

The Brookline Post newspaper**Executive Summary**

This proposal will discuss the creation of a biweekly newspaper to be published for the town of Brookline, NH, a small town with a population of about 4600. There will be a departure from town papers in the past in that this one will also have an internet feature, minimally making the paper available in PDF format online and/or eventually having an interactive nice looking web site. The reason for having the PDF version online is to save money with print costs for the intended distribution yet still make it available in print format for those who wish to download and print on their own. It is the intent to bring the town into the modern era yet to provide an old fashioned news local source.

There are not a lot of businesses in the town therefore getting enough money from advertising to cover expenses and earn a profit will be difficult. Keeping costs to a minimum and being a small efficient operation are key to the project's initial success. Alternate revenue sources such as government grants and possible town funding will additionally be explored in the future. The prospect of expanding into a territory beyond just the town of Brookline with a larger distribution to make the paper more appealing to advertisers will be investigated. This territory is envisioned to include a historical definition of all towns included in the original township of Old Dunstable and could cover the following NH and MA towns: Nashua, Brookline, Hollis, Mason, Milford, Londonderry, Amherst, Merrimack, Litchfield, Wilton, Mont Vernon, Hudson, Lyndeborough, Lowell, Dracut, Tyngsboro, Townsend, Groton, Dunstable, Derry, Windham and Pelham. State and national news will additionally be considered as it pertains to issues of a local resident.

There is currently no regular newspaper devoted solely to Brookline. In the past there has been a newspaper published for the town but the last one stopped printing a few years ago and the void has been felt due to the piecemeal reporting from surrounding town's newspapers and the realization that a lot of activities and happenings are not being covered at all. The news is currently

published in either a weekly newspaper delivered through the mail that shares the space with the neighboring town of Hollis or there is one day a week in the local daily papers from Nashua, Manchester or Concord. These attempts though valiant in trying to cover some of the Brookline territory fall short of keeping its readership up to date in Brookline news. The town itself also has a website which allows non-profit organizations and town committees to list their activities.

There have been various newspapers printed for the town over the years, below is some background on these newspapers. There was the Hollis Times/ Brookline Reporter printed in 1888-1916. For the time period and population at the time...this paper had a large circulation. This paper was interesting in its coverage of national and state news. It also covered many women's issues at a time just before women were allowed to vote. A second incarnation of The Hollis Times has been printed for about the last 30 years, it is solely dedicated to the town of Hollis. The Brookline News was published from 1953 – 1962. This was sold to another publisher and later renamed the Brookliner from 1962 – 1998. The Brookliner was sold to the publisher of the Townsend Messenger and printed for a few more years 1998-2001. These newspapers contained primarily local news. The non profit organizations, police, selectman, ambulance services all “spoke” through the paper. Town meetings and school activities were also featured prominently.

SWOT Analysis - Strengths.

There is a great deal of support from many townspeople to get local news through what they were traditionally use to having, a newspaper. There is even one person willing to help finance the paper. There are several people with digital cameras that have offered their help in providing photographic coverage. Volunteering for a variety of organizations for many years has allowed me to keep current with many of the non-profit organizations in town and to know quite a bit of what they are up to, how they operate and some of their publicizing needs. I have developed a relationship with many of the people involved in these organizations and I feel since there is a comfort level that has been developed, they will assist the newspaper by feeding it the information their organization could provide.

Although the newspaper is an ambitious idea for one person, it can be done due to modern technology. This can only be made possible with the right software, computer and printer.

The costs for the entire operation can be minimized by making it an in home business. The additional money that would be needed for the overhead costs of rent, separate utilities etc, will not be needed.

SWOT Analysis - Weakness

To rely solely on one person for most of work is a risk. If something happens to me, I have no one to get an issue out. Reliability in the publishing and distribution is very important. If the newspaper print schedule is unreliable for whatever reasons, the advertisers are not going to be happy and want their money back. In addition it will garner ill will with it's readership if they can not get it consistently when they expect it. The community may stop "feeding" the paper it's news for the paper and bad possibly mouth it. It has happened in the past that the town paper was not reliable for a while so people stopped looking for it.

The most economical way to publish will be self- printing. To get the right kind of printer, which means a fast one, is going to cost more money. The time to print possible 1900 issues of approximately 6 pages each (of paper size 11x17) will take too much time if the print speed is too low. Since it's a one man operation, the quickest printing will be necessary.

There are only a small number of advertisers available and the other newspapers will be competing for their money. I am completely inexperienced at a variety of issues that this newspaper brings to light. It could get me into situations that aren't good or waste my time and money.

Working from home to many people seems like a perfect existence, the problem is I have been a stay at home mother and volunteer for over 14 years, people think I have complete time on my hands to drop whatever I am doing to assist whatever they need. With a work at home husband, four children, 1 live in boyfriend, 2 stepchildren that live nearby who have kids and two older nephews that I am "surrogate" mother to since their mother passed away ... the house is in constant movement and activity. Also, my husband when not traveling who works from home also seems to think I am

interruptible at any time. I also have many pets . I have found that at home when something needs to be addressed, I am usually the one who has to do it. Like Rodney Dangerfield said “I get no respect”. It will be a huge adjustment for everyone to realize I am working and not available as I once was. Of course, some of this will go away with discipline on my part and understanding and adapting on everyone else’s part, but I am a long way from being able to get large segments of time to get work done.

It will be hard to earn money to even cover costs; I probably won’t have money to pay for extra help. I will be attempting to train my kids to assist with part of the work and who knows, it could become a nice family business.

If the Brookline Post is only made available in print form at local stores verses mailing it to every household it will have an extremely smaller distribution. There are about 1900 mailing addresses in town, not a lot, but it is sure a lot more than the possible 300 that would be printed if it was only available at stores. There could be subscriptions for a small fee for mailed issues and there is the internet “distribution” or viewer ship which will help with promotion of advertiser’s visibility.

SWOT Analysis - Opportunities

There are no other local papers solely devoted to town. It is a good time to be the one to do it! The town needs a place to speak to the public. There are not a lot of retail or manufacturing businesses in Brookline but there is a strong entrepreneurial spirit in the town and there are many small start ups for services. They all need a place to do their marketing and advertising.

The town has a historical “need” for a local newspaper. How can a town not have a newspaper??? Most people coming into the town are also use to having a local paper to read. They look for the opportunity to learn about their new home town by reading a local paper. The history committee is attempting to write up the town’s last 100 years of history it would be easy to showcase history “news”. I have access to a lot of historical information due to being chairman of this committee. Many community organizations are looking to post their information and draw attention to what they are trying to do.

One idea for the newspaper is for it to be a non profit organization which would draw upon volunteers for help. I have seen this done successfully in at least one community Charleton, Ma. It would be a good idea to recheck into the status of this town's paper.

There are design opportunities for the web site and some for paper. To drum up excitement for the paper, it could have a non-traditional look but only if it stimulates its readership and encourages people to use the paper. Some of the regional newspapers have very unattractive and boring web sites. This community has a fair amount of computer savvy people...and therefore has a portion of the readership that may solely use the web aspects, it would be in the paper's best interest to make it a pleasing to view site. Many newspapers seem to be using a similar template for their design of their web page...boring, with busy flashing advertising banners. This can be a fun opportunity.

Since many of the potential advertisers will be small possibly struggling businesses, the possibility of using bartering is attractive. I have a variety of plumbing, electrical and cleaning needs that could be bartered for advertising space.

There is a fairly new very nice High School newspaper that could be expanded upon to become the town newspaper. The town does share the high school with Hollis so, their news would have to be covered too and could be a problem if not done correctly. This could be a nice opportunity since the school paper is looking for people to help them with getting advertisers. It is already established and has a large amount of help and high school reporters that are familiar with the towns.

I will gain a lot of skills by doing this paper and be able to market myself into a paying position. I have been home raising my children for a long time and found employers not quite willing to take a "risk" by hiring someone who has been out of the work force for any length of time.

SWOT Analysis - Threats The more established regional papers have expanded their distributions by partnering with other towns or magazines and their internet sites. They have more bang for the buck to offer advertisers by having such large distributions.

The cost of sending the paper to all homes which would enable a larger local distribution (would be approx. 1900 households) could become prohibitive as the post office changes it's fees.

There is a conflict of interest with current volunteer work for town web site and doing the paper. This would be remedied by quitting the committee and most importantly finding a replacement but it would have to be done carefully as to not garner any ill will from townspeople who use this site.

If my main computer, an IMAC G5 fails , I have a backup PC laptop but I haven't got the same software on both computers. More money will be needed to purchase the software for both systems. If my printer fails, a maintenance contract will possibly bail me out by assumed good service with the company I have purchased the contract from. If they can't get it working the costs to print it elsewhere at places such as Kinkos or Staples or other local print shops is about \$1500 per issue (if 6 pages of 11x17 inch paper). This is extremely expensive and would have to be a last choice. The turnaround time for getting the paper out is also disrupted and could cause the paper to not be circulated on it's regular schedule.

There is a strong need for a backup helper, although I am pretty close to superwoman (ha-ha) the fact that the paper would be relying on just one person could be a big problem.

Competitor Analysis

How is news is delivered to a small town like Brookline today? It is through newspapers, television and local cable, the internet, radio and satellite radio and word of mouth. There are also now telephones receiving news. The internet is ever increasing the amount of news access available. This is primarily state and national news and has yet to really cover Brookline news.

The newspapers are available through a variety of means. Some are delivered or purchased daily (Nashua Telegraph, Concord Monitor, Manchester Union Leader), others mailed weekly (Hollis/Brookline Journal, Broadcaster), some are mailed monthly (Jormac Advertiser) and some that are primarily entertainment or advertising guides are distributed through newspaper kiosks for free all around the larger towns. Each of these types of newspapers all have their own websites. Additionally, the newspapers have partnered with either groups of towns, internet sites and magazines to expand distribution to get more advertiser interest and reach a larger market segment.

Although there is no devoted town paper the news about Brookline gets a "corner" in a variety of newspapers. The Nashua Telegraph prints a weekly page devoted to Hollis and Brookline news. Some news gets published on other days if it is deemed worthy or is basically controversial. There is a small rather successful newspaper at the High School. The Manchester Union Leader and Concord Monitor also have minimal news about Brookline .

There is also the Hollis/Brookline Journal, a weekly newspaper mailed to each home. They also cover in separate issues the towns of Milford, Bedford and Merrimac. It use to be owned privately by Milford Cabinet and was purchased by Nashua Telegraph about 1 year ago. They share at least classifieds but news content and days Brookline news appears has not expanded. The Milford Cabinet also had lost respect from many in town due to controversy and townspeople feeling they take sides over news about Brookline. It does seem the only news for them to print about Brookline is bad news. The paper is jokingly referred to as the "Hollis/Hollis Journal" due to it's stuffing the paper with news about Hollis more than Brookline.

Hollis Times printed in Hollis. Sold for \$1.00. It is not available for sale in Brookline and is primarily a Hollis paper. There is also the Townsend, MA Messenger, available for free at local stores and several other mailed to home newspapers such as The Broadcaster, Jomarc advertiser. The Broadcaster is printed by the Lowell Sun and shares expenses and circulation. There is a whole segment of entertainment papers that contain minimal non entertainment news that are available in the cities of Manchester, Concord and Nashua. These are HIPPO, 157 and Mirror. There is also the COFFEE NEWS an advertising paper with no news but available at many local stores and restaurants.

Each of the above newspapers have extensive web sites (except CoffeeNews) . There are also other web partnerships going on such as NH Parenting, NH Business Review, NH Magazine and NH EVENTS and as time goes on, I believe these partnerships will continue to expand. Additionally, some people have even questioned the need for a printed newspaper when the internet is so available yet this day is not here yet and there is still a strong need for printed media.

The local radio stations may be used for advertising the paper's existence as well as the WMUR or WZID, NH television stations. These stations could perhaps be used as additional partners for web advertising and news sharing. The idea of downloading local news to a telephone should be analyzed from a cost and time perspective to expand the market.

Target Population

The target population is primarily adult male and female residents of the town of Brookline. There will be a smaller target audience of high school students and some parts will appeal to children. If the territory is expanded as part of the OLD DUNSTABLE POST, it will be trying to reach the same targets and local news coverage will be pertaining to whatever town the paper is being issued for. A large print edition could be made available for those who can't see small print. This would most likely be for the elderly, who generally are not using the internet and would want to receive news the good old fashioned way. Local news is the primary choice, but state news and national news as it pertains locally may also be available. Being the first in the nation primary, political things do take place on a semi-regular basis.

Promotion Mix

The biweekly newspaper may have seasonal themes of businesses and activities. The goal is to have issues saved as a guide for that theme. Some themes will be hiking and recreation, town meeting, historical and other town services.

Letters or e-letters to be sent to all local businesses and organizations with follow up phone calls and personal follow up. The costs for sponsorship of local teams and local activities will be analyzed for its effectiveness. The paper will become a member of all local business associations such as Souhegan Valley Chamber of Commerce, and utilize each organization's resources. The use of internet searches will be evaluated and determined where they will help the newspaper and of course all costs associated with this will be analyzed. There will be some radio advertising to at least initially promote the paper's existence; any future use will be analyzed. Local television stations and their web sites will be used to either partner with or to do some advertising. Most likely their web sites will

become a part of the promotions. Other web advertising will be analyzed and any that may help draw a larger market segment to the paper or the paper's web site will be used. Other cable TV aspects will be analyzed and used where determined advantageous. There are also some advertising opportunities available at the local movie theaters that would be investigated.

Plan for Implementation

A computer and software will be purchased. The newspaper name will be registered with the state of NH and also Massachusetts if needed (if the territory will cover the towns in Massachusetts and if the dual registering is necessary). It will be determine how much the investor is willing to spend and for how long. I will continue to get training for page layout software, internet issues, and graphic design. I will attend goodbrain academy for some of this training. The monthly costs to get the paper to print and screen will be calculated. It will be determine if the distribution will be mailed to 1900 vs. 300-500 sold in stores. The web portal will be defined. All costs for print, web and mail, time constraints (especially when dealing with biweekly deadlines), legal representation, and accounting will be determined. The advertising fees will be established. The newspapers existence will be publicized and advertising customers will be found. The paper size will be decided. Paper, ink and the right printer will be purchased. Ideally to have it be a more professional look with 11x17 inch paper, but this causes the printer and paper to be more expensive and will make in more difficult (possibly) to print at home copies from the PDF version. A backup printing plan will be in place. A backup computer system will be in place. Extra helpers will be found.

Control

Periodic analysis of print and internet costs will allow for taking actions to reduce/keep low. Customer relations with advertisers will be maintained and enhanced where possible, making sure their needs are met. Ensurance that the newspaper is not only covering local issues, but a continual determination of reader's interests will be made. If there are any grants available for; new businesses, women in publishing, newspapers, history - archiving- web publishing, they will be applied for. The feasibility of doing a warrant article to help fund a paper as a town project will be done.

Financial Forecast

There are costs for leasing or buying a printer which still could be \$400 month *12 months = \$4800. Many companies offer a maintenance contract and they are available to come fix your printer if it breaks down. The ink sometimes comes as part of this maintenance contract. The paper will be purchased in bulk, with the possibility of teaming up with a local publisher of the COFFEE NEWS to help both with paper costs.

If the distribution is determined to be done via the mail, the mail expense would be approximately \$350 per mailing * 26 mailings = \$9100. This is the cost only for Brookline and this will increase as the territory increases. There is also a permit fee and an annual fee of \$150 each. All possible legal expenses will be determined. Hopefully no one will be suing the paper but given my inexperience I will need at least advice on copy write issues. There will be accounting fees and taxes to pay. The internet will have expenses from various things such as web advertising, web searches, internet space for the web page. Software and hardware expenses will be incurred. The purchase of a fine IMAC G5 with extra memory to speed things up, of \$2500. This computer can also be used for the web site. The software by Adobe INDESIGN CS for page layout for the print version, Adobe Golive for web updates and Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop is needed. This software is \$1300. All expenses for backup printing or other failed aspects.

Product/Service Life Cycle

The Brookline Post will be printed every 2 weeks. The Internet site will be updated at least this often and will contain past issues. Breaking news may be available prior to printing if articles are complete.

In Conclusion

It will be very difficult to make any money printing a newspaper with this small of a distribution!! I work for free enough already! It most likely will not happen unless it is a non profit consortium or I win the lotto and don't need to earn an income. The expansion of the town website to include local news is another possibility for local news distribution.