



**TBNK Government Channel**

# **Policy and Operating Procedures Manual**

**2/21/15**

**THE TBNK GOVERNMENT CHANNEL**

is a service of the



Telecommunications Board of Northern Kentucky

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# The TBNK Government Channel

## Policy Manual

(2-21-15)

### I. Mission Statement

The TBNK Government Channel (TGC), or government access television, is a service of the Telecommunications Board of Northern Kentucky (TBNK). The TBNK is the agency representing participating governments in Kenton County in negotiation of the franchise and administration of cable television matters, including the Public, Educational and Government Access operations (PEG.)

Our member organizations have created, through the TBNK, local government access television with the mission of enhancing the awareness and education of the general public, regarding the deliberations, policies, procedures, and actions of the various communities' governments. This is accomplished, in part, through publicizing and coverage of government events, services and information; as well as cablecasting the members' council, commission, fiscal court and other public meetings, with both live and recorded coverage. The TBNK also makes our coverage of members' meetings and other government programming available On Demand and On Line at our website - [www.tbnk.org](http://www.tbnk.org).

The TBNK currently programs 1 ¼ channels (one 24-hour channel and one 6-hour Prime-Time channel) with the goal of bringing accurate and unbiased coverage of more than 20 meetings each month to citizens' homes over the cable system, as well as other public service programming of a general interest to viewers. These channels are operated and programmed by the staff of the TBNK at the cable access television facility maintained by the TBNK for the use of our member communities' citizens, schools and governments.

TGC maintains a crew of professional videographers, managed by the TBNK Program Director, to provide cable television coverage of various local government meetings and events, as well as other local government informational programming – including our award winning Election Night Coverage and election forums. In order to bring the very best possible local government coverage to our citizens, both TGC and the TBNK must remain unbiased at all times. TGC and the TBNK will not endorse or support, in any way, the views, candidates or positions of a particular political party over those of another. ***Therefore, all meetings aired on TGC are “gavel-to-gavel”, unedited and in their entirety, barring technical difficulties.***

The TBNK Government Channel is non-commercial in nature. Commercial messages are defined as having a “call-to-action.” Underwriting and sponsorships are allowed. The placement, frequency and wording of any sponsorships/underwriting

will be determined by the Program Director in accordance with the goals of the TBNK.

*Note: Any questions concerning programming, or scheduling for TBNK's Government Channel can be addressed to the Program Director at the TBNK offices by calling 859-261-1300.*

## **II. Coverage Provided to Member Government Organizations**

- A. TBNK provides to its member organizations, as a benefit of their partnership in the TBNK, cable television coverage of up to two (2) regular meetings each month, with additional regular or special meetings to be covered dependant upon crew and resources. The TBNK Program Director on a first-come, first-served basis will determine availability of additional meeting coverage. In order to be considered for additional coverage, TBNK must receive written notice of the meeting at least 2 working days prior to the meeting date. This written notice must be signed by a member of the entity's executive branch (*Mayor, City Manager, Judge Executive, etc.*) or by no less than a quorum of its legislative branch (*i.e. city council, fiscal court, etc.*)
- B. If a specially scheduled meeting of a TBNK member organization occurs on the same night as the live regularly scheduled TBNK Board meeting, and both government channels are full, the TBNK will give up its live air slot for the member city or county meeting. TBNK will record its meeting as regularly scheduled, and air the recorded coverage later.
- C. The TBNK Government Channel will present government meetings LIVE as they happen, whenever possible and practical, with "gavel-to-gavel" coverage. In addition, meeting coverage MAY feature multiple camera angles and computer graphics when available. When a meeting cannot be cablecast LIVE, the event will be recorded and replayed on The TBNK Government Channel. Each government meeting is given at least three (3) airings (*this includes the live airing*) and may receive additional airings dependent upon scheduling and channel availability. Due to the nature of the monthly calendar (since the day of the week that a given month starts changes every month,) rotating meeting schedules, unpredictable meeting durations, and the sheer volume of meetings covered, the assigning of regular air-times to all monthly replays is not physically possible. However, after much experimentation with various program scheduling patterns over the years, in addition to any regularly scheduled LIVE airings, TGC has adopted a program pattern that generally allows us to provide one of the replays of each of our various communities' meetings every week at a regularly scheduled time. Our goal in adopting these targeted air-times is to provide our communities with a regularly scheduled air-time which they can more easily publicize in addition to their LIVE airings. While TGC cannot guarantee these targeted replay times 100 percent of the time, we will make every attempt to ensure these regular

times are adhered to for the majority of the time. The remaining two replays must fit wherever room allows. TGC makes every attempt to schedule these meeting replays at various times during the program day in order to reach the largest and most diverse possible group of television viewers. TGC will also make our coverage of members' meetings and other government programming available On Demand on the internet at our website - [www.tbnk.org](http://www.tbnk.org). Typically, TGC meeting coverage is available on our website within a week of the event, sometimes as quickly as a few days, as staffing permits.

*(Note for city clerks: To ensure accurate communication, you must **call our Program Director directly to notify us of any meeting changes**, cancellations, rescheduling or special meetings if you want them to be covered. **Don't give messages to the production crew.** Please don't assume they hear meeting changes that are announced at meetings, or anything else that is said at the meeting. While they are concentrating on following the person that is talking, their minds are focused on composing shots, focusing, audio and other aspects of the production and, so they miss details of what's being said. Also we have a lot of different members of our staff and details will not get communicated to the Program Director, who is the person who needs to know.*

***Please notify us of any changes in scheduling. We are coordinating 8 to 10 part-time crew members and it is difficult to add last minute meetings. Also, not being informed about cancellations costs us real dollars when crew members show up for a meeting and then we find out it is cancelled.)***

- D. While the TBNK always strives to bring the very best possible cable coverage to its viewers, no guarantees are made to member organizations by the TBNK regarding regular monthly replay times, multi-camera coverage, computer graphics and/or channel placement within the TBNK Government Channel lineup. In addition, TBNK cannot guarantee LIVE coverage of these events, due to the fact that many technical problems can interfere with our attempts, most of these factors being out of the control of the TBNK.
- E. TGC avoids the replay of dated government meetings since they can confuse our viewing audience. Therefore, any scheduled replay of an "old" meeting will be replaced with a "new" meeting of the same entity, should one exist, regardless of the number of replays achieved by the "old" meeting.
- F. LIVE meetings, regular or specially scheduled, including any live meetings that run longer than their scheduled time slots, will take priority over all scheduled replays of previously recorded meetings. Affected replays will be rescheduled in the timeliest manner possible by the TBNK Program Director.
- G. The TBNK operates 1) 24 hour channel and 1) 6 hour channel consisting of live and recorded programming and text "bulletin board messages".

- H. The playback facility is manned from 1:00 P. M. to 9:00 P. M. Monday through Friday for ensuring of live feeds, as well as preparation and monitoring of on-air programming, and scheduling of our state of the art computer automated system for 24/7 programming of the channels.
- I. The TBNK also makes our coverage of members' meetings and other government programming, including our award winning Election Night Results show and election forums available On Demand on the internet at our website - [www.tbnk.org](http://www.tbnk.org). Typically, TGC meeting coverage is available on our website within a week of the event, sometimes as quickly as a few days, as staffing permits.

### **III. Official Record and Retention of Video Recordings (tapes, DVD, etc.)**

- A) The TBNK Government Channel maintains the meeting master recordings (videotape, DVD, etc.) for a period of 90-days, for its internal purposes including but not limited to playback on its channels. During this period, the master recordings will not leave the custody of the TBNK. At the end of this period, the master recordings may be recycled or destroyed, depending upon the age of the recording medium and the number of times it has been used. If an organization wishes to obtain a master recording after the 90-day internal retention period, the recording (tapes, DVD. etc.) can be purchased at the TBNK for the current posted price. The TBNK Government Channel's on line Video On Demand coverage of members' meetings is available for at least one year on our website.
- B) The TBNK Government Channel's recordings of meetings will not be considered THE OFFICIAL RECORD of such meeting. TGC provides to its member organizations a free copy (usually DVD) of each meeting cablecast, to be delivered at that group's next regular meeting. This copy is available for pick up at the TBNK earlier should an organization need a copy sooner. An organization or any of its members may purchase additional copies within the 90-day retention period at current duplication prices. *(See Attachment #2 for further details regarding KRS statues and the Kentucky State Retention Schedule)*

### **IV. Controversial Situation Standards**

- A) TBNK understands that government issues may cause elected officials to contest the legality of certain public meetings and the events that may transpire in and around them. TBNK must continue to remain unbiased and therefore exercise appropriate precautions during these times. In order to assure this unbiased coverage, TBNK may choose to move to Controversial Situation Standards if the

TBNK Program Director receives conflicting requests from the same entity regarding the cable coverage of a certain meeting.

- B) At such a time, TBNK may insist upon written notification of all regular and specially scheduled meetings of the organization in question. To cancel the airing of a regular or previously scheduled meeting, TBNK must receive such notice, in writing, signed by the Mayor/Judge Executive, or a majority of the council/commission/board. To schedule airing of a special meeting TBNK must receive, in writing, a copy of the official posting signed by the Mayor/Judge Executive or a majority of council/commission/board. The affected member organization and/or its elected officials may appeal this decision to the TBNK. All decisions of the TBNK are final.
  
- C) TBNK recognizes that on occasion a citizen may be risking exposure to possible threats or violence by speaking out in public, and doing so very visibly on television. TBNK further recognizes that a government entity may, because of such a concern for the public safety, wish to not re-air a meeting that has been recorded, to avoid exposing an individual to possible retribution. It is important that this kind of problem be avoided so as to not discourage citizens from exercising their option to make comments to councils/commissions concerning public issues, including criminal activity. It is also important for TBNK to remain unbiased in such a decision. Therefore, if a government entity wishes that a meeting not replay due to a public safety concern, TBNK must receive such notice, in writing, signed by the Mayor/Judge Executive stating that the cancellation is due to public safety. As stated in Section II B, all coverage is provided unedited, gavel to gavel, so as to avoid any possible bias in editing. Therefore meetings cannot be edited for these situations. The only choice is to air or not to air. In the case of live meetings, TBNK cannot control what happens live in front of the cameras. Also, camera operators do not have the qualifications or responsibility to make any decision as to whether to avoid aiming the camera at any individual. Again the camera operator must remain unbiased in coverage of the meeting. Therefore if a council/commission becomes aware of an individual that needs such protection, the Mayor/Judge Executive should direct the camera operator to aim the camera at a safe area in the room for that period of time to avoid showing the citizen in question.

## **V. Non-Member Organizations**

- A) TGC may be contracted or sub-contracted by non-member organizations to provide like services to these groups, including production and airing of meetings. Non-member organizations will receive all of the same meeting coverage as the member organizations, with the following exceptions:
  
- B) If both a member and a non-member organization have regularly scheduled meetings at the same time, the member organization will receive any available

improvements in coverage before the non-member (i.e. multi-camera coverage, computer graphics and/or live cablecasting.)

- C) Should a member organization and a non-member organization have regularly scheduled meetings at the same time, the member organization will always receive first priority for live coverage (technical availability permitting), as well as the best available equipment and TGC channel placement.
- D) Non-member organizations that schedule their meetings on nights when there is no conflict with member organizations meetings may air live.
- E) Any regularly scheduled live meeting coverage, regardless of member status, will not be replaced by a specially scheduled meeting. TGC maintains this standard to ensure the integrity of its monthly program schedule and commitments. When possible, the special meeting coverage may be aired live on an alternative cable access channel at the discretion of the TBNK Program Director.

## **VI. Other TGC Programming**

- A) The TBNK Government Channel provides to its member organizations the ability to post information and notices *concerning official government business* within its computer-generated cable bulletin board. All information must be submitted in writing by the member organization and approved with the signature of the proper authorized government official and is subject to editing by TGC for both length and clarity.
- B) TBNK also produces additional programming in conjunction with area government organizations in an effort to promote these agencies and their missions. Any individual who has announced his/her candidacy for election may remain involved with any programming efforts established prior to their public candidacy announcement, assuming that the production is considered to be a *normal* part of the TBNK programming efforts. Any interested organizations should contact the TBNK Program Director for further information.
- C) TBNK often produces election-based programming at appropriate times during the year to help our citizens make the most educated choices when voting. This programming may include political debates and forums, which will be held in a non-biased manner with full regard for the election laws of the Commonwealth of Kentucky. TBNK may choose to work with outside agencies (*i.e. The League of Women Voters, Area Business Councils, other media outlets, etc.*) to help organize these events on a first-come, first-served basis. All such events will be coordinated with, and scheduled by the TBNK Program Director.
- D) The TBNK Government Channel may also air, at its sole discretion, other programs of interest to our viewing audience, including programming from

official government sources at the local, state and national level (*i.e. NASA programming, military shows, etc.*) Organizations desiring the airing of special programming from outside governmental sources (*i.e. national workshops, town hall meetings, etc.*) should contact the TBNK Program Director for further information. Any programs that the staff considers for airing must meet minimal technical standards stated in the CPC Policies and Procedural Manual.

- E) TBNK may at its sole discretion air programming that is a public service or of interest to residents of our member communities. This may include, but is not limited to, programming about residents, employees, or elected or appointed officials of our member communities or official community events or projects.
- F) The dissemination of government information and activities is the primary goal of TGC. Citizens seeking advocacy for different points of view outside of official government events and/or activities will be directed to the public access television branch of the TBNK. TBNK reserves the right to internally produce programming discussing current issues and events in a fair and unbiased manner. Should such a program be produced by TBNK, all sides will be equally represented.

## **VII. Prohibited Programming**

The following is prohibited on TBNK channels (However, we cannot guarantee the content of public meetings, since we cannot control the words or actions of attendees at these meetings. Also all meetings are aired unedited and in their entirety, barring technical difficulties):

- Material that is obscene, indecent, pornographic, libelous, slanderous, invades personal privacy, or is otherwise illegal according to Federal, State, or Local law.
- Material that violates local community standards.
- Advertising material with a call to action, soliciting the sale of specific products or services, appeal for money or property, except for TBNK fundraising purposes approved by the Telecommunications Board of Northern Kentucky. Underwriting is permissible.
- Advertisement of, or information concerning any lottery, except as discussed by public bodies as official business of those bodies.
- Advertising material with a call to action soliciting votes for public office. This does not include public meetings routinely covered by The TBNK Government Channel or programs produced by the TBNK staff for “fair and even” coverage of candidate or ballot issues, including debates and election coverage produced by TBNK staff, or any programming efforts by a candidate for public office which



were established prior to the candidate's public candidacy announcement, assuming that the production is considered to be a *normal* part of the TBNK programming efforts. This also does not include any programs that a candidate might appear in during normal execution of the duties of any office currently held by such candidate.

- Candidates for public office shall not appear on TGC channels, except in public meetings routinely covered by TGC or programs produced by the TGC staff for fair and even coverage of candidate or ballot issues, including debates and election coverage produced by TGC staff, or any programming efforts established prior to their public candidacy announcement, assuming that the production is considered to be a *normal* part of the TGC programming efforts. This also does not include any programs that a candidate might appear in during normal execution of the duties of any office currently held by such candidate.

## **VIII. Copyrights regarding TGC Programming**

- A) TBNK and its member organizations reserve all rights associated with TGC's originally produced media (*i.e. cable coverage, internal video productions, web site, etc.*) While an actual public meeting cannot be copyrighted, TGC's presentation (*i.e. including camera angles, computer graphics, etc.*) remains at all times the property of TBNK, its member organizations and their citizens.