

# **BIG is not a TV station. BIG is a Community Media Center.**

Brookline Interactive Group ensures a place for all Brookline residents to access media-making technology, amplify their voices and tell their stories, develop media literacy and new skills, and sustain a vibrant and transparent democracy. \*

(\*current mission statement working group draft)

# How BIG is Funded

- **BIG presently receives 2% of the 5%** of per-subscriber cable fees allowable under federal cable franchise law
- **The other 3% goes to the Town** (per 1984 Home Rule Petition)
- **Both the Town and BIG are losing funding** with the precipitous decline in these per-subscriber cable fees due to cable “cord cutters” & streaming services.
- **BIG has long advocated for state and federal legislation** to protect funding, but the future remains uncertain

# Warrant Article 40

A resolution to ask the Town to recognize BIG's essential work through a more formalized, long-term partnership:

- **Create a community media committee** to aid in identifying potential stable funding mechanisms for BIG, review cable licensing and leverage opportunities such as grants-of-location to cable companies
- **Exploring future partnerships** with the BIG to utilize its resources and expertise for public benefit

# Gratitude for the Town's Contributions and Long-Term Partnership

- The Town has been in partnership with BIG for 36 years
- Through the COVID emergency, **the Town and BIG have been successfully working together to:**
  - Ensure that all government in Brookline is accessible and transparent
  - Keep community engagement at the forefront
- **The Town allocated \$196,000 to BIG** in the first months of COVID in recognition of the critical role that BIG played. They recognized that it was **not sustainable without financial help from the Town**

**We want to thank the Town for their long-term partnership and support!**

We look forward to continuing this important community collaboration and innovation into the future!

## You're watching BIG's Civic Channel (Comcast 23 / RCN 15 & 613 HD)



### CONTACT US

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU



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### 3 DAY FORECAST



45°

Sat



44°

Sun



29°

Mon



### Pick It Up Brookline!

Restaurant Delivery Fees are Eating Into Restaurant Profits.

Restaurant delivery services charge extra with third fees, sometimes as much as 30% of the total bill, but also double their margins. Some restaurants can barely get by, others are losing money. The coronavirus and resulting unemployment have worsened the risk for pandemic. Now that restaurants are returning to selling take-out food as a greater portion of their business, they can no longer afford to pay delivery fees.

-Brookline Chamber of Commerce

Please order Take-out and Pick-it Up!

### CURRENTLY



55°F



@BrooklineMAPD

Help us reunite Snuggly (H) with his brother Spot last seen on July 17th area of Waverly and Thayer Streets. Any in...

<https://cr.us/3H0XCEG>

Favorite 1 | Retweet 1

### Schedule

10:00 pm Governor Baker COVID-19 Updat...

11:00 pm MA House of Representatives For...

12:00 am Select Board Committee on Polici...

6:00 am Governor Baker COVID-19 Updat...

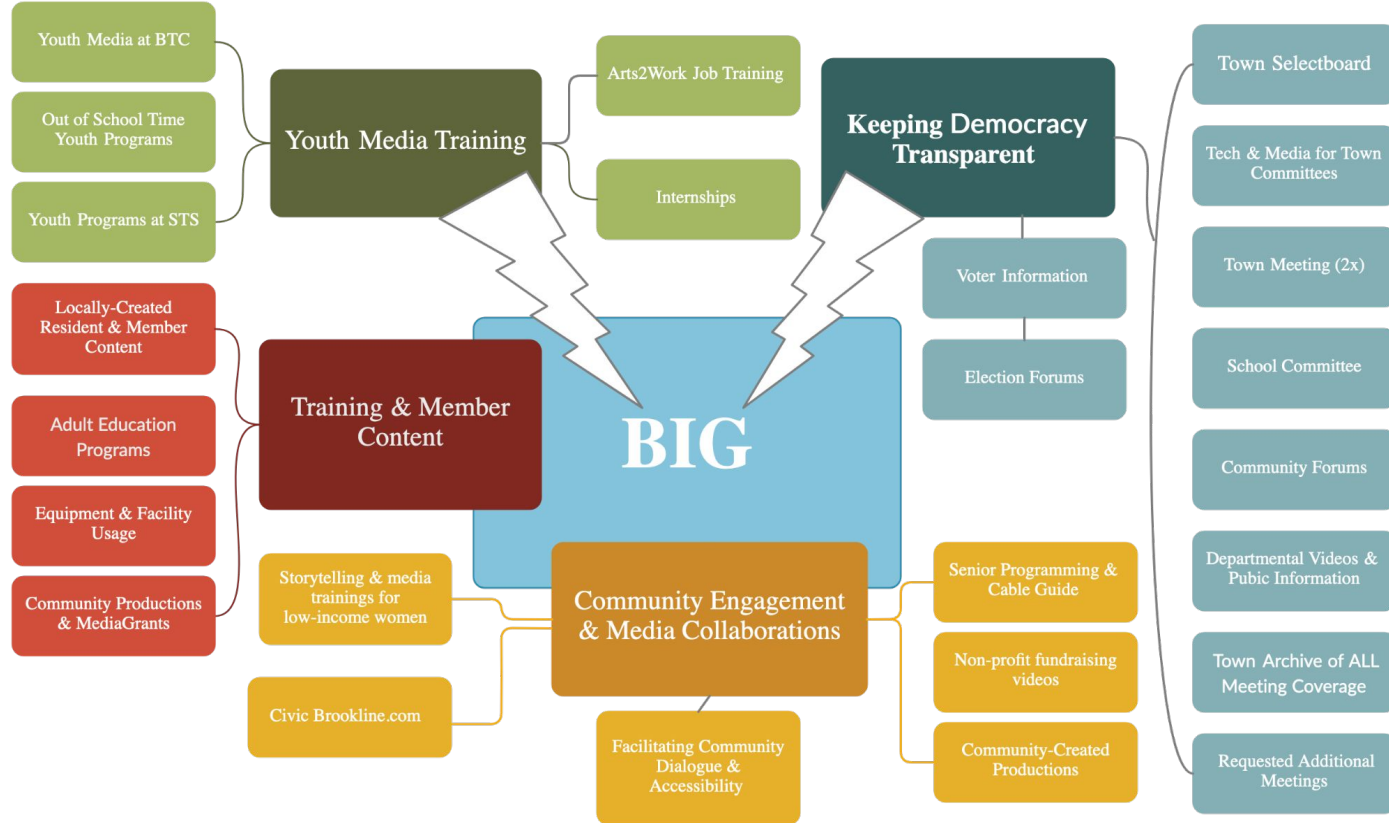
7:00 am MA House of Representatives For...

8:00 am Brookline School Committee Reg...

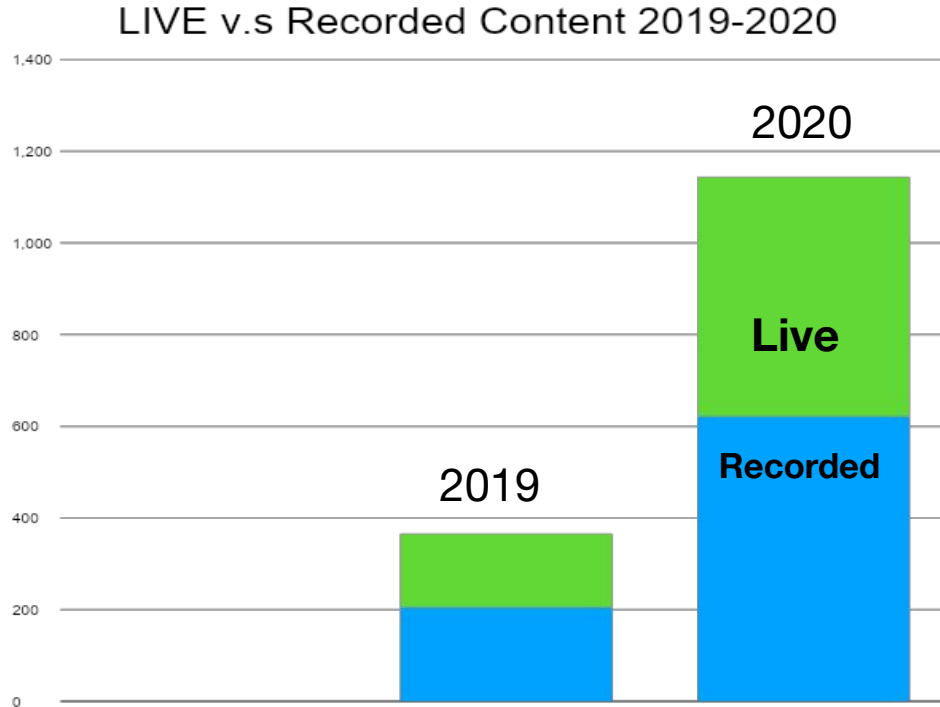
1:00 pm Governor Baker COVID-19 Updat...

[See the entire schedule](#)

# Overview of BIG Community Services



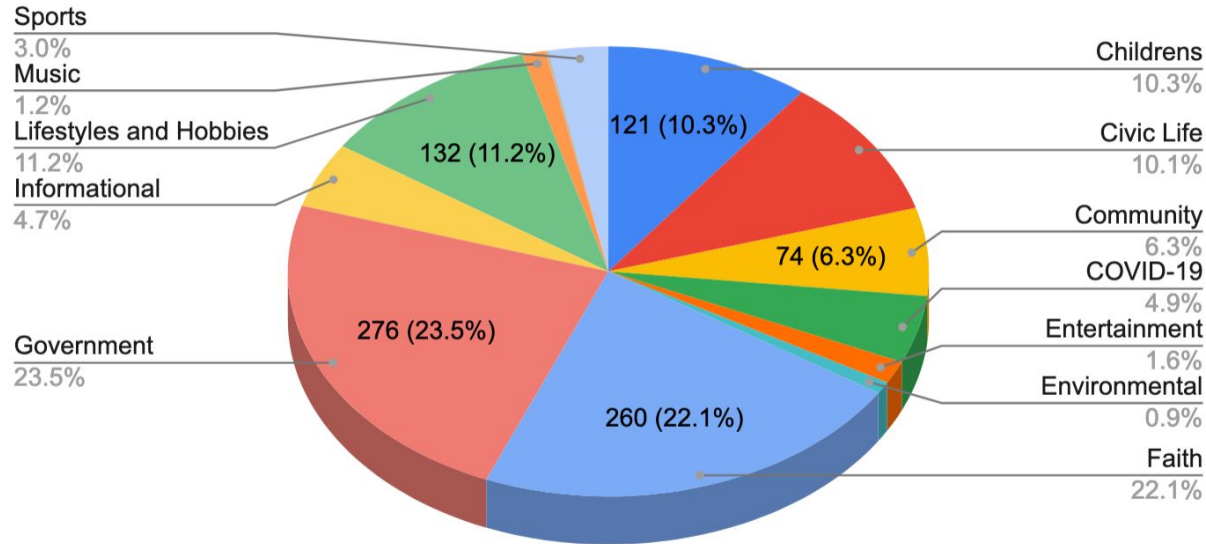
# 3x Increased Demand for BIG's Services



- 2020's adaptations are the new normal
- Hybrid meetings becoming codified in states like California
- Call for greater transparency are growing

# BIG's Programming in 2020

## 2020 Shows by Category



- In 2019, BIG recorded 95 hours of local government content
- In 2020, BIG recorded over 276 hours
- But BIG's programming touches all aspects of community life in Brookline
  - Programming is only 1/4 government content



# BIG's Innovations & Awards

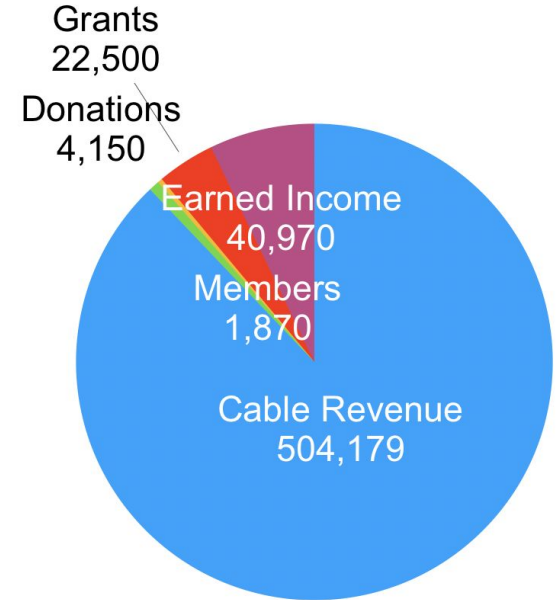
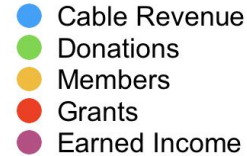
- Brookline Arts Commission:
  - 2020 Cultural Producer Award
- International Virtual World Society:
  - 2019 Nextant Legacy Award presented to Kathy Bisbee
- Alliance for Community Media (national industry association):
  - 2019 Best Youth Documentary (member-produced)
  - 2017 Best Public Community Media Center in U.S.A.
- Mass Access:
  - 2017 Mass Creator Awards Most Innovative Production
- United Nations Environmental Assembly in Kenya:
  - 2017 BIG presents VR project to the Assembly
- Arts2Work Regional Location
  - Chosen by a national job training network as the regional hub of youth and adult media arts pathways
- Kathy Bisbee, BIG's Executive Director:
  - Vice-Chair of the Alliance for Community Media's Northeast Regional board of directors
  - National Advisor for the XR Safety Initiative advocating for online safety & protecting children in 3D spaces
  - Accepted as a fellow in the Open Doc Lab at MIT



# BIG Income Sources: FY 2019-20

## 2019-2020 Funding: The beginnings of diversification

- Delivering high quality content and services costs money
- A year ago, BIG began making moves to bring in other funding sources
- COVID was a huge setback...

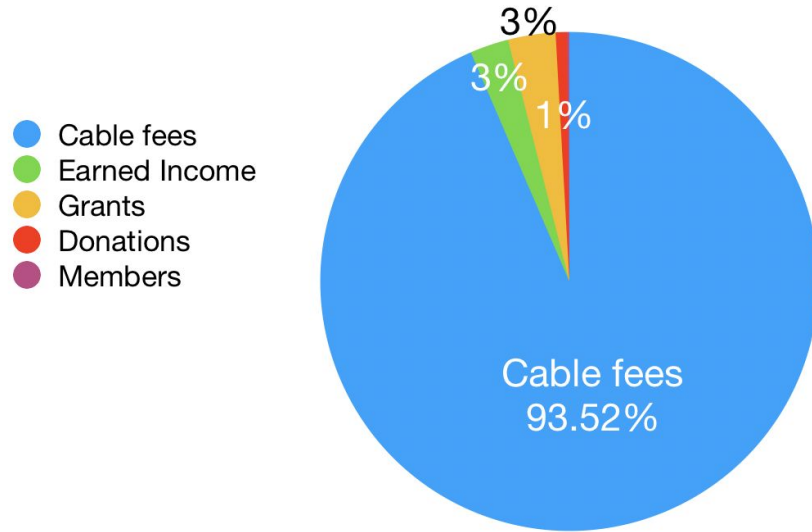


**\*Despite four months of the FY in Covid Times, BIG raised over 12% through earned income**

# BIG Income Sources: FY 2020-21

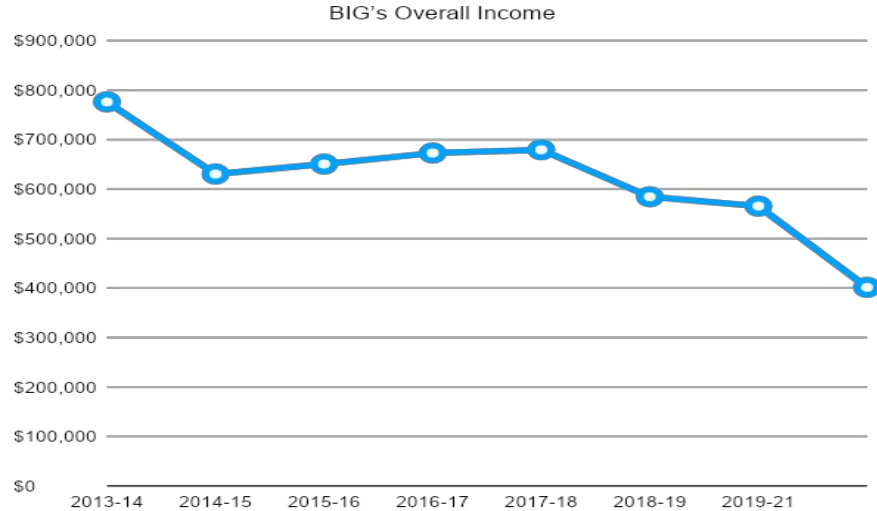
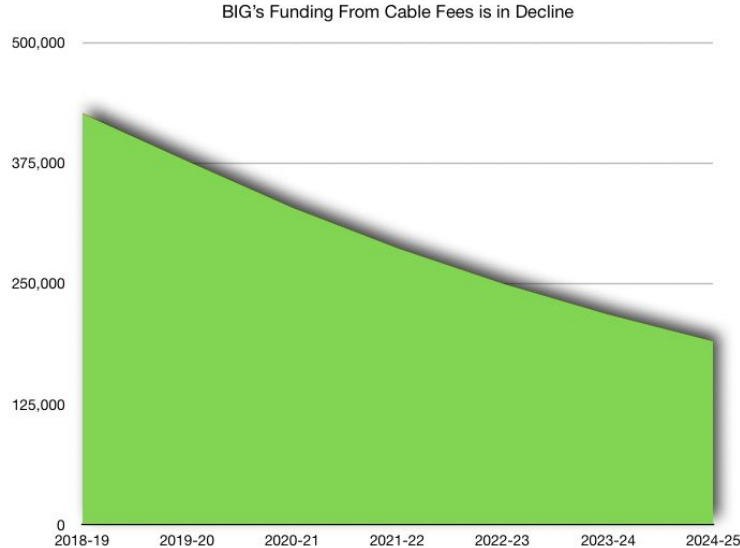
## 2020-2021 Funding: Pandemic halts BIG's push for income diversification

- Previous progress is temporarily wiped out
- Virtually all income again comes from cable companies



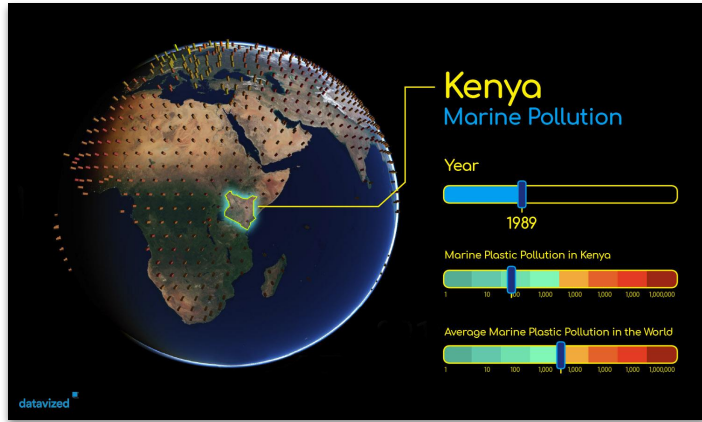
**Covid-19 Made BIG's Investment in a Declining-  
Cable Fee Future More Difficult**

# BIG's Projected Loss



- Funding from cable companies is in deep decline
- Revenue from **Comcast is declining by 12.5%** annually
- **RCN revenue is declining annually by 14%**
- We must **plan...and act**

# Pre COVID - A Developing Plan

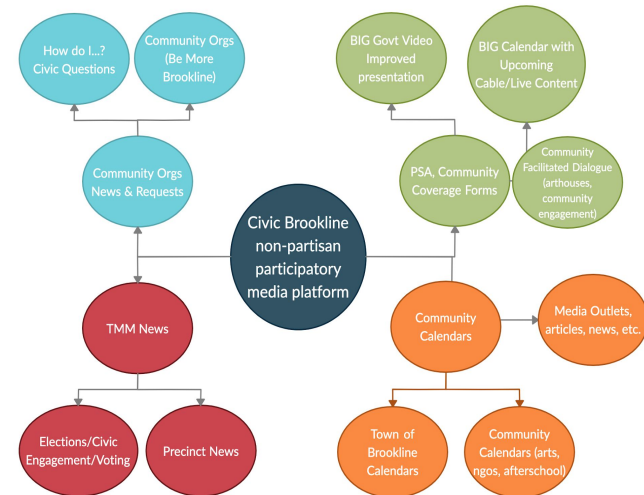


- Recognizing the need to adapt and change to the declining cable revenues, Pre-COVID, a plan was formulating
- BIG recognized the end of traditional funding
- BIG advocated on local, regional, state, and national reforms to enhance cable company funding
- BIG grew its non-traditional funding model
- BIG expanded the board
- BIG expanded staff capacity
- BIG Started the Public VR Lab - the *first* publicly-accessible virtual reality lab in the country and presented on the topic to the UN in Kenya



# The Perfect Storm - COVID and Beyond

- Covid stopped BIG's ability to grow new sources of funding from:
  - Customary fees
  - Workshops
  - Classes
  - Grants
  - Paid after school programs, and more
- Halted BIG's ability to:
  - Research
  - Advocate
  - Consider new ideas
- Strategic planning put on hold
- At the same time...
  - 200% increase in community demand for BIG's services
  - 200% rise in costs, operating remotely



# 2021: Services



- Continue providing free community coverage and low-cost productions
- Significant senior programming, with a printed content guide
- Free and low-cost coverage to local nonprofits
- Youth media, and job training programs
- Amplification of Brookline's underrepresented voices
- Archiving of all local media content
- Continued partnership on the Community Engagement Plan (CEP)



# 2021: Action

- **Adding staff** to cover the 200% increase in community content
- **Purchasing equipment** and **adding expertise** to align with the new post-COVID landscape
- BIG's Facility will re-open, and continue **providing curbside laptop and media-making equipment** to members





# Future: Action



The petitioners are asking the Town to recognize BIG's work:

- As other similar organizations are closing, or being bought out by large media corporations, **BIG is filling the void for local media**
- **Providing expertise** for the Community Engagement Plan
- **Amplifying Brookline's diverse voices**
- Through multiple platforms, **BIG keeps Brookline informed** and our democracy thriving

# Future: Action

The petitioners are asking the Town to recognize BIG's work:

1. **Aid BIG in Identifying Stable Funding** that is not dependent on legacy cable subscriptions
2. **Explore future partnerships** with BIG for the benefit of all of Brookline
3. **Establish a new community media committee:**
  - A new committee is needed, to guide us into the cableless future

Support BIG  
Vote Favorable Action on  
Warrant Article 40