

Approval of Minutes from the July 14, 2017 ECB Board Meeting

Karen Schroeder moved, seconded by Senator Olsen to approve the July 14, 2017 meeting minutes. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

AGENDA ITEM 1. Report of the Board Chair

Vice Chair Jim Zylstra announced that today's meeting will focus on strategic planning. Mr. Zylstra mentioned the unprecedented pace of change in public media including in Wisconsin. Mr. Zylstra believes today's meeting is good opportunity for board members to look at best practices and weigh in on where they would like the agency to go over the next 3 – 5 years. Mr. Zylstra reiterated the importance of the strategic planning process and thanked board members for their willingness to participate in that process.

AGENDA ITEM 2. Report of the Executive Director

Mr. Zylstra 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 added that his written report included updates on the Federal Budget, the State Budget and ECB's annual financial audit and he will be happy to answer any questions related to those updates.

Mr. Purcell then reported that a reorganization plan for the UW Colleges and Extension has been proposed by UW System President Ray Cross. Mr. Purcell introduced Malcolm Brett, Director of Broadcast and Media Innovations (BAMI) at UW Colleges and Extension to share more about the plan.

Mr. Brett reported that many details are unknown but the current proposal will reassign a large portion of UW Extension to UW Madison, with BAMI moving to the UW System Administration. Mr. Brett indicated the plan will be implemented by July 1, 2018. Mr. Brett reported the reorganization as proposed should have no effect on the daily operations, budget or staffing at BAMI. Mr. Brett anticipates more details will be forthcoming soon.

Mr. Brett also announced that his retirement plans will be slightly delayed in order to fully implement the reorganization plan prior to his retirement.

Jim Zylstra inquired about the history of the BAMI at UW Colleges and Extension. Mr. Brett responded that BAMI was created in 1967 as part of the UW Colleges and Extension and previously been under the administrative oversight of UW Madison.

Eileen Littig congratulated Mr. Brett and thanked him for his many years of exemplary service. Mr. Purcell added that the Mr. Brett would be recognized by the ECB prior to his retirement in 2018.

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

AGENDA ITEM 3. Strategic Planning Update – Gene Purcell & Marta Bechtol

Gene Purcell reviewed the development of the ECB's current strategic plan and noted that board policies require that a new plan be developed every three years. Mr. Purcell indicated the current plan was scheduled to be updated two years ago, but that process was postponed until the next State budget biennium in order to address significant budget cuts at the ECB.

Mr. Purcell reported that his goal for today's meeting is to gather input from board members in order to develop a draft plan for the Board's review at the January 2018 meeting. After review and discussion at the January meeting, Mr. Purcell indicated that the current schedule calls for a final plan to be presented to the Board at the April ECB Board of Directors meeting for approval.

Mr. Purcell noted that board members have been provided a number of materials with background information regarding strategic planning. Mr. Purcell reminded board members that much of the work performed by ECB is technical in nature and done in partnership with the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents to deliver public media to Wisconsin. Mr. Purcell then directed board members to an array of maps displayed at the meeting which included coverage maps for Wisconsin Public Television, Wisconsin Public Radio (Ideas, News & Classical, and Classical networks), as well as emergency weather radio.

Mr. Purcell said he would be happy to discuss or answer any questions about specific issues related to strategic planning but due to our limited time today, he asked board members to focus on broad topics and directions related to the ECB and agency responsibilities.

Mr. Purcell introduced Marta Bechtol, ECB Deputy Director; to lead the discussion and solicit feedback from the Board.

Ms. Bechtol briefly reviewed information which was distributed prior to the meeting including performance metrics and the agency budget. Ms. Bechtol stated this information will be used to help determine ECB's priorities and measure its performance but the focus today will be to identify the strategic intent of the plan being created by this effort, and to provide direction for the strategic planning committee.

Ms. Bechtol informed the Board that a strategic planning committee has been established and is composed of Gene Purcell, Steve Bauder, Jon Miskowski, Mike Crane, Aimee Wright, and herself. Ms. Bechtol added that the committee will incorporate feedback from agency staff as well as outside stakeholders, and work to ensure that everyone who is affected by the plan has an opportunity to provide input.

Ms. Bechtol reviewed Board Policy #107 related to the development of the ECB strategic plan and the role of the Executive Director to oversee the development and implementation of the plan.

Ms. Bechtol reminded the Board that ECB's Mission Statement is dictated by state statute, and the strategic planning process will not address any changes to that statement.

Ms. Bechtol then presented the ECB Vision Statement:

“The Wisconsin Educational Communications Board is committed to ensuring that Wisconsin residents have equitable access to telecommunication services and advanced technologies in support of educational goals. This is accomplished through the activities of the Wisconsin Educational Communications Board and through collaboration with entities involved in educational and cultural initiatives whose purposes can best be served through telecommunications.”

Jim Zylstra inquired about the history of the vision statement and when it was approved by the Board of Directors. Gene Purcell responded that the current statement was developed in 2006 and approved by the Board around the same time.

Karen Schroeder asked if the ECB is meeting the objectives identified in the Vision Statement. Gene Purcell responded that yes, he believes these objectives are being met and we will discuss that in a little more detail when we look at performance metrics.

Ms. Bechtol added that a portion of the Vision Statement is based on State Statute 39.11 Section 8 as it relates to “equitable access to telecommunication services and advanced technologies in support of educational goals”. Ms. Bechtol went on to point out the coverage maps on display as evidence of the agency’s commitment to ensure equitable access.

Kurt Kiefer emphasized the importance of the phrase “equitable access” in combination with “advanced technologies” as he believes the ECB has excelled in not only developing or procuring quality content, but making it universally accessible to Wisconsin residents, including those in remote areas. Mr. Kiefer added this is an important and enduring portion of the Vision Statement.

Ms. Bechtol continued the discussion by reviewing strategic directions from the 2012 ECB Strategic Plan:

1. Strengthen the impact and reach and performance of the ECB to better serve all of the citizens of Wisconsin while recognizing and attempting to serve an increasingly diverse population.
2. Assure the responsible use of resources to carry out the work of the ECB.
3. Grow and engage public media audiences using the most effective forms of content delivery.

Several board members spoke in favor of using the existing 2012 strategic directions and discussed modifications.

Senator Luther Olsen noted the strategic directions are quite broad and questioned whether the directions were so broad that it would be challenging to complete them.

Ms. Bechtol asked the board to consider the Strategic Plan itself, and solicited input from the Board on the plan following the strategic directions.

Representative Loudenbeck suggested that the updated Strategic Plan acknowledge ECB’s commitment to leveraging all of our partnerships and understanding the agency’s role within the public broadcasting and government partnerships. Representative Loudenbeck added this will be important during the next three years as the reorganization at the UW is implemented.

Jim Zylstra asked how the agency utilizes the current plan, is it woven into the Executive Director's goals, is it shared with staff? Gene Purcell responded that the plan is incorporated into the Executive Director's annual goals and objectives. Mr. Purcell added that individual elements are shared and promoted with staff but said he could improve communicating the entire plan with staff.

Senator Olsen noted that the current plan includes broad goals and inquired about how ECB measures its success or failure to meet those goals.

Marta Bechtol discussed reference material which had been distributed prior to the meeting which included reportable metrics used to measure ECB's goals identified in the strategic plan. Ms. Bechtol highlighted improvements which have broadened the scope of ECB's services throughout the state.

Mike Crane, WPR and Jon Miskowski, WPT discussed how WPR and WPT measure listener and audience growth, as well as how public broadcasters measures cultural diversity within those audiences.

Marta Bechtol reviewed the cost of statewide delivery.

Senator Olsen inquired about the cost of statewide delivery and how much per household is derived from GPR and program revenue. Gene Purcell responded that it can vary based on distance from the network hub and population centers. Mr. Purcell added that in FY2017, 25.8% of the broadcast interconnect was paid for with GPR but that was reduced to 0% for FY2018 as 100% is paid for with program revenue.

After a brief discussion, Marta Bechtol summarized the strategic intent directions again and asked the Board if they are satisfied with the directions as they are or with changes.

Eileen Littig suggested removing "attempting" from strategic direction number one, to be replaced with "strive" and leave the remainder of the directions as is.

Representative Loudenberg reiterated the importance of recognizing the ECB's unique and distinct role within the public broadcasting partnerships and suggested that the strategic plan reflect the ECB's relationship with a re-organized UW System.

Ms. Bechtol thanked the board for their input and reported that a draft version of the strategic intent directions would be presented to the Board in January.

AGENDA ITEM 4. Financial Report

Jim Zylstra reported that quarterly financial reports were distributed with the board packets in advance of today's meeting and asked if there were any questions or comments.

There were no questions or comments.

AGENDA ITEM 5. Proposed Meeting Dates for 2018

Jim Zylstra reminded Board members of the 2018 meeting dates which had been proposed at the July meeting:

January 12, 2018

April 13, 2018

July 13, 2018

October 12, 2018

Mr. Zylstra noted there were no conflicts reported to Dr. Wegenke or Gene Purcell since the July meeting so these dates should be considered final.

AGENDA ITEM 6. Questions/Comments from Board Members

There were no additional questions or comments from board members.

AGENDA ITEM 7. Adjournment

Senator Luther Olsen moved to adjourn, seconded by Eileen Littig. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote. Dr. Wegenke announced the meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.