

EDUCATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS BOARD QUARTERLY MEETING

ECB Board Room

3319 West Beltline Highway

Madison, WI

Remote attendance by Microsoft Teams or phone

April 11, 2025

9:30 a.m.

MINUTES

Board Chair Kenney Called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m. Roll Call was taken.

Board members present:

Alyssa Kenney
Anne Hanson
Darrell Williams
Chris Patton
Paul Hammer
Anne Chapman
Leah Lechleiter-Luke
Eric Fulcomer
Sen. Romaine Quinn
Sen. Chris Larson
Rep. Patrick Snyder
Rep. Ryan Clancy
Janet Botz
Deborah Hamlett

Board members absent:

Amy Traynor
Roy Christianson

MINUTES APPROVAL: Sen. Larson made a motion to approve the January 17, 2025 minutes with the edits below. Anne Hanson seconded the motion.

- Agenda Item 3 - In the 2nd sentence, Leah is misspelled as Leak.
- Agenda Item 6 (p. 7), last paragraph, 2nd sentence - delete the word 'don't.'

The motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 1. Report of the Board Chair – *Alyssa Kenney*

A plaque was presented to Anne Chapman for her service at her final meeting as a public board member. Members were reminded to complete their Statement of Economic Interests with the Ethics Commission by April 30, 2025.

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

With the departure of ECB's executive staff assistant, Marta Bechtol has reviewed the requirements for State Open Meetings Law and determined that this board's minutes are much more extensive than required, leading to a lot of extra work for agency staff. Alyssa Kenney suggested that bullet points of informational item discussion points should be included in minutes, but full informational presentations are not required.

Chris Patton asked Marta Bechtol about the impact of shifting humanities funding for ECB. Marta Bechtol noted that ECB does not work directly with Wisconsin Humanities, and passed the question to Jordan Siegler, Executive Director of Wisconsin Public Media. He responded that a small amount of money for the Wisconsin Life project may be affected. Jordan also noted that the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's (CPB) Ready to Learn (RtL) grant funding flows through the Department of Education and is now at risk. WPM is still committed to doing this work, so it may need to be funded in other ways.

Marta Bechtol explained that ECB is currently affected by a hold-up in funding from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). ECB's normal 5-year contract for maintenance of the National Weather Service (NWS) transmission sites is up for renewal. Due to staff reductions at NOAA, there are few people who can review contracts and there is now a backlog. ECB has been told to pause routine maintenance of federal NWS sites until the review takes place and the contract is reissued. ECB remains in communication with NOAA staff while we await more information.

AGENDA ITEM 3. Action: Election of Foundation Trustees [Wis. Stats. 39.12(4)]

Leah Luke nominated Rep. Snyder for the foundation's legislator seat previously filled by Rep. Dave Considine. The nomination was accepted, and the vote was unanimous. Leah nominated Anne Hanson for the seat vacated by Jim Zylstra's retirement. The nomination was accepted, and the vote was unanimous.

AGENDA ITEM 4. Information: Q3 financial report – *Aimee Wright, Director of Finance*

The Q3 financial report is on target for this point in the fiscal year. Alyssa Kenney asked if anyone has tried to renegotiate contracts given the tariffs. Aimee Wright replied in the negative. Alyssa Kenney asked if the recent staff retirements have had a financial impact on the agency. Marta Bechtol replied that retirements do impact the budget, but to the degree we are aware of upcoming departures, we plan for those figures in our annual budget and are prepared to absorb the impacts both fiscally and in human resources.

AGENDA ITEM 5. Information: "ECB – Protect, Educate, Connect" Message

- Protect – Wisconsin's Emergency Alert Plan – *Adam Hargrove, Dir. of Engineering*

Eric Fulcomer asked how many emergency alerts there had been in the last year. Adam Hargrove said over 6000 weather & AMBER alerts, most of which are weather related. Jan Botz asked if ECB has a connection with The Coast Guard. Adam Hargrove answered that ECB does not directly, for emergency alerts, but ECB does partner with them on tower space. Sen. Larson asked which entities could send out alerts. Adam Hargrove said local law enforcement, Wisconsin Emergency Management, the National Weather Service, County level emergency management, and the Wisconsin Department of Justice.

- Connect & educate – America 250 – *Jason Smith, Administrative Project Manager Outreach Manager and Megan Monday, Director of Education, PBS Wisconsin*

Jason Smith promised we'd send the presentation afterwards. There were no follow-up questions.

- Connect – Statewide engagement – *Kealey Bultena, Associate Director WPR*

Chris Patton asked about what's on the horizon for WPR and PBS Wisconsin. Kealey Bultena responded that there will be increased partnership with PBS Wisconsin, recognizing that audiences are across many platforms. 2024 was a big year with realigning WPR's networks; now it's time for analysis and a change in strategy to continue to serve audiences at higher and higher levels. Sarah Ashworth, WPR Director, brought up a report titled "Researching Unmet Needs" report and talked about how WPR can use the specific Wisconsin data to improve local storytelling and local community connections to reach across the state even more. The data from that report said audiences want more environmental coverage when developing new projects.

Megan Monday added that there are two collections in development in the PBS Wisconsin Education unit: one on climate, the other on writing and arts integration. Jon Miskowski, PBS Wisconsin Director, said "Hometown Stories: Madison" is in development. There is collaboration with the Ho Chunk in Madison. Jason added that they continually measure the impact of partnerships and collaborations.

Leah Luke submitted to the meeting chat: *"I would like to thank PBS WI Education for allowing Mia Forslund to present at our recent Educators Rising (student organization which supports high school students considering a career in education) conference. She facilitated three breakout sessions in which she shared materials with Wisconsin's future teachers. 2nd year. Hoping she will return again next year."*

AGENDA ITEM 6. Closed Session: Evaluation of the Executive Director.

Eric Fulcomer moved that the board moves into closed session. Leah Luke seconded. The nomination passed unanimously with a quorum present.

AGENDA ITEM 7. Adjournment:

The board reconvened in open session and the meeting was adjourned.