

HERNANDO COUNTY GOVERNMENT BROADCASTING OPERATIONAL POLICY No. 30-1

Purpose: To provide standard guidelines of operation for Hernando County Government Broadcasting (HCGB) in order to ensure uniformity and consistency and to facilitate understanding of the HCGB mission and functions.

I. Background

Hernando County Government Broadcasting's (HCGB) Channel 622 is a 24-hour government access television channel programmed and operated by Hernando County, Florida. HCGB Channel 622 consists of programming primarily produced by Hernando County government agencies and their employees. HCGB Channel 622 was initially established in 1998 on Channel 19 in accordance with provisions of the cable television franchise agreement with Time Warner Communications (now Bright House Networks). Channel 20 was established in November 2002, for broadcast of The Florida Channel (the State of Florida government access channel) and the Community Bulletin Board. In December, 2007, Bright House relocated Channel 19 programming to Channel 622; Channel 20 programming (The Florida Channel) was moved to Channel 623; and Channel 615 became the County's secondary channel for the community bulletin board. In 2010, Bright House withdrew Channel 615 from the County's use.

Channel 614 is the School District channel (HITV). Channel 622 and 614 are not public access channels. Access to airtime is restricted to government and school-related functions/operations and community programming in accordance with this policy. The following policy applies specifically Channel 622.

II. Organizational Structure

Hernando County Government Broadcasting (HCGB) is a part of the General Services Division within the Technology Services Department. The division is supervised by the Technology Services Manager, with two other staff members (1 Video Production Manager and 1 Video Assistant). The HCGB staff works closely with other county departments to produce informational programs, training videos and other video applications for internal and external use.

III. Mission

The mission of HCGB is to enhance communication between County Government and County citizens by providing timely and informative video programming regarding local government activities and services via the local dedicated governmental cable channel.

Adopted by the Hernando County Board of County Commissioner: July 25, 2000
Amended 11/14/00
Amended 05/6/03
Amended 01/15/08
Amended 10/22/13

IV. Programming and Production

The programming for HCGB is intended to:

1. Identify, explain, and encourage the use of government services and provide more responsible and informed interaction between government and citizens;
2. Provide Hernando County residents access to the live gavel-to-gavel proceedings of the Board of County Commissioners' meetings and other forums where public policy is discussed, debated and decided -- all without editing, commentary or analysis.
3. Provide elected and appointed officials and others who would influence public policy a direct conduit to the audience without filtering or otherwise distorting their points of view;
4. Employ production values that accurately convey the business of government rather than distract from it;
5. Conduct all other aspects of its operations consistent with these principles.

The programming is accomplished in a manner which encourages trust, a sense of accountability and appreciation of the value of county government services. Decisions regarding the daily programming schedule will be made by the Video Production Manager in accordance with these operating policies. Programming shall include only non-editorial information concerning the operations and deliberations of local government and other programming as covered under this policy.

V. Indirect Government Programming

1. In order to maximize cost-effective and informative programming, HCGB may utilize videos from or provide production services to eligible organizations outside Hernando County government. Eligible organizations are defined as:
 - A) Local, state and federal government bodies, agencies, and representatives;
 - B) Local groups working with local government agencies on official government activities;
 - C) Private, non-profit organizations providing a public service to Hernando County residents that offsets or avoids direct costs to Hernando County; and
 - D) Private, non-profit civic and/or community organizations that do not provide a public service to the general community but whose activities benefit only its members or a limited number of Hernando County residents.

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2. Requests for services from eligible organizations will be evaluated by HCGB staff in accordance with the following criteria:
 - ▶ availability of resources (cost and staffing)
 - ▶ availability of air time and scheduling
 - ▶ appropriateness to the HCGB mission
 - ▶ citizen/community interest
 - ▶ compliance with programming restrictions
 - ▶ conformance to technical and production quality standards, if program request is to air a videotape
 - ▶ public service/safety needs
3. All requests for production services must be submitted in writing by the eligible organization to HCGB within a reasonable length of time prior to the event. HCGB will make a determination for providing the requested video production services, based upon the provisions of this policy.
4. Upon HCGB's determination that the requested services will be provided, HCGB shall notify the requesting eligible organization of the cost of the services. HCGB will invoice the organization within thirty days after the services are rendered.
5. Any production services provided to an outside eligible organization under the terms of this policy shall be the sole responsibility of the Video Production Manager and/or HCGB staff. Under no circumstances will HCGB facilities and/or equipment be made available to outside organizations except as set forth in this policy. The videotape product shall remain the property of HCGB subject to all provisions of public records laws (F.S. Chapter 119).

VI. Prohibited Programming

1. Advertising of a commercial product or service nature, except as otherwise provided under the Underwriting section of this policy (Page 5);
2. Information concerning any lottery, gift enterprise, or similar promotion offering prizes based in whole or part upon lot or chance;
3. Direct solicitation of funds;
4. Material that would violate any federal, state, county or city statute or law;
5. Material which has the specific purpose of promoting religious beliefs or religious philosophies;

6. Obscene, indecent or defamatory materials;
7. Appearances or underwriting by or on behalf of candidates for public office, except for candidate forums as set forth in Section VII, Candidates for Elected Offices; and
8. Endorsements of proposed issues or ballot items (sample ballots and ballot listings may be permitted), the only exception being if the Board of County Commissioners votes as a body to take a position on an issue and wishes to inform the community on that position.

VII. Community Events

1. Candidates for Elected Offices

A) HCGB will produce and/or broadcast no more than two (2) candidate forums for each primary and general election. Video coverage of candidate forums shall be limited to those which are sponsored by recognized, county-wide, private, non-profit, non-partisan organizations. Requests for coverage of candidate forums shall be submitted to the County Administrator for presentation to the Board for approval no less than three months prior to the date of the event.

B) The requesting organization shall be responsible for organization, format and content of the forums with input provided by HCGB as needed. HCGB shall be solely responsible for technical production/coverage of the forums (see Section V (5), page 3).

C) The requesting organization shall provide a written copy of the forum format to HCGB at least 30 days prior to the forum.

D) Candidates who have qualified or pre-qualified for election to any elective office shall not be permitted to make individual statements on HCGB regarding their candidacy, except as recognized at candidate forums.

C) Current elected officials and/or County employees who have qualified or pre-qualified for election/re-election to any elective office will be shown only in the performance of their official duties.

2. All other requests for videotaping services for community events shall be handled in accordance with the provisions of Section V above.

VIII. Program Submission

All programs for HCGB will be viewed by the HCGB staff in their entirety before airing to ensure technical and content compliance. Videotapes which are submitted to HCGB become the property of HCGB. HCGB reserves the right to edit programs submitted for broadcast and/or to display disclaimers. Program submissions must include all copyrights. Copyrighted music and video will not be used in HCGB programs without written permission. The program submission process is as follows:

1. Program is submitted to HCGB for review.
2. Program is reviewed and any necessary changes are made. If a program is accepted as submitted, it can then be scheduled for broadcast.
3. Requestor must honor requests from HCGB for review, revision, or clarification of program content in order for the program to be aired.
4. The review process should be completed within 10 working days.

IX. Underwriting

Hernando County recognizes the value of the local government channel in keeping residents informed on issues which affect them as well as issues of a general local community interest. Therefore, in order to maximize the benefit and the range of programming to be made available within the parameters of this policy, the Board of County Commissioners encourages underwriting of the production of programs by the business community and/or individuals. Underwriting would enable additional funding for particular programming which is in compliance with this policy in return for recognition of the underwriter at the beginning and end of the program. A typical acknowledgment would be: "This program was made possible through the generous support of (name of business/individual) - (business slogan)."

X. HCGB Program Priorities

The following programming priorities determine how programs will be aired:

First Priority: Live or tape delayed official public meetings of the Hernando County Board of County Commissioners or its agencies or divisions and approved programs produced by agencies under the Hernando County Board of County Commissioners for Hernando County.

Second Priority: Approved programs produced for or submitted by other government agencies or divisions.

Third Priority: Approved programs produced for or submitted by an outside group and related to Hernando County government agencies or divisions.

Fourth Priority: Approved programs produced for or submitted by a community eligible organization under the definitions and terms of this policy.

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