



## Educational Communications Board

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### EDUCATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS BOARD MEETING

ECB Board Room  
3319 West Beltline Highway  
Madison, Wisconsin  
July 14, 2017  
9:30 a.m.

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#### 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  
   Erin Kastberg (representing Ray Cross)  
   Representative Amy Loudenbeck  
   Cate Zeuske (representing Scott Neitzel)  
   Senator Luther Olsen  
   Bryan Steil  
   Rolf Wegenke, Ph.D., Chair  
   Bohdan Zachary  
   Jim Zylstra (representing Morna Foy), Vice-Chair

Absent:                             Kurt Kiefer (representing Superintendent Tony Evers)  
   David Hutchison  
   Rich Lepping  
   Eileen Littig  
   Senator Fred Risser  
   Karen Schroeder



### **Approval of Minutes from the April 21, 2017 ECB Board Meeting**

Cate Zeuske moved, seconded by Dean Dietrich to approve the April 21, 2017 meeting minutes. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 1. Report of the Board Chair**

Dr. Wegenke expressed that while today's meeting is routine, he appreciates everyone making time to attend during a very busy time of the year. In addition to some updates regarding the 100 year anniversary and the spectrum repack, a few policies have been updated for the Board's approval.

#### **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 provided an update on the federal budget as it relates to public broadcasting and the ECB. Mr. Purcell reported that yesterday, the House Appropriations Sub-Committee for Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies met and approved a bill that provides a continuation of advance funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) at current levels for fiscal year 2020, and confirmation of funding for the current fiscal year (FY18). CPB funding is currently at \$445 million, and Mr. Purcell reminded the board that 10% of the ECB's budget is derived from the CPB.

Mr. Purcell reported that funding for the PBS Ready to Learn initiative was approved at current levels of about \$27 million. The Ready to Learn Initiative supports the educational component of public television and digital media to deliver early learning and school readiness content.

Mr. Purcell added that funding for the replacement of the Public Broadcasting Interconnect, which is the nation-wide system that delivers public broadcasting, was not recommended by the Appropriations Sub-Committee.

Mr. Purcell provided an update regarding the state budget. Mr. Purcell reported that a state budget for FY18 has not yet been approved by the full legislature but the Joint Committee on Finance has approved the ECB portion of the budget bill. Mr. Purcell thanked Senator Luther Olsen and Representative Amy Loudenbeck for their efforts on the Joint Finance Committee and ongoing work to finalize the budget.



Mr. Purcell continued by reporting that ECB's 2017 fiscal year has ended and will close under budget. Mr. Purcell attributed this in part to a higher than usual number of vacancies and retirements during the past year. Mr. Purcell reported that ECB has filled a number of positions recently and acknowledged the work of ECB staff for going "above and beyond" during the last nine months without being fully staffed.

Mr. Purcell reminded Board members that David Cobb is collecting the adverse adjudication forms which had been distributed a few weeks ago. Mr. Purcell added that it is not necessary to complete the form if there are no adjudication issues to report. ECB is required to submit the forms to the FCC by August 1<sup>st</sup>.

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

**AGENDA ITEM 3.      ECB Board Policy Updates – ACTION ITEM**

Dr. Wegenke thanked Gene Purcell for preparing updated board policies and reminded the Board that a copy of the updated policies were distributed with the board packet for today's meeting. Dr. Wegenke noted the changes were mostly limited to updating names and contact information, as well as the elimination of policies which had become outdated and no longer necessary.

Senator Luther Olsen moved to adopt the proposed changes, seconded by Dean Dietrich. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

**AGENDA ITEM 4.      ECB Repack Update**

Gene Purcell introduced Steve Bauder, ECB Engineering Division Administrator, to provide an update regarding the "repacking" of ECB stations following the FCC spectrum auction.

Mr. Bauder reported that two ECB stations are scheduled to be repacked. Mr. Bauder reminded the Board that "repacking" occurs following the FCC spectrum auction when portions of the television frequency spectrum are re-allocated to wireless providers. Television stations that remain on the air are then required to move their signal to another frequency. For the ECB, WPNE in Green Bay and WHLA in La Crosse are now subject to the repacking process.

Mr. Bauder reported that ECB has submitted budgets to the FCC to implement the repack at WPNE and WHLA, and the FCC will reimburse the ECB up to 90% of the costs. For WPNE, Mr. Bauder reported a budget of \$900,000 and \$1.5 million for WHLA. Mr. Bauder noted that it will not be necessary to replace the antenna in Green Bay (WPNE) which is owned by another station who leases space on the tower to ECB. Mr. Bauder reported that WHLA's tower in La Crosse is owned by the ECB and the antenna will need to be replaced, thus the higher cost to



repack. Once the budgets are approved by the FCC, ECB will be reimbursed up to 90% of the costs up front, and the remainder in 2020.

Mr. Bauder reported that ECB has submitted requisitions to the State Procurement office and have received waivers from the Governor to expedite the purchasing process in order to meet the deadlines established by the FCC. Mr. Bauder added that ECB has completed contracts for equipment and tower crews who will carry out the installation. The work is scheduled to be completed by November 2018, ahead of the FCC deadline of April 2019.

Mr. Bauder went on to discuss many benefits which may be realized following the repack. According to Mr. Bauder, the new transmitters will use less electricity and generate less heat thus requiring less air conditioning. The new transmitters are also much smaller and will alleviate space issues at the transmitter sites.

Mr. Bauder reported that one of the greatest benefits will be the opportunity to upgrade WPNE and WHLA transmitters to be ready to transmit the next generation television standard with a simple, inexpensive software upgrade rather than new equipment.

Mr. Bauder also shared that ECB maintains six television translators around the state, and some of those will be displaced by the repack process. The FCC spectrum auction does not address funding for the repack of television translators. Mr. Bauder shared with the Board that a cell phone provider has stepped forward to fund the replacement of television transmitters for non-commercial broadcast translators affected by the repacking.

Mr. Bauder reports that ECB is currently awaiting the FCC's budget approval.

Mr. Bauder also reported that ECB and Wisconsin Public Television will be providing on-air notifications to alert viewers of the changes as well as cable companies, health care facilities and other broadcasters to ensure that viewers are aware of the changes and the need to re-scan their television tuners.

Cate Zeuske inquired about the need to notify health care facilities. Mr. Bauder explained that many healthcare facilities use radio or television frequencies for monitoring medical equipment and the ECB is required by law to inform such facilities when our transmission signal changes frequencies.

Erin Kastberg asked about the timeframe for the repack budgets to be fully reimbursed. Mr. Bauder responded that the official start date of the project was April 12<sup>th</sup> of 2017 and the FCC will repay the remainder within three years and no later than April 2020.

Malcolm Brett commented to the Board that while WHA-TV in Madison is not scheduled to be repacked, they are in the process of replacing the antenna and transmitter. Mr. Brett



acknowledged that WHA-TV and the University have benefited immensely by all the work that Steve Bauder and the ECB Engineering Division have done to prepare for the repack of ECB stations and he is grateful for their work and the cooperation of all the partners of Wisconsin public broadcasting.

There were no further questions or comments.

**AGENDA ITEM 5.** 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Wisconsin Public Broadcasting

Gene Purcell introduced Mike Crane, Wisconsin Public Radio and Kathy Bissen, Wisconsin Public Television, to present a summary of activities taking place or being planned to celebrate the 100 year anniversary of public broadcasting in Wisconsin.

Kathy Bissen presented video clips that included a portion of the dedicatory program for WHA-TV broadcast in 1954, and historical images from WHA radio. Mike Crane discussed the early history of WHA radio and explained how 1917 has been identified as the birth of public broadcasting in Wisconsin.

Following a brief review of the history of public broadcasting in Wisconsin, Ms. Bissen and Mr. Crane presented a schedule of events that are planned for the celebration of the anniversary. Mr. Crane reported that Larry Mueller of WPR hosted an anniversary event at Lambeau Field in June. Ms. Bissen announced that Paula Kerger, PBS President and CEO will be in Madison on October 5<sup>th</sup> for a donor and partner appreciation event at the Edgewater Hotel. Mr. Crane announced that WPR and WPT will be hosting an event on Saturday, October 14<sup>th</sup> at the Overture Center in Madison called “The Power of Story”. This event will be hosted by Ari Shapiro of National Public Radio with WPR’s Dr. Jonathan Overby and Anne Strainchamps, NPR founding Program Director (and former WHA staffer) Bill Siemering, Dasha Kelly Hamilton, Storyteller and The Moth Milwaukee Host and many more.

**AGENDA ITEM 6.** Financial Report

Dr. Wegenke noted that the Financial Report was distributed with the board packet in advance of today’s meeting and asked if there were any questions or comments regarding the report.

Gene Purcell noted that ECB’s budgeted to actual expenses stand at 92% through June of 2017. Mr. Purcell reported there was one additional payroll and a few utility bills yet to be paid but the agency is on track to close out the fiscal year under budget. Mr. Purcell also congratulated Marta Bechtol and Aimee Wright for their work in generating a new format for year to date reports for the Board’s review and for helping the agency track our budget with improved accuracy.



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### **AGENDA ITEM 7.** Proposed ECB meetings for 2018

Dr. Wegenke asked board members to consider the proposed 2018 meeting dates listed on today's agenda:

January 12, 2018

April 13, 2018

July 13, 2018

October 12, 2018

Dr. Wegenke asked board members to notify Gene Purcell or David Cobb if there are any potential conflicts with the proposed dates which will be formally adopted at the October meeting.

### **AGENDA ITEM 8.** Questions regarding reports or other comments from Board Members

There were no questions or comments.

### **AGENDA ITEM 9.** Adjournment

Senator Luther Olsen moved to adjourn, seconded by Erin Kastberg. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote. Dr. Wegenke announced the meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.