

February 3, 2023

For Immediate Release

### **Closed Captioning Coming to Westfield Public Access Channel 15**

*Westfield* – Mayor Michael McCabe is happy to announce that the City of Westfield will soon offer closed captioning on all city government meetings televised on public access channel 15 and streamed at [www.westfieldtv.org](http://www.westfieldtv.org).

The city has a long history of broadcasting meetings of the City Council, Planning Board, and School Committee. When the pandemic hit and these meetings went to a virtual format, the rudimentary captioning provided made the meetings more accessible for the hearing-impaired. When the meetings resumed in person, and were broadcasted on Channel 15, the city did not have the technology to provide captioning.

In the fall of 2022, Westfield resident John Plata approached Mayor McCabe to advocate for hearing- impaired community and highlighted the need for closed captioning to broaden accessibility to local government to those with hearing impairments. “At the time, I spoke with the city’s Media Systems Specialist Peter Cowles, who said that there were some problems associated with integrating aspects of the captioning technology with the city’s media infrastructure. I am pleased to share that technology has caught up, and we have entered into a contract with Telvue that will provide SmartCaption™ Automatic Closed Captioning.”

“I have had my eye on this closed caption system since it was rolled out,” said Cowles, “It has now matured to the point that I feel it will be a benefit to our hearing-impaired viewers on Channel 15,” Cowles anticipates that closed captioning will be rolled out before the end of February. He plans to caption all live public access programming, including the morning shows that are broadcast from Studio 120 at the Westfield Technical Academy, and the city public meetings that are typically broadcast live from City Hall.