

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES HELPS FUND PCTV'S CLOSED CAPTIONING

Pittsfield, MA, January 24, 2023 - Pittsfield Community Television has received funding from the Pittsfield Commission on Disabilities to add closed captions to many local programs broadcast on PCTV's channels. The service will allow hearing-impaired viewers to follow along with the content of the programming by reading text on the screen.

On January 12, the commission voted to allocate \$1,850 to help the organization provide closed captioning for all city meetings for the year. The captions can currently be viewed on certain programs on the PCTV website, www.pittsfieldtv.org, and the PCTV Select app. Many more programs will be captioned in the coming weeks and months.

PCTV is hopeful that the captioning can extend to the public, education, and government channels on Spectrum in Pittsfield. Viewers would normally be able to view the captions on the Citylink channel, 1303, simply by switching on the closed captions using their remote control. Unfortunately, Spectrum is not currently allowing captions to appear on its channels 1301, 1302, and 1303.

"This is a critical accessibility issue for viewers and community members," said PCTV Executive Director Shawn Serre. "We want people of all abilities to benefit from the important local programming provided by PCTV. I thank the Commission for their initial investment in this service and implore Charter Spectrum to step up and do the right thing: make the changes at your end to pass these closed captions along to your cable TV viewers," he said.

Congress requires video programming distributors (VPDs) - cable operators, satellite distributors, and other multi-channel video programming distributors - to include closed captions provided from any of their source channels.

The money from the Pittsfield Commission on Disabilities comes from the city's parking violations fund. While the cost of adding captions to video programming has been reduced in recent years, it remains a significant expense for local television organizations which choose to provide the service.

PCTV is hoping to expand closed captioning to programming on the Access Pittsfield and ETV channels, but that will require funding for additional hardware. The organization is seeking grants and other local funding to expand the captioning service to additional channels.

Pittsfield Community Television is Pittsfield's Public, Education and Government ("PEG") Access Television Station. A 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable organization, PCTV's mission is to provide access to the medium of television and related technologies, including training, production facilities, and cablecast time, and to provide the Pittsfield community with local television programming. It has served this vital role to the community since its inception in 1986. PCTV also manages and operates WTBR-FM, also known as Pittsfield Community Radio, a non-commercial educational radio station broadcasting on 89.7 FM. Information on PCTV and WTBR-FM can be found at PittsfieldTV.org and at WTBRFM.com.

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