
TOWN OF MERRIMACK



DATE: September 8, 2023

MEMORANDUM

TO: Town Council

FROM: Nicholas Lavallee, Media Services Coordinator

Town Manager Paul Micali and the Merrimack Town Council,

I am seeking approval to apply to the FCC for a transfer of a Low Power FM frequency from a neighboring community to Merrimack or potentially apply for an original frequency. Obtaining this frequency is an essential step to broadcast content over FM radio in Merrimack.

The closure of local newspapers have led to fading civic engagement, eroding social bonds, and surging misinformation. Broadcasting community content like varsity sports, concerts, municipal meetings, and original programs over the FM airwaves is another medium to keep our residents informed while instilling a sense of civic pride. Merrimack's LPFM radio station could be used for announcements from Police and Fire in the case of an emergency. Bedford and Manchester have had their community media stations broadcasting content via LPFM for several years with success and positive feedback. Our Media Division has long been recognized as a primary source of municipal information and it's been greatly desired to add LPFM to our resources.

LPFM first appeared on the Media Division's CIP in 2011 (originally projected for the 2013-2014 budget) and has been included every year since. The Media Division has been at the mercy of the FCC's filing period window in obtaining a LPFM frequency which has not occurred in a decade. The FCC will be opening a LPFM application window from November 1 - 8, 2023. The Town of Merrimack has an opportunity to request a transfer of Londonderry School District's frequency before this year's LPFM application window. There is no cost to apply for a LPFM Frequency. If the transfer (and subsequent relocation request of Londonderry's LPFM signal) is approved by the FCC, the Media Division would need to expend upwards of \$9,000 in start up equipment to begin broadcasting content over LPFM radio.

There may be challenges presented to our staff in adding LPFM to Media Division services, but we've shown to be capable of crossing similar hurdles in the past. I'm confident that LPFM could be a welcome addition to the Town's Media Division.

Thank you for your consideration.

Nicholas Lavallee
Town of Merrimack
Media Services Coordinator