



Educational Communications Board

3319 West Beltline Highway • Madison, WI 53713-4296 • 608.264.9600 • ECB.org

EDUCATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS BOARD MEETING

ECB Board Room
3319 West Beltline Highway
Madison, Wisconsin
April 21, 2017
9:30 a.m.

MINUTES

Roll Call and Introductions

Board Chair Dr. Rolf Wegenke called the meeting of the Educational Communications Board to order at 9:35 a.m. In lieu of a roll call of Board Member attendance, Dr. Wegenke asked board members to introduce themselves for the benefit of a new board member. The complete attendance list follows:

Board Members Present:

- Representative Dave Considine
- Dean Dietrich
- Kurt Kiefer (representing Superintendent Tony Evers)
- David Hutchison
- Erin Kastberg (representing Ray Cross)
- Eileen Littig
- Cate Zeuske (representing Scott Neitzel)
- Karen Schroeder
- Bryan Steil
- Rolf Wegenke, Ph.D., Chair
- Bohdan Zachary
- Jim Zylstra (representing Morna Foy), Vice-Chair

Absent:

- Rich Lepping
- Representative Amy Loudenberg
- Senator Luther Olsen
- Senator Fred Risser



Approval of Minutes from the January 20, 2017 ECB Board Meeting

Eileen Littig moved, seconded by Karen Schroeder to approve the January 20, 2017 meeting minutes. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

AGENDA ITEM 1. Report of the Board Chair

Dr. Wegenke's report was in the form of a motion to honor the career of Terry Baun, ECB Director of Engineering, who announced his retirement in March following a long broadcast engineering career and significant contributions to the ECB and public broadcasting.

Dr. Wegenke moved that the ECB Board of Directors salute Terry Baun on his retirement and many years of service to public broadcasting and the people of Wisconsin. The motion was seconded by Jim Zylstra. The motion was adopted by unanimous voice vote. Dr. Wegenke instructed Gene Purcell to share a text of the motion and unanimous support with Mr. Baun following today's meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 2. Report of the Executive Director

Dr. Wegenke introduced ECB Executive Director Gene Purcell. Mr. Purcell reminded board members that a copy of his written report was included in the board packets distributed prior to the meeting.

Mr. Purcell thanked Dr. Wegenke for the kind words regarding Terry Baun and acknowledged Mr. Baun's good work. Mr. Purcell reviewed a number of important contributions from Mr. Baun and noted that a retirement party has been planned for Memorial Day weekend.

Mr. Purcell went on to introduce Steve Bauder, who was recently appointed to the Engineering Division Administrator position which Mr. Baun retired from. Mr. Bauder expressed his deep respect and admiration for Mr. Baun's service and also discussed how strong the Engineering Division currently is due to Mr. Baun's leadership.

Mr. Purcell continued his report with an update regarding the federal and state budgets. Mr. Purcell conveyed there was little to report regarding either budget. A continuing resolution to fund the Federal Government is due to expire within the next week, and Mr. Purcell anticipates an additional resolution to be adopted as the federal budget debate continues. Mr. Purcell reminded Board members that federal funding comprises about 10% of the ECB's budget. Mr. Purcell also reported that the Joint Committee on Finance is working to finalize the state budget and is in session today, but the ECB has not yet been on their agenda. Mr. Purcell reported that he has been meeting with legislators to discuss the ECB's budget and he thinks those meetings have been positive.



Eileen Littig asked for clarification regarding corporate support as it relates to the ECB. Mr. Purcell responded that about 56% of the ECB's budget is derived from program revenue which is a combination of individual membership contributions and corporate support. Mr. Purcell also introduced Kathy Bissen and Mike Crane who addressed how program revenue is represented in the budgets for WPT and WPR.

Mr. Purcell continued his report by providing an update on the FCC Spectrum Auction. Mr. Purcell reported that, following the completion of the auction, stations have been notified if they are to be repacked (moved to a new channel). Two ECB stations are now scheduled to be repacked. WHLA-TV in La Crosse and WPNE-TV in Green Bay will be moving to new channels.

Mr. Purcell also shared that 5 stations in Wisconsin have accepted bids to be purchased as a result of the auction. Four of those stations are in the Milwaukee market and one in Madison. Mr. Purcell said that Milwaukee Public Television (MPTV) has sold one of its two stations for \$85 million which will go to Milwaukee Area Technical College, the licensee of MPTV. Mr. Purcell reminded the Board that Milwaukee Public Television's situation was unique in that it owned two stations and will continue to be able to serve their market with the remaining channel.

In the other markets served by the ECB (La Crosse, Wheeler, Wausau, Green Bay, and Park Falls), Mr. Purcell reported there were no stations sold as part of the auction. Mr. Purcell added that the final auction proceeds were lower than had been forecast by the FCC. He attributed this to both the mechanics of the "reverse" auction as well as the lack of interest in stations by wireless providers located in lesser populated areas.

Dr. Wegenke asked Mr. Purcell to pause his report in order to congratulate the Board of Directors for their thorough consideration of the FCC Spectrum Auction process at previous meetings and noted that ECB's prediction that there would be little interest to buy ECB stations was correct. Dr. Wegenke took a moment to thank Mr. Purcell, the ECB staff, and the Board of Directors for all their work related to the FCC Spectrum Auction.

Mr. Purcell continued and reported on the repacking process which will occur at ECB stations in La Crosse and Green Bay. Mr. Purcell reported that the full repacking process will be carried out over a 39 month period, divided into 10 phases. WHLA has been assigned to phase 2, and WPNE to phase 3. Mr. Purcell reported that ECB has been proactive in planning for the repack and he expects the ECB will implement the repack according to the FCC's schedule. Mr. Purcell added that he has invited Steve Bauder to present ECB's repacking progress at the July Board of Directors meeting.

Erin Kastberg asked if the ECB will be reimbursed by the Federal government for repacking expenses sooner since the ECB's stations to be repacked are both in early phases. Mr. Purcell responded that 90% of the expenses will be paid up front with the remaining 10% to be paid at the conclusion of the repacking.



Mr. Purcell concluded his report and asked if there were any additional questions. Eileen Littig inquired about the funding for the Wisconsin Media Lab (WiML). Ms. Littig asked if there were any additional funding options for WiML and wondered if additional funding may be possible in the future. Mr. Purcell reminded the Board that diminished state funding for the WiML led to the reduction of staff and relocation of the WiML to Wisconsin Public Television (WPT). According to Mr. Purcell, by moving the WiML to WPT, there is now a possibility that WPT Development Staff could seek donations or corporate sponsorship to help fund the WiML. Mr. Purcell also reported that while a request for WiML funding in the agency's budget request was not approved, he continues to advocate for state funding. Mr. Purcell added that WiML and WPT have a positive relationship with the Department of Public Instruction and continued collaboration will help strengthen future funding requests.

There were no additional questions or comments regarding the Executive Director report.

AGENDA ITEM 3. Acceptance of annual financial audit results – Carrie Gindt, CPA - Reilly, Penner & Benton LLP

Gene Purcell introduced Carrie Gindt, CPA, who participated in the meeting via telephone. Ms. Gindt provided a brief review of the audit report which was provided to board members in advance of today's meeting. A complete copy of the report will be included with the official minutes of today's meeting. In summary, Ms. Gindt announced that Reilly, Penner and Benton has issued an unqualified opinion regarding ECB's financial audit. Following Ms. Gindt's review, there were a few follow up questions from board members and a brief discussion.

Jim Zylstra moved to accept the audit, seconded by Cate Zeuske. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Gene Purcell added that it was a challenging year to prepare for the audit due to the State's transition to the STAR financial system and he wished to congratulate Marta Bechtol and Aimee Wright for their work in guiding ECB through the process. Mr. Purcell's comments were followed by a round of applause from the Board of Directors.

AGENDA ITEM 4. Financial report

Quarterly financial reports were distributed with the board packet in advance of today's meeting. Dr. Wegenke asked if there were any questions regarding the reports.

Gene Purcell mentioned that the reports reflect that the ECB has only spent 53% of the agency's budget through three quarters of the fiscal year but this can attributed to staff vacancies and a number of large bills that are paid during the fourth quarter.



Mr. Purcell added that contributions for Television and Radio are projected to be met or exceeded.

Eileen Littig asked about the most recent membership drive which was reported to have fallen short of the goal. Mr. Purcell responded that WPT outperformed other public stations but was short of the goal set by WPT. He also indicated that overall membership revenue is up over the previous year. Mr. Purcell explained that it was a very successful drive but the pledge drive numbers don't include sustaining memberships. Sustaining membership has continued to rise as has fundraising in general, so pledge drive numbers will likely dip as viewers choose to become sustaining members rather than make a donation during pledge.

Ms. Littig also asked if door to door canvassing has been successful. Mr. Purcell replied that canvassing has been successful in Madison and will be implemented in other parts of the state.

Dave Hutchison inquired about utilizing social media to enhance fundraising. Mr. Purcell replied that WPT and WPR are not currently using social media specifically for fundraising but have been very creative in identifying new ways to raise funds and they are looking very closely at ways social media can enhance those efforts.

There were no further questions or comments.

AGENDA ITEM 5. Evaluation of WECB Executive Director

Pursuant to s. 19.85(1)(c), Wis. Stats., the Board convened in a closed session for the annual performance evaluation of the WECB Executive Director.

AGENDA ITEM 6. Questions regarding reports or other comments from Board members.

Following the closed session, the Board reconvened at 11:35 a.m. Dr. Wegenke asked if there were any additional questions or comments.

Eileen Littig inquired about the Federal budget and funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB). Ms. Littig asked how she can help people who have asked her what they can do to promote the CPB and the continuation of federal funding. Mr. Purcell replied that since CPB is federally funded, he encourages supporters to contact their elected Representatives and Senators to let them know you support public broadcasting.

Cate Zeuske asked if Mr. Purcell could provide talking points or promotional material that would be helpful to promote public broadcasting. Mr. Purcell responded that he has a variety of promotional material and statistics and he will forward those to Ms. Zeuske in the near future.



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AGENDA ITEM 7. Adjournment

Representative Hutchison moved to adjourn, seconded by Dr. Wegenke. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote. Dr. Wegenke announced the meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.