



City of Wilmington

Cable, Video, and Telecommunications
Commission

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In recent days, there has been ongoing discussion and information circulating regarding DETV and its role as the City's Third-Party Operator (TPO) for Comcast Channel 28. To provide clarity and full transparency, this statement outlines the facts about the situation and the Cable, Video, and Telecommunications (CVT) Commission's decision.

First, it is important to note that **the City is not cutting funding** for public access television. Wilmington City Council and the CVT Commission remain committed to ensuring public access programming continues to serve residents. However, like many cities across the country, Wilmington is facing financial challenges when it comes to sustaining public access channels. With the rise of streaming services, Comcast cable subscribers have significantly declined each year, and this trend is expected to continue. The City's funding for the TPO is directly tied to cable subscriptions, causing the CVT Fund to shrink annually. Right now, we are facing a potential \$2.1 million shortfall over the next five years—something we cannot ignore. Everyone involved, including DETV, is well aware of this funding shortfall. Because of this, the CVT Commission made the difficult decision to adjust the agreement with DETV, which currently serves as the City's Third-Party Operator (TPO) for Comcast Channel 28.

Under this new pending agreement, DETV will still have access to Comcast Channel 28 and continue to operate as Wilmington's public access channel. However, the City will no longer be responsible for covering rent, utilities, or equipment costs for a second studio space located on the 3rd floor of the same building where DETV's primary studio is located. The City has committed to covering the full cost of transferring and moving equipment from the 3rd floor studio space to DETV's primary studio on the 1st floor. In addition, the Commission has agreed to reimburse DETV up to \$20,000 for any unforeseen expenses they may incur during this transition. As far as DETV's operational funding, nothing has changed. DETV will continue to be responsible for setting its rates and funding its own operational expenses, a model that aligns with how many public access stations operate nationwide.

Public access television stations across the country have had to adapt to changes in the media landscape, and most public access stations, including DETV, generate their own revenue to sustain their operations. DETV has established itself as a strong brand with multiple revenue streams and is strategically positioning itself to grow a statewide audience. It is our hope that the growth and expansion DETV has been experiencing continues for years to come.

It is also important to clarify that the **City has never directly funded DETV**—historically, it has only covered rent, utilities, and equipment-related costs for DETV, as the city's TPO, to have a separate second studio location. This adjustment does not remove DETV's ability to broadcast from its main studio; Comcast Channel 28 remains available for its programming. During contract negotiations, DETV stated multiple times that while they liked having the second studio, it was not necessary, and closing it would not impede or hinder their business operations. They also indicated that recordings and many of their day-to-day operations would not be directly affected. It was only after DETV expressed these sentiments that the Commissioners felt comfortable addressing budget challenges by no-longer renewing the lease or paying utility fees.

Again, the **City of Wilmington is not defunding** DETV or public access television. We are simply negotiating a new contract with the organization selected to be the city's TPO. We encourage you to stay engaged, ask questions, and seek the facts. If you have concerns, we want to hear them. Let's have an open conversation based on facts, not fear. Thank you for trusting in us to make the best decisions for our community—even when they are difficult. Public access television in Wilmington is not going away, but changes are being made to ensure that taxpayer resources are managed responsibly while keeping the community informed.

C.V.T Commission