

TOWN OF VERNON

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Town Leaders Join Together to Educate Residents about Municipal Budgets

Videos Produced by Community Voice Channel will be Broadcast Regionally on COMCAST Public Access Channel 1070 and YouTube

(VERNON, Connecticut) – Community Voice Channel (CVC) in partnership with leaders from several communities will begin broadcasting a video series to educate the public about municipal budgets.

Produced by Melanie Merkel, the Community Outreach Manager for Community Voice Channel, the first two videos feature municipal leaders from Vernon, Ellington and Tolland. Additional videos are planned and will involve leaders from other communities. The videos will be broadcast regionally on COMCAST Public Access Channel 1070 beginning in September.

The idea for the series grew out of discussions between Merkel and Vernon Town Administrator Michael Purcaro, who recalled the “Schoolhouse Rock” series of short videos that aired Saturday mornings and explained government processes, such as how laws are made, and rules of grammar.

“Local government spending has the most direct impact on the residents of any community, both in terms of the taxes they pay and the services a municipality provides,” Vernon Mayor Dan Champagne said. “We want people to understand how budgets are created and the important role residents play in that process.”

In many communities, residents are asked to approve the annual budget at a town meeting or referendum. It is beneficial that residents are familiar with what goes into creating the annual budget.

“The annual budget represents much more than revenues and expenses,” Purcaro said. “It is a community’s plan for the coming year and vision for the long-term. Having a public that is educated about the budget process increases engagement and helps ensure residents have the opportunity to inform their leaders about what they value and view as important.”

Each video is only a few minutes long and focuses on the different parts of municipal spending, including property assessment and revaluation, mill rates, education, capital improvements, and more.

“Developing a responsible budget is one of our most important tasks each year,” Ellington First Selectman Lori Spielman said. “It consumes a lot of time and energy. Helping residents understand that process and how they can have input is beneficial.”

The videos will be aired on CVC, which serves COMCAST customers in Andover, Bolton, Ellington, Hebron, Marlborough, Tolland and Vernon. The videos will also be available on YouTube.

“Government that is open and accessible to the people it serves is essential,” Tolland Town Manager Brian Foley said. “Anything we can do to educate our community about what we do and how we do it, and how residents can get involved, is worthwhile.”

“I’m glad Community Voice Channel was brought into this project,” Merkel said “This is the kind of informational video we exist to provide.”

The videos can be viewed online by clicking here:



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