

*"This is what really happened, reported by a free press to a free people.  
It is the raw material of history; it is the story of our own times."  
Henry Steel Commager*

*"A good newspaper is a nation talking to itself."  
Arthur Miller*

*"This formidable censor of the public functionaries, by arranging them at the tribunal of public  
opinion produces reform peaceably,  
which must otherwise be done by revolution."  
Thomas Jefferson*

## **2022 Year-End Report**

JANUARY 2023

2022 was an exciting and busy year for the Board of Directors of Kent News, Inc.

After a meeting in February of 2022, four Kent residents decided to bring back the town's newspaper, "The Kent Good Times Dispatch," or as it was known to local residents, "the "GTD." That newspaper began in 1952 as a Boy Scout project and later that year was taken over by John and Jane Green who were publishers, editors, reporters, and photographers. After being sold when the Greens retired, it had a number of owners until January 2009. At that time, its then-owners, Housatonic Publishing, a subsidiary of The Journal Registrar Company, closed it, along with 25 other small local newspapers.

Since that initial meeting, the board of directors has changed, losing two members and gaining four new members. It has never lost its focus, which is to bring back the local newspaper as a non-profit, and to eventually be able to offer it free to all residents in both digital and print form on a weekly basis.

To achieve our goal, we had three objectives for 2022:

### **First, validate the community's interest in a local newspaper.**

We created and distributed a short online questionnaire, distributed through Survey Monkey (and a few hard copies at the Library), available to all Kent residents. Respondents demonstrated overwhelming support for the project, with 91.93% of the of the 223 people surveyed expressing enthusiasm for the proposal. Many offered to volunteer, and even more respondents said they would be interested in donating to the effort. (Survey results attached.)

### **Second, create a non-profit corporation in order to operate and raise funding.**

We created a non-profit, non-stock corporation, Kent News, Inc. or KNI, organized in the State of Connecticut (May 16, 2022), adopted By-laws and a Conflict of Interest Policy (May

20). We applied for and received an Employer Identification Number (May 25). We registered as a Charity in CT (May 30) and held our first official meeting, where we appointed officers and filed the Minutes with the State of CT (June 7). We registered the trade names of "Kent News, Inc., "The Kent Good Times Dispatch" and "The Kent G.T.D." with the Kent Town Clerk and opened a checking account with a local bank.

Once organized into a non-profit business, we developed a business plan and spent time learning about running a non-profit newspaper. We explored the possibility of having a fiscal sponsor and what we would need to do to file for 501(c)(3) Tax Exempt status with the IRS.

We have since obtained a fiscal sponsor, "The Tiny News Collective" that collects donations on our behalf, takes a small percentage of each donation in exchange for doing all of the necessary bookwork, including sending thank you notes, and filing required tax documents with the IRS.

Our application for tax-exempt status with the IRS is in progress and we expect that it will be complete by the beginning of February 2023. Once filed, it can take up to a year for the IRS to make a decision.

Once these steps were completed we set up three committees within the Board of Directors: "Fund Raising," "Sales & Advertising, Policies and & Procedures," and "Preparing for Publication."

**Third, secure professional advisors that would help successfully guide us through our startup processes.**

We requested and were assigned a mentor from S.C.O.R.E. with whom we meet monthly. We consulted with local lawyer, Lorry Schiesel, and tax consultant, Jack Kinney.

We joined two professional organizations recommended to us by our SCORE mentor: INN (the Institute for Non-profit News) and LION (Local Independent On-line Newspapers).

Through the New York Bar Association's Cyrus R. Vance Center for International Justice's, "Lawyers for Reporters" program we have obtained the pro bono services of the law firm of Willkie Farr & Gallagher. The law firm will help us determine if there are any impediments to our using "The Kent Good Times Dispatch" name and assist us with filing our application for tax-exempt status with the IRS.

Our goal for 2023 is to raise enough money to begin publishing on-line by late spring or early summer 2023. To accomplish this, we have determined we will need about \$200,000 to cover salaries, start-up costs and ongoing expenses, plus extra to assure we can continue publishing into the next year as we increase our fundraising so that we can add the print version by 2026.

We have interviewed two very qualified area people interested in the job of editor, which is a paid position. We have a volunteer for the sales manager position and we are looking for a graphic designer with newspaper experience to do ad layout, etc. Once we have all or most of the money in place, we can hire and begin publication. Meanwhile, we will begin to

slowly add fun and informative content to our webpage including a calendar of events, which we will do our best to keep as up-to-date as possible.

With gratitude for your interest and enthusiasm,

The Board of Directors  
Kent News, Inc.

Karen Chase, President  
Charles "Chuck" Goldberg, Vice-President  
Andrea Schoeny, Secretary  
Jonathan Matson, Treasurer  
Barin Rovzar, Member  
Deborah Rose, Member

Below are our Mission, Vision, and Values statements and Initial Survey results:

**Mission:** Kent News, Inc. is a non-partisan, non-profit news and information source committed to building community and enhancing the lives of our residents, businesses, and organizations by providing trusted local information and covering topics of interest to the Kent Community.

**Vision:** A community that is inclusive, engaged, and informed; that actively participates in government, volunteers, and supports local schools and businesses. A community that is proud of itself, its achievements and its children.

**Values:** To ensure that we can accomplish our vision and mission, the actions and behaviors of the members of the KNI Board of Directors and the Staff of The Kent Good Times Dispatch will always reflect the following values and beliefs:

1. We will be non-partisan and unbiased in our actions as well as in our reporting
2. We will always separate our personal beliefs from those of the Board and the Kent Good Times Dispatch newspaper
3. We will insist on honesty and accuracy in all our dealings, whether financial, personal or in reporting the news
4. The welfare and interests of the residents of the Town of Kent will guide all our actions as members of the board of KNI and as staff of the GTD.
5. We will avoid conflicts of interest and if unavoidable be open and transparent with donors and readers.
6. We understand and adhere to the Code of Ethics (as adopted) for Journalists and the board that oversees them.

**Initial Interest Survey Results:**

**223 responses**

**1. Would you be interested in a local newspaper for the Kent area?**

**(223 answered)**

<u>Answer</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u># of respondents</u>
Yes:	91.93%	205
No:	3.14%	7
Possibly:	4.93%	11

**2. How often would you like to receive the newspaper?**

**(217 answered)**

Weekly:	68.20%	148
Bi-weekly:	26.27%	57
Monthly:	9.22%	20

**3. Which format do you prefer?**

**(219 answered)**

Print:	20.55%	45
Digital:	20.55%	45
Print & digital:	59.36%	130

**4. Would you be interested in supporting a local newspaper by**

**(156 answered)**

Volunteering:	46.15%	72
Financial support:	63.46%	99
Paid:	16.67%	26

*(some people checked more than one box)*

**5. What age group do you represent?**

**(223 answered)**

18-30:	1.35%	3
30-50:	16.14%	36
50/above:	82.51%	184

**6. Are you a**

**(222 answered)**

Full time resident:	73.87%	164
Part-time resident:	15.32%	34
Former resident:	5.86%	13
Non-resident interested:	4.99%	11

**7&8. Name and contact information**