponsorship package which includes acknowledgments on our channels, on the website and in our newsletters. During her summer internships with us, Katie Sawosik also added several station IDs featuring our sponsors – complete with blooper reels.

1. Alpine Environmental
2. Bridges by Epoch
3. Cameron Senior Center
4. Circle Health
5. Eastern Bank
6. Enterprise Bank
7. Especially for Pets
8. Robert Feins, MD
9. Harkness Law
10. LAER Realtors
11. Life Care Centers
12. Rotary Club of Westford
13. Marketing by Marcia
14. Northern Bank
15. Roudenbush Community Center

Members and Volunteers

The spring of 2017 was packed with excitement as nine WA seniors completed their capstone projects with us, along with longer-term interns from Innovation Academy and NVTHS and two students from the NE Independent Living Program. It was hectic and equipment was going out the door daily. Our college intern, Katie Sawosik worked well on projects with little direction and assisted with the first summer video camp session.

2017 Studio Sign-ins
Total: 922

WestfordCAT.org Visits – Up 19%
2017 New Members

Billy Auger
Liewei Bao
Michael Beek
Allie Bush
Dawn and Owen Cashman
Wen Chen
Nina Cimini
Michelle Collett
Pamela Connolly
Sherrie Cook
Sherri Couillard
Douglas Coull
James Curran
Helen Cui
Tarah Doolin
Suzanne Eaton
Jamie Evans-Garcia
Marisol Garcia
Chelsea Ge
Donna Giuggo
Frank Heitkamp
Diane Hendriks
Ashly Jose
Ritu Juneja
Shameem Khan
Chris Kuntz
Shane Lazar
Jason Macres
Marcia J. Macres
Elaine Miller
Nancy Null
Barry Rosenberg
Katherine Sawosik
Leah Schenkel
Fengying Shi
Greg Sinclair
James Teal
Johnny Vaught
Wayne Wagner
Shirley Xia
Hong Zhang
Shunhe Xiong

Student Internships

Innovation Academy
Abigail Monahan
Caitlin Pichette

Northeast Independent Living
Seamus O’Hearne
Austin Roy

NVTHS
Ben Richards

WA Capstone
Noah Barnes
Kevin Biciunas
Lukas Borodawksa
Lauren Derners
Aaron Ewing
Dylan Grimm
Hunter Hychovan
Andrew Reed
Ethan Wheel

Special Thanks to:

• Betsy Alvarez, our news events announcer
• Anthony Cammalleri, Spring 2018 WestfordCAT News intern
• Ryan Cozzens, Spring 2018 WestfordCAT volunteer
Contributor of the Year – Cheryl Major, Thin, Strong, Healthy
For television shows and editorial content provided for WestfordCAT and WestfordCAT News throughout 2017.

Longest Running Program – Legal Ease
Archived back to June 15, 2006
with “Mass Gun Law” as the first show’s topic.
News Segment
Contributor of the Year:
Rekha Sharma’s
Health Tips

The Health Tip Segment
appears in each of the
weekly news shows.

Most Prolific Producer:
Ed Cohen, The Ed Cohen Variety Show
21 shows produced in 2017

Most YouTube Views:
Producer, Nina Cimini

Nina’s six shows
produced in 2017
had more than 10,000 views!
This year we continued our efforts to become the main source of locally relevant news and cultural listings in town by consistently posting quality content. We continued to use MailChimp services to distribute our free daily publication, containing at least two new posts per day. Thursdays grew to be our content-rich days, sometimes featuring an in-depth story as well as our weekly news show.

By adding video clips of local meetings to our short stories, we pushed up the numbers of people reached on Facebook. Two anecdotal examples -- the clip of Kevin Regan’s acceptance speech after winning the Gordon B. Seavey Appreciation Award reached 1,096 Facebook followers. And Ellen Rainville’s humorous presentation on Rev. Willard Hall’s Journal at annual Town Meeting reached 779 followers.

Our weekly news show hit its stride with a combination of hard news stories and a weekly feature designed to attract a variety of viewers. Ongoing segments include updates with the town manager and superintendent, the weather forecast, an adoptable pet, and Rekha Sharma’s health tips. Producing this weekly show is a team effort for our staff with Joyce Crane assembling the stories and writing the script, Patty Stocker piecing it together on Wednesdays and Thursdays, with extra video clips often provided by Nick Woodbury and Stephen Edwards. Sarah Fletcher promotes the production and Lauren Horton ensures that schedules are met and last minute changes are handled.

We tackled some weighty issues for the town, including the asphalt plant, the shocking accidental death of a shopper at the Cornerstone Square Market Basket and the school security/gun control struggle that had local school and public safety officials on alert. Our Main Street show drew steady requests from residents asking to appear on it for a variety of reasons, from promoting a fundraising effort to sharing personal stories about the opioid epidemic.

We also established several policies to address reader submissions, letters to the editor and political coverage to serve as guidelines for protecting the station’s news credibility.

All these efforts paid off as the news site had more than 337,000 page views in 2017, according to Google Analytics, with Facebook being the most instrumental guide to our site, directing 21,025 visits. Organic searches drove 19,453 visits to us. And our daily email subscriptions sent another 9,012 visits to us. In January 2017 we started out with 362 subscribers. By December 2017, we had 412 subscribers -- a 14% increase.
2017 Annual Programming Report

1,184 Programs added across three channels
- 469 Programs added to the VOD Library
- 387 Videos added to YouTube
Locally Produced & Presented Programs

The Public Channel

21 Locally Produced Series – 232 Episodes

- 30 Minutes (1)
- Adoptable Pet of the Week (46)
- Around Town (1)
- Back of the House (3)
- Barry’s Place (4)
- CAT Tracks (27)
- Ed Cohen Variety Show (22)
- Full Circle Fitness (10)
- Hello Westford! (1)
- Holiday Cheers (16)
- Legal Ease (5)
- Local Music Rocks (3)
- Main Street Westford (17)
- Personal Finance Playbook (9)
- Ready, Set, Talk! (1)
- Russia Then and Now (1)
- Second Opinion (1)
- Senior Spot (17)
- Thin, Strong, Healthy (1)
- WestfordCAT News (45)
- Westford Tales (1)
18 Locally Produced Specials

• 9/11 Memorial Service 2017
• 2017 Blues N’ Brews Festival
• A Conversation with Dennis Galvin
• 2017 Apple Blossom Parade
• Budget Buddies 2017
• CCLS YEP 2017
• Chick Singer Night
• Indian Hill Cantori Scolari – February
• Indian Hill Cantori Scolari – June
• Jim Arciero Sun Santa Toys for Tots 2017
• Legalization of Marijuana – Is it Safe?
• Memorial Day Ceremony 2017
• NIA Annual Meeting at Sandy Beach
• Run for Liv Ride for Liv
• Tai-Ji Demonstration – Boston Harbor Fest
• The Impossible Can Be Possible
• Town Common Menorah Lighting 2017
• Westford House Concert

8 Presented Program Specials

• Dementia Friendly Program Presentation
• Historic Houses of Main Street w/Ellen Harde
• Islamic Law – A Social Sciences Perspective
• Native American Grassy Pond Stone Circle
• Shunhe Xiong Campaign Video
• Strategic Planning Retreat 2017
• WBA Annual Meeting 2017
• WBA Town Managers Talk 2017

The Education Channel

5 Locally Produced Series - 28 Episodes

• Chat with the Coaches (3)
• Superintendent Update (14)
• WA Principal Report (1)
• WA Sports Update (5)
• WA Sports Games (5)
9 Locally Produced Specials

- Bullying is NOT Okay, Period
- Chinese Exchange Students at WA
- Governor Baker NVTHS Machine Shop Ribbon Cutting
- Kids Video Camp 2017
- Miller Community Night Part 1 & 2
- NVTHS Videos (4)
- US Education – How Does it Rank Worldwide?
- WA Graduation 2017
- WA Speech and Debate Club
- Youth at Risk Forum – Opioid Epidemic

4 Presented Series - 7 Episodes

- Animal Adventures (1)
- Eat Well Be Happy (1)
- Expedition New England (4)
- Wicked Good Food (1)

The Government Channel

12 Locally Produced Series – 130 Episodes

- Annual Town Meeting 2017 AM/PM Sessions
- Annual Town Meeting 2017 Monday Session
- Special Town Meeting – July 2017
- Special Town Meeting – October 2017
- Board of Health (11)
- Board of Selectmen (24)
- Conservation Commission (23)
- Finance Committee (11)
- Planning Board (15)
- School Committee (25)
- Zoning Board of Appeals (18)

5 Locally Produced Specials

- LWV Candidates Night 2017
- LWV Warrant Review Annual Town Mtg 2017
- LWV Warrant Review STM – July 2017
- LWV Warrant Review STM – October 2017
- Strategic Planning Retreat 2017
77 Locally Produced and Presented PSAs/Shorts

- Adoptable Pet of the Week (46)
- Anti Bullying – Girl Scouts
- Arciero’s Sun Santa Toys for Tots Donations
- Chick Singer Night PSA
- Cameron Open House
- Candidates Minutes (13)
- Confronting Peer Pressure by Jamie
- Day School Playground Fundraiser
- Ed Cohen Channel Intro for TV 2017
- #End Gun Violence Vigil
- Finance Committee Applications
- Hidden Battles
- Lights Camera Action Workshop
- MassAccess Viewer Support PSA
- Senior Tax Relief Program
- Show Me the Money PSA
- Special Town Meeting PSA – July 2017
- Veterans Day Services 2017
- WA Trustees Scholarship Fundraiser
- UFO Conference Promo PSA
Programming Statistics Across 3 Channels

Bulletin Board

WestfordCAT runs public service announcements and bulletin board announcements on each channel providing local information on upcoming events and public service announcements. Messages for the bulletin boards can be submitted through our website, by emailing bulletin@WestfordCAT.org or by sending a fax to 978-692-5246.

WestfordCAT endeavors to post information in the most expedient and visually impacting manner. In 2017, the community submitted 73 slides and 87 PSAs to the bulletin board.

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Training

All of our staff was involved in continuing efforts to expand training classes offered through 2017. In collaboration with Roudenbush Community Center, we offered two summer video camps hosting 10 students in each session. These are the ever-popular “Lights, Camera, Action!” summer youth video training camps.
Thank you Ira!