

**MINUTES OF THE
BOARD OF WISCONSIN PUBLIC RADIO ASSOCIATION BOARD MEETING
HELD ON
Wednesday, September 16, 2020**

The WPRA Board of Directors meeting was called to order at 2:04pm.

In attendance at the meeting were: Nick Abts, Niles Berman, Roy Christianson, Mike Crane, Larry Graham, Pat Heim, Katrina Keller, Pete Lundberg, Jeff Muse, Mary Peterson, Fran Rauscher, Paul Sturgul, Susan Tikalsky

Others in attendance: Marta Bechtol, Jason Butler, Ellen Clark, Katie Cyrus, Paul Damberg, Tyler Hahn, Sarah Janes Ugoretz, Dean Kallenbach, Kate LaRocque, Lisa Nalbandian, Gene Purcell, Rick Reyer, Willa Schlecht, Matt Schoeffler, Ezra Wall, Cynthia Woodland

Members excused: Tim Coburn, Amy Kocha, Janan Najeeb

Welcome was given by WPRA Board Chair Niles Berman. The Board expressed unanimous consent to participation by Webex or phone.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD. No members of the public made comments.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Motion to approve the consent agenda as presented, including approval of the Minutes of the May 20, 2020 Board meeting.

- a. Moved: Graham; Second: Sturgul
- b. No discussion.
- c. Motion carried.

BOARD CHAIR'S REPORT. Berman discussed the FY21 Committee assignments, and reminded members they may join a Committee at any point throughout the year. Since the WPRA Bylaws are silent on the subject, Berman requested Board approval of the Committee appointments as presented.

Motion to approve WPRA Committee appointments for FY21.

- a. Moved: Lundberg; Second: Abts
- b. No further discussion.
- c. Motion carried.

Berman asked Board members to complete their annual Conflict of Interest Disclosure form and send them to Janes Ugoretz. Board members also received the FY21 WPRA Board Book. Berman commented on the Board Evaluation Spreadsheet and the ongoing discussion over its role and usefulness to the Governance Committee. Lundberg shared that he finds this information useful, as it provides a snapshot of not only how the Board is doing but also of his own individual involvement. As a new member of the Board of Directors, Berman attended the Educational Communications Board meeting on July 17, 2020. Discussion revolved heavily around broadband expansion efforts and highlighted Bechtol's appointment to the State Broadband Task Force, whose work will culminate in the presentation of a white paper to the Governor. Graham emphasized how important this work is, and Tikalsky asked for clarification on expansion efforts. Bechtol explained that the state cannot create its own broadband service and that the

private sector needs to drive this. The Task Force is exploring creative ways to facilitate this and make it easier for broadband companies to become involved in broadband deployment throughout under-served areas of the state.

WPRA ELECTION UPDATE. Kallenbach provided an overview of the 2020 WPRA Election. All Board members on the ballot were reelected to serve another term, and the proposed Bylaw Amendment was approved by a vote of 2,071 in favor and 255 opposed, with 37 abstaining. Moving forward, the Board will oversee and implement the election process. Members reached out to staff to engage in equity, diversity, and inclusivity (EDI) conversations, and Berman noted members' strong endorsement for the Bylaw amendment.

FY20 PRELIMINARY RESULTS AND FY21 YTD FINANCIALS. Schlecht commented that after a difficult March, a break-even April, and a strong showing in May and June—due in large part to a mailing sent out by the Development team—membership revenue was favorable for the year by \$63k. Accumulated expense savings due to cancelled canvassing and events, plus vacancies/delayed hires in salaried positions created an ending fiscal year with a \$537k favorable budget variance. This variance is added to our unrestricted cash reserves which will now exceed \$1.5 million. We ended the year with \$1.1 million in bequests. This greatly exceeded projections, as bequests typically amount to about \$200k per year. Schlecht commented that the audit process is going smoothly, and she does not expect any changes to the results presented today.

We experienced a \$16k shortfall for revenue in the first month of FY21. However, August revenue was \$90k favorable for the month so WPR is \$74k favorable on revenue YTD. Vehicle revenue has been curiously strong. Nearly all of the favorable variance year-to-date is related to vehicle donations, and WPR has already reached 40% of the goal for the year. Schlecht emphasized that at this point in the fiscal year, we are not able to discuss patterns yet. However, the September pledge drive will be informative, and reporting for the first quarter will have commentary on trends. LaRocque mentioned the struggles that the Business Sponsorship team continues to work through, while Purcell and Bechtol commented on the status of UW and state funding.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT. Crane commented that WPR staff continue to work under extremely challenging conditions while covering extremely challenging and quickly evolving topics. After vacating WPR studios on March 13, staff continue to work almost entirely remotely. This work is largely possible due to the capital investments—authorized in the FY2018 budget by the WPRA Board—to improve our studios and equipment. COVID-19 coverage remains ongoing, and while WPR had planned extensive reporting on the Democratic National Convention in Milwaukee, two other election-related initiatives are ongoing: an in-depth series called Swing State and a new webpage dedicated to political coverage. As staff began to work remotely, WPR welcomed its first ever dedicated photojournalist into its ranks and Crane commented that this has allowed us to tell stories in new, dynamic ways. Reflecting on the ongoing demonstrations for racial equity and justice, Crane highlighted that a commitment to diversity is outlined in public media's founding documents. While WPR still has a long way to go, a few initiatives are in place to help us move forward, including the Wisconsin Public Media Change Team and the Second Century Fellowship for early-career journalists of color.

Regional managers also shared ongoing efforts around strengthening our EDI work.

- In Superior, work is underway to explore partnerships with WOJB, the Native American public radio station in Hayward. Damberg also mentioned that staff has reached out to students representing minority and underrepresented groups at UW-Superior.
- In Wausau, Reyer talked about how a coalition of community partners, including WPR, started Toward One Wausau (now Toward One Wisconsin) which seeks to deal with racial tensions in

the community. Staff are also working with BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) student organizations on the Stevens Point and Wausau campuses.

- In Green Bay, WPR partnered with StoryCorps to amplify underrepresented voices. Clark also spoke of WPR's targeted outreach towards regionally based Tribal governments and organizations.
- In Milwaukee, Nalbandian discussed the Community Connections campaign, which targets non-profits dedicated to EDI work, and a guerilla marketing effort to make call-outs to local organizations tied to The Ideas Network. With a recent office move, staff also focused on making sure their new venue was handicap accessible and approachable for various groups in the city.
- In La Crosse, WPR is a sponsor of the Community Conversations initiative which is exploring the book *Waking up White*. Wall also commented on the organization's efforts to develop regional programming around the removal of the city's controversial Hiawatha statue.
- In Eau Claire, Kallenbach mentioned WPR's role as a major sponsor of Literacy Chippewa Valley, which tutors many recent Hispanic and Hmong immigrants and provides literacy training in jails and prisons in the area. Regional programming has also focused on racial tensions at UW-Eau Claire and has won awards from Wisconsin Broadcasters Association and Midwest Broadcast Journalists Association. The Eau Claire bureau is also in its fifth year of offering a paid journalism internship targeted towards underrepresented populations.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION FOR WPRA. Berman asked Board members to reflect on what role the WPRA can and should have in furthering EDI efforts. Members commented that the Board can raise funds to support WPR's EDI efforts and can strive to have a Board that reflects the diversity of the state. Christianson commented that while geographic and gender diversity on the Board appears strong at this point, racial diversity does not. LaRocque mentioned that prioritizing racial diversity on the Board starts with a verbal commitment and should ultimately be a mutually beneficial relationship between the organization and the member. Abts emphasized the need to keep in mind prospective Board members' commitment to public radio in the state as we further develop these EDI efforts. Graham recognized the important role that WPR's regional managers have in developing relationships with members and potential WPRA Board members. Muse commented that, as someone who identifies as a minority, he thinks WPRA is approaching this work in the right way.

LaRocque discussed the Friends of PBS Wisconsin's work around EDI. They are not planning to codify their commitments, but strengthening representation and inclusivity is a stated goal. Berman and Keller said that the Governance Committee will take up this discussion at its upcoming meeting and will provide an update at the November Board meeting.

RESOLUTIONS. Clark read a resolution honoring Michael Cisler for his Board service. The resolution was unanimously adopted by acclamation.

OPTIONAL WPRA SOCIAL HOUR. Board members and staff engaged in informal conversation.

ADJOURNMENT. The Board adjourned by unanimous consent at 4:41pm.

These minutes submitted by Sarah Janes Ugoretz.