

**CITY OF ALBANY
CITY COUNCIL
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda date: 11/21/11
Reviewed by: BP

Subject: Camera purchase to support live event production for KALB

To: Community Media Access Committee

From: Jeremy Allen, KALB Manager

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the Community Media Access Committee support and recommend the purchase of three Panasonic AG-HPX370 shoulder mount cameras and accessories to be used for live, multi camera video production of Albany events, which will be filmed by youth involved in the City of Albany A/V Mentorship and the Albany Student Broadcast programs.

BACKGROUND

Over the last five years, the City has benefitted from the regular participation of high-school aged volunteers in all of its community events. These youth have been a critical workforce supporting the audio/visual aspects of the City's event production including audio engineering, video documentation, presentation, lighting, hospitality and promotion. While volunteering afterschool, evenings and weekends, they have been able to acquire basic job skills and a high degree of technically specific audio/video knowledge in a challenging work environment. Participants have had hands-on experience learning live sound for musical and presentation events, stage lighting, event production, multi camera video broadcast, audio/video recording and editing, as well as receiving practical advice related to job skills.

Several current City part-time staff started as volunteers in this capacity, proving the model of "get your feet in the door by volunteering". While this is not the primary goal of the A/V mentor program, it is worth noting that the City has hired some very good, mature and responsible young part-time employees over the years who had first gained volunteer experience.

With the changes to the current offerings at the Teen Center for FY 2011-12, the Recreation Department decided to offer a formal version of the existing volunteer program called the A/V Mentor Program. Under the Teen Center umbrella, AVMP participants learn live audio/video production to produce TV and web content through the Albany Teen Center, KALB and AHS Student Broadcasting. Training opportunities are provided throughout the academic year to bolster the skills of the youth involved. The program is offered free of charge and participants

will receive a certificate of completion from the City as well as a letter of commendation from City officials.

Under direct supervision from City of Albany staff, participants in this program work together to provide technical support for the events listed below and accrue volunteer hours over the course of the year program. In addition, the events will be filmed for broadcast on KALB and streaming on the City website.

2011-12 events to be filmed by City of Albany include:

- City of Albany Concerts in the Park
- Lunar New Year
- Dinner with Albany
- Arts and Green Festival
- 4th of July Celebration
- KALB channel 33 broadcast programming
- Albany Film Festival
- Albany Library Brown Bag Speaker Series
- Albany Library Poetry Nights
- City of Albany and AUSD Public Meetings

Many of these same youth, if attending AHS, can/will also be a part of Albany Student Broadcasting, a group of Albany High School students who produce live, multi-camera broadcasts of high school and community events. Their mission is to teach the fundamentals of live broadcasting to students considering media-related careers, and to provide content for KALB. The group is co-managed by the high school teachers Jeff Castle and Ned Purdom and City of Albany youth services manager Jeremy Allen. For more information visit www.albanystudentbroadcasting.com

2011-12 events to be filmed by Albany Student Broadcasting include:

- 4 Girl's Volleyball games
- 4 Boy's and 4 Girl's varsity basketball games
- 4 Boy's varsity baseball games
- 4 Performing Arts events
- AHS graduation

We have chosen to shoot everything "live to tape" meaning that we will cover events live, as if our broadcast is being viewed simultaneously by a home audience, even though we are recording it for a future air date. We do this for two reasons: 1) Live broadcasts are fun, fast-paced and require a ton of coordination and team work. 2) Recording events live allows us to "edit on the fly," instead of dragging a bunch of tapes back into the studio and editing them after the event is already over.

We have seen that post production work including multi camera filming and editing in the studio is too costly and time consuming for current staffing limitations and is not sustainable on a regular basis. City or AUSD staff simply doesn't have the time or resources to engage in this

type of production. “Live-to-tape”, though a larger production, leaves us with a finished product that is ready to air immediately. City and AUSD public meetings are broadcast in this fashion though with remote controlled cameras instead of a production crew.

The pilot events that we worked on together last year (2 AHS Baseball games and the Arts and Green Festival) were fun, productive and instructional. They showed us that it indeed takes a crew of 7-10 people to pull off a production and that the community was curious and enthusiastic. The events also showed us that the weak link in the production was the cameras, and that without good cameras of the same make and model, we were limited in our capacity to teach the necessary skills or achieve the desired high-quality result.

After thorough research, the Panasonic AG-HPX370 stands out as the best studio hybrid camera suited to the types of event productions that we do. Staff looked at the benefits of this camera choice to City of Albany broadcast and video projects, as well as those for AHS.

The Panasonic AG-HPX370 has the following attributes:

- studio/switcher integration capability (SDI out, genlock in)
- large LCD or viewfinder-out
- manual zoom/focus rings strong zoom,
- will accept as interchangeable lens
- cost point low enough to allow for the purchase of 3-4 cameras
- works out-of-the-box but will also allow for additional accessories/upgrades when funds become available
- useful for both small video projects and larger multi-camera shoots

A camera comparison spreadsheet is attached (**see attached A-1**) including the other models we looked at.

The Panasonic AG-HPX370 will work equally well in a controlled indoor environment, providing for the eventuality of producing studio shows in the future.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT

One of the goals of the Albany Community Media Access Committee is to generate locally produced content and share the content with the Albany community on KALB and online. As part of the CMAC 2010 on-going goals and objectives (**see attached A-2**) the committee suggested including the use of volunteers for camera and production work, particularly volunteers from Albany High School. On the attached document one can see in the highlighted items how many CMAC goals correlate with this endeavor.

Over the last five years the City and School district have crafted productive working relationships that have allowed us to share staff, facilities, A/V equipment and IT support between agencies. AUSD students make up a significant block of the City of Albany volunteer corps. This volunteer model has proven over the years to make it possible for the City of Albany to create large scale, professional community events. As budgets get tighter it makes good sense to foster relationships that allow us to share equipment and staff.

We now also have an opportunity to recreate a clear and defined relationship with Albany Student Broadcasting that will allow us to expand this inter-agency collaboration in order to create broadcast content that is of interest to Albany. By generating more local, youth based programming we can offer an incentive to households to subscribe to Comcast (where this content can readily be seen) thereby boosting Comcast franchise and PEG fees paid to the City. Our experience with Albany FilmFest has also proven that there is potential for sponsorship and underwriting from Albany sports booster groups that would like to see their players and games on TV and available online.

This will help foster community building, enabling KALB and AHS to be a functional channel for the distribution of relevant and interesting media to City residents. We will continue to provide a programming block on KALB's television broadcast specifically for this content.

A condition of this collaboration will be a written agreement between the City of Albany and AUSD detailing the goals and logistics of managing the equipment, program and volunteers. We are also exploring various incentive possibilities to generate consistent student involvement. CMAC will be provided a draft version of this agreement.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The cost of the 3 cameras is \$18,045 (**see attached A-3**) - \$6,015 ea. plus tax and shipping. AUSD is being asked to provide for the purchase of the 1st round of accessories including camera video screens, batteries tripods, cases etc totaling approximately \$13,000. We qualify for special pricing from Panasonic because of the collaboration with an educational institution. Retail cost on these cameras is \$9200 and the best online price is \$7200.

The cameras will be purchased with 2011-12 PEG monies received annually from Comcast.