



EDUCATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS BOARD MEETING

July 22, 2022

9:30 A.M.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Marta Bechtol, Executive Director

Thank you, Dr. Wegenke!

Rolf Wegenke was first appointed to the Educational Communications Board in 1992 at a colorful time in the agency's history. He cares deeply about public broadcasting which is evidenced by his stewardship of the board. His experience, wisdom and gentle approach transformed the Board of Directors into an efficient, helpful, and positive leadership body that enables and supports the good work of the organization. Both the agency and the Partnership are in strong positions right now, with great credit to Dr. Wegenke and his 30 years of service to the board.

Dr. Wegenke has always been an advocate for the staff. He is kind, gracious and supportive of our talented professionals. He appreciates the behind-the-scenes work we do here. I am personally grateful for Dr. Wegenke's guidance over the last 4 years. He has fostered my growth into this role by offering keen perspectives and practical solutions when I needed them most. Although he certainly deserves his happy retirement, he will be greatly missed by the ECB – from the finance team, to operations center, to the field technicians – but especially by me.

Congratulations, Heather Reese!

Heather Reese has been appointed the permanent director of Wisconsin Public Media at UW-Madison, and I couldn't be happier! Heather has demonstrated her mettle over the course of the past year and proven to be the most capable and collaborative of colleagues. I am thrilled to be able to continue the work we've already taken on together and look forward to this new era for the Partnership.

Federal Budget Update

The House Appropriations Committee has completed its FY23 appropriations proposals, which meet all of CPB's requests and include an increase for Ready for Learn:

- \$565 million for CPB in FY 2025
- \$60 million for Interconnection
- \$32.5 million for Ready to Learn (an increase of \$2M over CPB's request)
- \$40 million for the Next Generation Resilient Alert and Warning System

The proposed markups will be debated in the House before heading to the Senate.



The federal FY 2023 budget year ends at the end of September. Federal funding comprises only 10% of the agency's operating budget, but it provides critical leverage for our fundraising efforts and makes it possible for us to equitably serve the most rural parts of the state.

Advocacy

For the first time ever, ECB will be holding "Open Houses" at select tower sites in late summer/early autumn. Invitations are being sent to all Wisconsin legislators and their staff members, all ECB Board members, and the Friends of Wisconsin Public Television and the Wisconsin Public Radio Association. Please join us for one of the Open Houses if you are able!

Wisconsin Broadcasters Hall of Fame: Gene Purcell

Former ECB Executive Director Gene Purcell was inducted into the [Wisconsin Broadcasters Hall of Fame](#) during the summer conference of the Wisconsin Broadcasters Association on June 23, 2022. Along with Gene's wife and family, many current and former ECB and WPM employees were on hand to celebrate this significant event.

A link to the tribute video that debuted at the conference is [HERE](#). This video will be archived in the Wisconsin Broadcasting Museum's online library and in the physical exhibit permanently housed at the Milwaukee Hilton City Center.

A small agency-only remembrance is scheduled over the lunch hour on Wednesday, July 27, the anniversary of the traumatic event at our building. We will place a memorial marker near the flagpole in front of the building along with some transplanted flowers from Ruth's garden.

Milwaukee PBS Update

Bohdan Zachary, Vice President and General Manager of Milwaukee PBS, will be stepping away in October to return to his home in California. In addition to his service on the ECB Board, Bohdan has been a true partner in strengthening the relationship between Milwaukee PBS, PBS Wisconsin and the ECB. He's become a good friend and I will miss him very much. Damir Braovac, Administrative Manager of Milwaukee PBS, will serve as interim GM. ECB will continue working with Dan through the the final stages of completing the master control.

Our Operations Center staff and Milwaukee PBS engineers continue to work together to prepare for the upcoming cutover of services. Items of note:

- Space renovation plans have been finalized with DOA; the project will begin in late summer.
- All technical equipment has been ordered.
- 2.0 FTE new master control operator positions were approved by Joint Finance in late June and recruitment is underway.

We are on schedule for a on-time implementation and appreciate the Board's assistance in keeping this project moving forward.



Broadband Access

On July 12, [Governor Evers announced](#) that the [Governor's Task Force for Broadband Access](#) has released its [2022 report](#). The focus of this year's report is to sustain the momentum of progress made over the last year. The recommendations take an "all hands" approach to supporting broadband development and adoption through funding, policy, community and technical assistance. It has been a privilege to serve on the Task Force and to advocate for broadband expansion on behalf of public and commercial broadcasters.

Equity & Inclusion

The State of Wisconsin Bureau of Equity and Inclusion (BEI) conducted a monitoring audit of ECB in early June to review agency progress with our [Equity and Inclusion Plan](#). The audit went very smoothly, thanks to Jennifer Dargan's excellent management and preparation. BEI determined that the agency is on track with our Equity and Inclusion Plan goals. A formal report will be issued later this summer which we will share with the board.

Our Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee members recently completed their six-month term and have handed off the reigns to three new committee members. A transition meeting was held with both outgoing and incoming teams to discuss E&I plan progress and share updates on completed and remaining tasks. I am grateful for the great work accomplished by the outgoing committee members and look forward to the next six months with the new volunteers.

This summer we are hosting an intern in our Broadcast I.T. unit as part of the State of Wisconsin Student Diversity Internship Program. ECB hasn't utilized interns in about 15 years, and it is the first time we've participated in the state's program. We will be evaluating this experience and other opportunities for what may best serve aspiring broadcast professionals and ECB. We look forward to learning more from our intern and BIT staff at the end of the summer.

Department of Administration Upgrades

We are pleased to see the Department of Administration Division of Facilities making improvements to the Wisconsin Public Broadcasting Center this summer. Common areas on each floor are getting fresh paint and flooring; the lunchroom on the lower level is being cleaned and updated. ECB and other building tenants are working with Facilities to establish an identifiable presence in the lobby as you enter the building. We are grateful for the opportunity to offer input on the design. Shared spaces in this building have not received any attention since before I started at ECB in 2004. We are excited to see a renewed investment in our work environment!