

**MINUTES OF THE
BOARD OF WISCONSIN PUBLIC RADIO ASSOCIATION BOARD MEETING
HELD ON
Thursday, September 12, 2019**

The WPR Board of Directors Meeting was called to order at 11:02am.

In attendance at the meeting were: Nick Abts, Niles Berman, Roy Christianson, Tim Coburn, Mike Crane, Dean Dietrich, Ron Dunlap, Larry Graham, Anne Katz, Amy Kocha, Trina Keller, Pete Lundberg, Jeff Muse, Janan Najeeb, Mary Peterson, Fran Rauscher, Paul Sturgul, Susan Tikalsky

Others in attendance: Mike Arnold, Marta Bechtol, Tim Brown, Jason Butler, Ellen Clark, Katie Cyrus, Paul Damberg, Jeff Durkee, Adam Hargrove, Sarah Janes Ugoretz, Dean Kallenbach, Kate LaRocque, Lisa Nalbandian, Steve Paulson, Gene Purcell, Rick Reyer, Jeanette Roberts, Willa Schlecht, Matt Schoeffler, Anne Strainchamps, Marike Stucky, Eric Tallmadge, Andrea Trungale, Britny Williams, Cynthia Woodland

Members excused: Michael Cisler, Pat Heim

Welcome was given by Chair Ron Dunlap.

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

CONSENT AGENDA:

Motion to approve May 23, 2019 minutes as presented.

- a. Moved: Sturgul; Second: Dietrich
- b. No discussion.
- c. Motion approved.

Motion to approve July FY20 Financials as presented.

- a. Moved: Sturgul; Second: Dietrich
- b. No discussion.
- c. Motion approved.

Motion to approve consent agenda as presented.

- a. Moved: Dietrich; Second: Kocha
- b. No discussion.
- c. Motion approved.

BOARD CHAIR'S REPORT. Dunlap welcomed two new Board members, Janan Najeeb and Roy Christianson, and highlighted new Committee assignments. He asked that Board members sign and submit their annual Conflict of Interest forms and encouraged Board members who would prefer to have a hard copy of the FY20 Board Book to follow up with Janes Ugoretz. Dunlap highlighted key agenda items, including presentations by Anne Strainchamps and Steve Paulson of To The Best Of Our Knowledge and Adam Hargrove, Director of Engineering at the Educational Communications Board. Dunlap also welcomed WPR staff as well as Jeanette Roberts, President of the Friends of Wisconsin Public Television Board.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT. Crane spoke of the passing of WPR Reporter Glen Moberg, who was recently honored by the Wisconsin Public Broadcasters Association as a "Local Broadcast Legend." WPR is preparing to launch Derailed, an in-depth look at how high-speed rail almost came to Wisconsin. This is

WPR's first experiment with a short-run, podcast-first project, and involved deep collaboration amongst different teams across the organization. Crane provided an update on the rebuild of the Vilas Hall studios and touched on changes to regionally produced shows—including the addition of Simply Superior. Crane answered questions from the Board regarding WPR's availability via smart devices, the costs and benefits of outreach efforts, and the overlapping goals of outreach and marketing.

BOARD LIAISON/CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER'S REPORT. LaRocque highlighted ongoing work around the CRM conversion, as WPR rebuilds its database essentially from scratch. The “go-dark” and “go-live” events are coming up in October, and staff members are confident in the new CRM's long-term value. LaRocque mentioned the article included at the end of her report, which touched on the “Trump Bump” and the “Trump Slump.” Staff remain optimistic about WPR's ability to put tools in place for philanthropic giving. LaRocque talked about efforts aimed at preserving but also further developing the current member program.

REVIEW FY19 PRELIMINARY RESULTS. Graham has completed an interview with the auditors, and the Finance Committee will meet with them in October. Schlecht commented that overall membership revenue was 4.9 percent short of budget, but that savings through expense management nearly met the shortfall. Overall, the net operating loss was \$5k. The FY19 revenue shortfall was partly due to basing the budget on an overly optimistic performance from the previous year. The FY20 budget process was modified to partially account for this, allowing for additional months of reporting to inform the final budget process. Dietrich highlighted WPR's nimbleness in being able to make the adjustments it did. Berman added that this experience seemed more like a budget process issue rather than a strategic concern.

WPR SPOTLIGHT: TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE (TTBOOK). Paulson and Strainchamps provided a brief history of TTBOOK, which, in its nearly 30 years, has amassed a listenership of 230k, with roughly 500k podcast downloads over 3 months and a growing streaming audience. The original concept was for TTBOOK to take The Wisconsin Idea and share it with a national audience. Today, a staff of 7 produces 1 hour of original content per week, with a repeat episode. When brainstorming episode themes and content, the team reflects on considerations such as a balance between “heart and head” and whether the diversity of thinking as pertains to the issue at hand is represented. TTBOOK strives to go deeper than a typical news program by embracing an “intelligent optimism” approach—in part, by providing content that elicits a sense of hope. Strainchamps and Paulson spoke about a new project that will launch in November and played a selection of audio samples from past shows.

FRIENDS OF WPT BOARD PRESIDENT: Jeanette Roberts, President of the Friends of WPT Board of Directors greeted the WPRA Board. She spoke of how the intention of bringing the two Boards together and collaborating in certain ways is an idea that has been maturing over time.

ADVOCACY UPDATE. Purcell spoke about the fruitful collaboration between Friends of WPT and WPRA as relates to political advocacy efforts. Though 2020 is not a budget year, Purcell spoke of the importance of remaining active and staying engaged, and the leadership and logistics teams are already discussing plans for 2020 advocacy activities. Two key activities include the APTS Public Media Summit in Washington, D.C. in February and the state Advocacy Day in Madison, which will likely take place in April. Purcell commented that WPRA Board members' participation in Advocacy Day is crucial, and Bechtol mentioned that the event is largely focused on advocating for the Educational Communications Board (ECB) budget, which is largely funded by the state. The funding provided for the 2019 budget was lower than requested, but the majority of the budget was supported including the capital funding request. Bechtol spoke about rural broadband as a key priority for the ECB. Purcell mentioned that as federal funding has remained consistent for the last 10 years, the buying power of those funds has declined. The

Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) has requested an increase in the federal appropriation, from \$445 million to \$495 million, which also includes an increase for the Ready to Learn initiative and the interconnect. President Trump has proposed no funding for these requests, but Congress can choose to provide the funds. The House has currently approved the requests, and the Senate will weigh in soon.

WPM AND UW-MADISON TRANSITION UPDATE. There have been administrative changes as WPM has moved—as of July 1, 2019—from UW-Extension to UW-Madison Campus, and a big piece of that has involved changes to human resources. This transition will be an ongoing process, and Purcell expects it to span at least the next budget cycle. Various changes are also taking place on campus, so plenty of transitions are afoot. Berman followed up about a previous question relating to preserving editorial independence, and Purcell stated that this remains solidly in place.

WPM SPOTLIGHT: RADIO ENGINEERING AND INFRASTRUCTURE. Director of Engineering for the ECB, Adam Hargrove, spoke about the ECB's role in transmitting content. He provided an overview of the towers and coverage throughout the state. Towers are built so that if any portion fails, the entire structure will fail, which means that structural integrity is critical. ECB engineers partner regularly with the Department of Transportation and the state's counties. In monitoring the condition of the towers, the ECB relies on both drones as well as physical inspections. Ice and lightning can damage the towers, so regular monitoring is critical. Hargrove talked about how important it is to keep transmitters cool, adding that if site power is lost, generators will keep things running while a solution is identified.

ADJOURNMENT. The Board adjourned by unanimous consent at 3:15pm.

These minutes submitted by Sarah Janes Ugoretz.