

**EDUCATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS BOARD
QUARTERLY MEETING
ECB Board Room
3319 West Beltline Highway
Madison, WI
Remote attendance by Microsoft Teams or phone
April 19, 2024
9:30 A.M.**

MINUTES

Roll Call and Introductions

Board Chair Jim Zylstra called the meeting of the Educational Communications Board (ECB) to order at 9:32am. A roll call was taken and a quorum was verified. A complete attendance list follows:

Board Members Present:

- Jim Zylstra, Chair
- Paul Hammer
- Dr. Darrell Williams
- Anne Chapman
- Alyssa Kenney
- Leah Lechleiter-Luke
- Dr. Eric Fulcomer
- Senator Chris Larson
- Representative Patrick Snyder
- Representative David Considine
- Deborah Hamlett
- Amy Traynor

Absent:

- Heather LaRoi
- Anne Chapman

Approval of Minutes from the January 19, 2024 ECB Quarterly Board Meeting and the March 21, 2024 ECB/WPRA Joint Meeting

Paul Hammer moved, seconded by Rep. Snyder, to approve the January 19, 2024, and March 21, 2024 meeting minutes. Board Chair Jim Zylstra and Alyssa Kenney abstained from approving the March 21, 2024 minutes due to absence. The motion carried.

AGENDA ITEM 1. Report of the Board Chair – *Jim Zylstra*

Board Chair Jim Zylstra informed the Board that WPR optimization announcements went out last week. He presented the brochure he'd received in the mail and complimented the details.

Mr. Zylstra notified the Board that member Leah Luke has been reappointed by the governor for a second term, running through May of 2028.

He then noted that the American Public Television Stations (APTS) has a Champion of Public Broadcasting Award which they bestow on a state or federal leader annually. This year that award was given to Senator Tammy Baldwin from Wisconsin.

Mr. Zylstra concluded his report informing the Board that on June 13th, the new radio signal in Rice Lake (WEPP 90.7 FM) will go live with an event honoring Gene Purcell, as the call sign was assigned in his memory.

There were no other questions or comments from board members.

AGENDA ITEM 2. Report of the Executive Director – *Marta Bechtol*

Executive Director Marta Bechtol informed the board that Federal Advocacy Day was held in Washington D.C. in February, and she attended alongside WPM Executive Director Heather Reese, ECB and WPRA Board member Roy Christiansen, and Reed Hall from the Friends of PBS Wisconsin board.

Ms. Bechtol continued, stating they were able to visit the offices of the entire federal delegation from Wisconsin and were kindly received. They were also able to have dinner with ECB's FCC legal counsel, which was a privilege.

Ms. Bechtol moved on to state advocacy, which was held at the Capitol just two days before this Board meeting. Approximately 30 volunteer advocates made 97 visits with legislative offices, an exceptionally high number compared to previous years. As this is an off-budget year, the meetings were focused on thanking the legislators for their support of the biennial budget that enables the services. Feedback from these visits was generally positive. The timing also allowed for radio optimization messaging to have been delivered ahead of us, allowing for increased conversation and awareness.

Ms. Bechtol moved on saying that WPR's changes have been getting good coverage by state and local journals and on television stations. She noted that Sarah Ashworth, Director of WPR, will be making regional visits to hold audience listening sessions and turned the floor over to Ms. Ashworth for comment.

Ms. Ashworth informed the Board that regional visits would begin the next week, starting in Appleton, moving on to Green Bay and then Madison. She noted that her tour will continue through the middle of May. She appreciated Mr. Zylstra's comment about the mailers and stated that an influx of comments had come in over the last weekend. Ms. Ashworth stated that responses have been a mix of critical thoughts and questions as well as notes of appreciation for the realignment of services and the commitment to new local programming.

Ms. Ashworth said the majority of criticism has come from the Milwaukee area, where WPR is doing a complete format change from The Ideas Network to WPR Music. Listeners in that region have been informed about the potential to reach the signal from Kenosha, that streaming is available, and that local and NPR newscasts will still be played at the top of the hour on the Music network, and that WPR News can also be found on HD2. Ms. Ashworth added that WUWM already brings *The Morning Edition* and *All Things Considered* to that area. She expects to see another bump in comments on May 20, when the changes go live.

Representative Snyder asked if she'd be visiting his district in Wausau, which Ms. Ashworth confirmed she would in the coming weeks.

There were no other questions or comments from board members.

AGENDA ITEM 3. Action: Adoption of FY24-27 Strategic Plan – *Marta Bechtol*

Executive Director Marta Bechtol reminded the Board that the draft of the FY24-27 Strategic Plan was presented at the January 19 meeting. She noted that outside of typos and grammatical rearrangements, no significant changes have been made to the document since. For ECB to move forward on goals and actions, this document must be formally finalized.

Board member Alyssa Kenny noted her appreciation for the process of this plan, going from draft to final with time in between for the Board to carefully put thought into reading and suggesting edits. She recommended following this approach going forward.

Alyssa Kenney moved for approval, seconded by Rep. Snyder. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

AGENDA ITEM 4. Action: Recommendations for Board policy updates regarding WPR – *Marta Bechtol*

Executive Director Marta Bechtol pointed to the markup of Board Policy 313 that had been sent to Board members ahead of the meeting. Ms. Bechtol noted that the current policy designates three radio networks: *NPR News and Classical Music*, *The Ideas Network*, and the *24-Hour Classical Music* service. This policy must be realigned to match WPR's reconfiguration from three to two networks and designating them as *WPR News* and *WPR Music*.

Alyssa Kenney moved for approval, seconded by Paul Hammer. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

AGENDA ITEM 5. Information: Staff Survey Summary – *Jennifer Dargan, Deputy Director*

Deputy Director Jennifer Dargan presented the results from the 2024 ECB Employee Engagement Survey. Ms. Dargan stated that 35 out of 54 employees responded, and like the 2023 results, the top three reasons for working at ECB were the mission, colleagues, and benefits.

Ms. Dargan explained that the questions are generally kept consistent for comparison and benchmarking from year to year. The response choices for each question are on a five-point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). On average, responses fell between a 4 (agree) and a 5 (strongly agree).

Ms. Dargan said a new question was added this year regarding training and resources. She noted that ECB executive leadership encourages employees to participate in training and professional development to ensure they have the skills and resources needed to do their jobs.

The remaining questions centered around colleague interaction, work culture, supervisor and executive leadership communication, equity and inclusion, and the overall perception of the agency. The general perception question included a scale from 1 (the agency is struggling) to 10 (the agency is running smoothly). The average of the responses was 8.9.

Board Chair Jim Zylstra asked what the takeaway is, and what is done with the results going forward. Ms. Dargan said when someone has a criticism or suggestion and has left their name, leadership follows up to talk through it and problem solve together. If there are specific training requests, department heads take them into account when planning agendas for future division meetings. Sometimes issues are specific to a work unit, so they are responded to at that level. Ms. Dargan added that these results have been shared at a recent all-staff meeting.

Mr. Zylstra remarked that the results seem to indicate that for most ECB employees, this isn't a job – it's something they want to do and are passionate about the mission.

Executive Director Marta Bechtol mentioned that in last year's survey there had been some comments about managerial training, so leadership initiated a series of discussions with current supervisors about being a leader and implementing strategies within their teams. She noted that there had been a slight uptick in the ratings given regarding interactions with their supervisors.

There were no other questions or comments from the board.

AGENDA ITEM 6. Information: Q3 Financial Report – *Aimee Wright, Finance Director*

Director of Finance Aimee Wright presented the ECB budget fiscal year to date through March. She noted at the end of March, agency revenue was at 65% total budget but

that some large receipts have since come in. Expenses are tracking at 71%, also appropriate for this time of year.

The agency should be on track for budget through the final quarter of the fiscal year.

There were no other questions or comments from the board.

AGENDA ITEM 7. Evaluation of the Executive Director

The board moved into closed session, pursuant to s. 19.85(1)(c) and (e) Wis. Stats., for the annual performance evaluation of the Executive Director.

AGENDA ITEM 8. Adjournment

The board reconvened in open session at which point Representative Snyder moved, seconded by Dr. Fulcomer to adjourn. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Jim Zylstra announced the meeting adjourned at 10:27am.