



Educational Communications Board

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EDUCATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS BOARD MEETING

ECB Board Room

3319 West Beltline Highway

Madison, Wisconsin

October 25, 2019

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 9:30 A.M. A roll call of Board Member attendance was taken and recorded. The complete attendance list follows:

Board Members Present: Representative Dave Considine
 David Hutchison
 Kurt Kiefer (DPI Superintendent Carolyn Stanford Taylor designee)
 Eileen Littig
 Senator Luther Olsen
 Chris Patton (DOA Secretary Joel Brennan designee)
 Rolf Wegenke, Ph.D., Chair
 Bohdan Zachary
 Jim Zylstra (WTCS President Morna Foy designee), Vice-Chair

Absent: Jose Delgado
 Ron Dunlap
 Heather LaRoi (UW System President Ray Cross designee)
 Senator Fred Risser
 Karen Schroeder
 Representative Pat Snyder



Approval of Minutes from the July 26, 2019 ECB Board Meeting

Senator Luther Olsen moved, seconded by Eileen Littig, to approve the July 26, 2019 meeting minutes. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

AGENDA ITEM 1. Report of the Board Chair

Dr. Wegenke noted that today's meeting includes a presentation related to the rebranding of Wisconsin Public Television and a preview of the newly branded "PBS Wisconsin". Dr. Wegenke commented that PBS branding is important to public television audiences in Wisconsin as there is a long history and recognition of quality media. Dr. Wegenke went on to note that rebranding does not change the fundamental values and principles of the ECB or public television but it helps tell our story more clearly.

Senator Olsen asked about ECB's role in the rebranding process. Dr. Wegenke noted ECB's role is limited to policy but as a license holder for several public television stations, the rebranding is being presented to board members today as informational before it is seen on screen in November.

There were no questions or comments regarding the Board Chair report.

AGENDA ITEM 2. Report of the Executive Director

Dr. Wegenke introduced Marta Bechtol, ECB Executive Director; and informed board members that a copy of the Executive Director's report was included in the board packet in advance of today's meeting.

Ms. Bechtol began her report by introducing Adam Hargrove who was selected to replace Steve Bauder as the Administrator of the Engineering Division (Director of Engineering). Ms. Bechtol reminded board members that Mr. Bauder retired from state service in August and Mr. Hargrove began his new position in October. Mr. Hargrove had previously served as ECB's Director of Field Engineering.

Mr. Hargrove introduced himself to the Board and shared his previous experiences in the Air Force and ECB.

Ms. Bechtol went on to announce that Glenn Guy has been promoted from a Regional Technical Manager position to the Director of Field Engineering to replace Mr. Hargrove, and an ECB position at Wisconsin Public Television (PBS Wisconsin) Audience Services has been filled.

Ms. Bechtol continued her report and reflected on how ECB's work during the last quarter is aligned with the 2019 – 2021 Strategic Plan.



In the area of Strategic Direction 1, Action Item 1, Ms. Bechtol reported that language has been restored to ECB's budget which authorizes the agency to produce educational media for K – 12 Wisconsin students. Ms. Bechtol pointed out this does not include any additional funding but she notes this is an important part of ECB's mission. Ms. Bechtol reported that capital funding has been approved in full for power increases at WPNE Green Bay and WHLA La Crosse. Ms. Bechtol reported that ECB is on the agenda for the December 2019 Building Commission meeting for final approval of these projects.

In the area of Strategic Direction 1, Action Item 4, Ms. Bechtol highlighted Jon Miskowski's report for Wisconsin Public Television (PBS Wisconsin) which includes a description of the WPT Education's "Click Teacher Summer Camp," a professional development program related to teaching video production and journalism.

In the area of Strategic Direction 2, "Responsible Use of Resources...," Ms. Bechtol highlighted Adam Hargrove's report for the Engineering Division which includes descriptions of the Engineering Division's power upgrades at WPNE and WHLA and a joint project between ECB and WPR staff to procure upgraded audio processing equipment for all WPR stations.

In the area of Strategic Direction 3, "Grow and engage public media audiences using the most effective forms of content delivery," Ms. Bechtol announced that contracts have been finalized with YouTube TV to carry a livestream of Wisconsin Public Television (PBS Wisconsin) starting in December 2019. In the area of Strategic Direction 3, Action Item 1, Ms. Bechtol reported that ECB staff who attended the WBA Fall Broadcaster Clinic in Madison participated in discussions related to the potential deployment of ATSC 3.0 (next generation TV standard) and are better prepared to guide ECB's transition should the new standard be adopted.

Senator Luther Olsen asked Ms. Bechtol to elaborate about Wisconsin Public Television (PBS Wisconsin) streaming on YouTube. Ms. Bechtol explained that YouTube TV is a streaming TV subscription service which will deliver a livestream of PBS Wisconsin for subscribers based in Wisconsin. Ms. Bechtol noted that YouTube TV is a subscription service different than the YouTube website. Ms. Bechtol added that PBS negotiated a contract with YouTube TV and individual member stations were given the option to participate.

Eileen Littig complimented Ms. Bechtol's report and expressed that she was grateful for the restoration of statutory language to authorize ECB to produce educational media for K – 12 Wisconsin students.

Kurt Kiefer noted that he has heard informal feedback regarding the WPT Education professional development activities for educators on which Ms. Bechtol reported and that feedback has been very positive.

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



AGENDA ITEM 3. Rural Broadband Exploration Update

Marta Bechtol provided an update to the Board regarding the potential use of ECB assets and TV whitespace to help bring wireless broadband to rural areas. This topic was an agenda item at the July 2019 ECB meeting. Ms. Bechtol reminded the Board that Strategic Direction 2, Action Item 5 instructs the agency to “Facilitate the maximization of the state’s communications infrastructure by assisting with broadband deployment when possible.”

Ms. Bechtol reported that she and ECB staff have been active during the last three months meeting with staff from the Public Service Commission (PSC), as well as cell phone and broadband internet providers. Ms. Bechtol reported that most cell phone providers have no immediate interest to explore the use of TV whitespace for wireless broadband. Ms. Bechtol reported that while meeting with the PSC, she was introduced to staff from Astrea Broadband who are working with Microsoft to explore the potential utilization of TV whitespace in northern Wisconsin. Ms. Bechtol also reported that she and Adam Hargrove have met with representatives of the University of Northern Michigan who successfully implemented an LTE network using EBS licenses.

Ms. Bechtol went on to report that she was recently a presenter at a WiscNet “Building Smarter Communities” conference in Eau Claire to discuss the potential use of TV whitespace, and she was able to connect with many stakeholders involved with networking services in educational settings.

Following Ms. Bechtol’s comments, Kurt Kiefer commented on the importance of bridging the divide for rural students without access to broadband internet, which he believes is between 15 – 20% of Wisconsin households. Mr. Kiefer complimented Ms. Bechtol’s participation at the WiscNet conference and noted that partnerships between rural communities, public agencies and internet providers have been successful in expanding access to broadband internet in rural areas.

Jim Zylstra inquired about Mr. Kiefer’s comment regarding 15 – 20% of Wisconsin households without access to broadband internet, and asked if that figure represented households without physical access as well as households that could not afford access. Mr. Kiefer responded that current data doesn’t delineate the difference but DPI is working to refine the data in more detail.

Several board members discussed the lack of broadband internet options at their own residences and home communities.

There were no additional questions or comments from board members.



AGENDA ITEM 4. Presentation: Wisconsin Public Television Rebrand, Amber Samdahl

Dr. Wegenke introduced Jon Miskowski, Director, Wisconsin Public Television (PBS Wisconsin). Mr. Miskowski discussed the rebranding of Wisconsin Public Television which will be identified as “PBS Wisconsin” starting in November. According to Mr. Miskowski, PBS is one of the most recognized and trusted brand names related to educational programming and incorporating “PBS” into the name for public television in Wisconsin has been discussed for many years. Mr. Miskowski cited a 2017 study from IBM that identified PBS amongst the 20 most recognized brand names in the country, and is the number one recognized brand related to educational media. Mr. Miskowski introduced Amber Samdahl, Creative Director, who discussed the new branding and displayed examples for the Board.

Ms. Samdahl discussed how PBS chose the new design elements. According to Ms. Samdahl, several factors were considered including establishing consistent designs across multiple media platforms, brand recognition strategies used by comparable media companies, and incorporating signature colors into the design which will be reflected on television graphics and in print and web-based media related to PBS Wisconsin.

Ms. Samdahl also discussed how the PBS shield and associated font were updated. While the changes were slight, Ms. Samdahl indicated the updated graphic and font style will be easier to read on mobile devices and computer screens.

Ms. Samdahl reviewed the steps her staff have taken to prepare for the rebranding which included new television graphics, website redesigns and over 700 media assets that will include PBS Wisconsin logos. Ms. Samdahl added that staff will be utilizing “pbswisconsin.org” email addresses starting on November 4th.

Ms. Samdahl went on to display multiple examples of PBS Wisconsin television graphics as well as redesigned webpages.

Following Ms. Samdahl’s presentation, several board members shared positive comments regarding the new logo and PBS Wisconsin branding. Marta Bechtol voiced that an added benefit is that PBS Wisconsin will be able to utilize premade graphic art and templates developed by PBS, allowing PBS Wisconsin staff to work on local projects.

There were no further questions or comments.

AGENDA ITEM 5. Presentation: “Kindness” Curriculum – Wisconsin Public Television Education Staff & Center for Healthy Minds Staff

Jon Miskowski introduced Megan Monday and Ryan Hendricks from the WPT Education (PBS Wisconsin Education), and Chad McGehee from the University of Wisconsin Madison Center for Healthy Minds to introduce “Kindness in the Classroom,” a curriculum and lesson plan designed



to help pre-K and kindergarten students understand their emotions, self-regulate, and care for themselves and others.

Mr. McGehee described the collaboration which took place between the Center for Healthy Minds and the Wisconsin Public Television Education Unit. The collaboration led to the development of a web-based resource for classrooms with accompanying lesson plans and activities. The web-based resources are part of the WPT Education (PBS Wisconsin Education) website: <https://pbswisconsineducation.org/kindness>

Ms. Monday reviewed how her staff met with experts from the Center for Healthy Minds and educators to identify tools teachers could utilize to bring a mindfulness curriculum into the classroom. Ms. Monday reported that a five-part video series was produced which includes an introductory video; two videos related to the core foundational concepts of the mindfulness curriculum; a practice exercise video; and a video with “tips and tricks” for educators.

Ms. Monday displayed the “Kindness in the Classroom” website and played one of the video lessons for the Board followed by a brief mindfulness breathing exercise led by Mr. McGehee.

AGENDA ITEM 6. ECB FY19 Budget Performance Report, ECB Deputy Director Pete Dally

Marta Bechtol reminded the Board that the agency would soon be audited for the most recent fiscal year and this was a good time to look at the overall performance. Ms. Bechtol introduced ECB Deputy Director Pete Dally to report on the agency’s FY19 budget performance.

Mr. Dally complimented the work of the ECB managers and Finance office in the development and administration of the overall FY19 budget. Mr. Dally added that implementation of the STAR Financial System has greatly improved the agency’s ability to efficiently track the budget.

Mr. Dally reported on the FY19 budget which was adopted in July 2018. At the close of the fiscal year, Mr. Dally reported that budgeted and actual expenditures closely matched, with final expenditures slightly less than what was budgeted.

Mr. Dally noted that a couple of expense categories were below budget including salaries/benefits, and utilities. Mr. Dally explained that a few positions were vacant for a long period but those positions have been filled and expenditures will be closer to the budget for FY20. Mr. Dally explained that utility expenditures were down for FY19 as a result of energy efficiencies implemented at transmitter sites.

Marta Bechtol added that as a result of position reallocations used to build the Broadcast IT unit, as well as increases in base salary ranges for new hires, she expects expenditures for salary and benefits to meet or exceed what has been budgeted for FY20.



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Mr. Dally reviewed GPR spending which includes salary and fringe benefits and debt service. Mr. Dally explained that debt service was mostly attributed to capital funding projects such as transmitter equipment, power upgrades, Operations Center equipment and similar projects which go through the Building Commission. Mr. Dally reported ECB's total GPR expenditure for FY19 was \$6,573,829.

Mr. Dally went on to review Program Revenue expenditures which totaled \$11,438,495 in FY19. Mr. Dally reviewed individual expense categories and attributed the largest expense as media memberships such as PBS and NPR dues.

Mr. Dally noted that ECB total expenditures for FY19 were \$18,012,324 while the agency's budget for that period was \$19,937,953. Mr. Dally noted that budget forecasts were highly accurate and most of the savings can be attributed to vacancies and energy efficiencies.

Dave Hutchison asked for further explanation about the membership dues. Marta Bechtol responded that this figure includes membership fees such as PBS and NPR and related programming fees for licensed content. Ms. Bechtol added these expenditures are funded through corporate underwriting and individual pledges.

There were no further questions or comments.

AGENDA ITEM 7. Financial Reports

Dr. Wegenke noted that quarterly financial reports were included in the board packets distributed in advance of today's meeting and asked if there were any questions from board members regarding the reports.

There were no questions or comments regarding the Finance Reports.



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AGENDA ITEM 8. Proposed Meeting Dates for 2020

Dr. Wegenke announced there were no conflicts regarding the proposed 2020 meeting dates reported to him. After a brief discussion, the Board agreed on the following meeting dates for 2020:

Friday, January 31

Friday, April 24

Friday, July 17

Friday, October 16

There were no questions or comments from Board members.

AGENDA ITEM 9. Questions/Comments from Board members

There were no additional comments from board members.

AGENDA ITEM 10. Adjournment

Senator Luther Olsen moved, seconded by Jim Zylstra to adjourn. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote. Dr. Wegenke announced the meeting adjourned at 11:10 A.M.