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Memorandum of Understanding Between The White Plains Public WPPL and the White Plains Community Media

The Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) is between the Board of Trustees of the White Plains Public WPPL (“WPPL”), a state chartered agency of the City of White Plains, and the White Plains Cable TV Access Commission (“WPCTAC”). This MOU sets forth the parties’ current understandings and principles for negotiating the move of WPCTAC into the WPPL.

1. Background

WPPL was chartered by the State of New York in 1899. The nine-member Board of Trustees exists by virtue of the provisions of Chapter 356 of the Laws of 1915 of the State of New York as amended and as expressed in Article XI of the Charter of the City of White Plains, and exercises the powers and authority and assumes the responsibilities delegated to it under the said statute.

According to their by-laws, the Board of Trustees “have the exclusive care, custody, management and control of the White Plains Public Library and all property pertaining thereto.” The WPPL occupies one facility located at 100 Martine Avenue, White Plains, NY.

The White Plains Cable Television Access Commission was formed by resolution of the White Plains Common Council in 1981, with the goal providing access to the television medium to City residents.

The Commission’s by-laws state: “The commission is required to control and manage cable access channels provided to the City of White Plains under City franchise agreements with a cable-TV provider or providers; to equip, control and manage studio and other necessary production facilities for the use of said channels; to produce, or cause to be produced by White Plains community organizations and individual residents and the City Government, programming for the public and government access channels; and to assist the City Government to establish and operate other electronic communications facilities.”

In 2011 the Commission expanded its mission beyond cable TV and began providing locally produced programming on the Internet, essentially globalizing the local access channel. At that time the more inclusive name “White Plains Community Media” was adopted.

In 2012, the WPPL engaged in an extensive strategic planning process, resulting in three goals for 2012-2015: the WPPL will be an inviting and welcoming organization; the WPPL engages and develops teens, and the WPPL will be a Learning Commons for adults. The last two goals require that the WPPL integrate the use of digital media, especially audio and video content, into its programs and services, and provide the public

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with opportunities to become skilled in using and creating digital media. Having WPCTAC located within the Library will help WPPL achieve these goals.

In addition, the WPPL continues to position itself as the hub of the White Plains community, providing a venue where everyone in the City is welcome and can participate in a range of learning opportunities. WPPL is devoting more of its resources, both its staff and its facility, while partnering with other organizations, to provide classes, workshops, and programs. The renovation of the WPPL's first floor supports the roles of learning and interactivity.

WPCTAC also has a mission of public education, especially in the area of audio/video editing and production. However, its present facility has limited this role.

The WPPL is undergoing a significant increase in usage, and will close FY 2012-2013 having received over 500,000 visits. It is anticipated that the renovations, combined with the recent establishment of an outreach librarian, will attract new users. The heavy foot traffic at 100 Martine would help raise the profile of WPCTAC, make its activities more transparent while helping to market its services.

II. Principles of Understanding

WPPL and WPCTAC have shared values. Both institutions value free speech, encourage diverse points of view, recognize the diversity of White Plains, foster community dialogue and self-expression, and aim to provide public education.

Both parties are motivated by a partnership that will provide better services to White Plains residents while maximizing the City's investments in each organization. There could be substantial financial and operating advantages to WPCTAC residing in the Library. In turn, by leveraging their complementary strengths, these public institutions could have a transformative impact on each other.

WPPL and WPCTAC will continue as independent organizations, but will work to integrate their programs and services when possible. The WPCTAC identity and brand will be preserved within WPPL.

III. Development of Definitive Documentation

Both parties recognize that a more definitive written agreement is necessary to define and document the terms of partnership. Therefore, WPPL and WPCTAC agree:

1. They shall negotiate diligently and in good faith to prepare a definitive partnership agreement for WPCTAC to reside in the WPPL. The goal is to complete an agreement as promptly as possible, but no later than July 1, 2013.

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2. WPCTAC will need space for both a studio and staff offices. Potential spaces include the first floor (current Periodicals Workroom) and the third floor (empty office space, book storage room).

3. To house WPCTAC's offices and/or studio on the third floor will also require that the office space for two library departments (Systems and Collection Management) be reconfigured.

4. WPCTAC will consult with WPPL on the continued renovation of the first floor and the auditorium to ensure that there is no duplication of equipment and that WPCTAC's instructional and production needs are accommodated.

5. Both the Library's Board of Trustees and the WPCTAC's Commission will need to give the partnership agreement its review and support for it to go into effect.