



WPSU Board of Representatives Meeting Notes
May 20, 2020
via Zoom Conference

Board Members Present:

Tim Asinger
Ilona Ballreich
Kate Bennett Truitt
Sherry DelGrosso
Amy Frank
Kelly Hastings
Jennifer Judd
John Lacny
Vince Mannino

Kevin Mead
Gary Miller
Joseph Nairn
Jennifer Neely
Greg Petersen
John Pozza
Sara Songer
Melinda Stearns

Staff Members Present:

Don Bedell
Rob Butler
Michele Demaree
Carolyn Donaldson
Tamra Fatemi
Jeff Hughes
Tracey Huston
Toni Irvin

Mindy McMahan
Cece Merkel
Laura Miller
Chrissy Moyer
Jessica Peters
Isabel Reinert
Cheraine Stanford
Tom Wilson

Welcome

Greg Petersen called the meeting to order, welcomed new board member, Amy Frank, announced two board resignations (Carline and Roland Crevecoeur) and outlined the agenda.

- Approval of February meeting minutes
 - A motion was made (Gary) and seconded (John) to approve the February 18, 2020 meeting notes as presented.
 - The motion passed unanimously.
- GM Remarks - Isabel Reinert
 - With COVID-19 reaching our area and sending us all to work from home in mid-March, I am so proud, amazed and humbled by how quickly and nimbly our employees were able to make the transition. They remain positive, resilient and flexible to everything that has been thrown on their plates.
 - WPSU have remained positive in this COVID-19 crisis
 - Core broadcast operations have remained up and running smoothly
 - Increased our radio reporting efforts
 - Spun up educational initiatives

- Learned production methods for virtual events supporting our local broadcast productions and many University clients in their efforts to keep education moving forward and everyone informed.
- We have received from the 1st Federal stimulus package, or CARES Act, \$372K, as our share for TV and FM of the public media relief funding. We also are slated to received \$142K from Pa Department of Education for work we have done to serve our educators, students and families across our coverage area. This is 1/7th of \$1M rec'd across the PA public media stations with whom we have coordinated our efforts and continue to do so.
- On May 5th we premiered our Speaking Grief TV documentary as part of this multi-faceted project that we shared at our meeting at SCEC. This documentary is distributed by APT across the US, with more than 140 stations choosing to carry the TV documentary.
- Congratulations to Tim Asinger – for winning Bradford Area Chamber of Commerce’s Community & Spirit Award – to an individual or organization that has made a significant, positive impact in the Bradford area through volunteer, civic, religious, cultural and/or business activities.
- Here are some examples of what we have been working on:
 - As I mentioned, I am very proud of our radio team who has created 90 news features regarding COVID-19, along with 5 episodes of Take Note, 2 REACH podcast episodes, and 4 Health Minute episodes. We have also aired 7 new episodes for Democracy Works, looking at the pandemic from many angles.
 - Just as school districts were announcing they would be closing, WITF in Harrisburg, lead the Pennsylvania public television stations to form a partnership with the PA Department of Education to use the near universal delivery of public TV to better meet the needs of preschool through 12th grade students. The result was a project coalescing around the name Learning at Home. We increased our daily hours of educational programming, mapped those programs by grade level and subject matter in color coded guides and provide coordinated activities for many programs. Each Saturday, parents receive a newsletter with the new schedule and links to those activities. This was very important for us to do to address the lack of broadband connectivity across the commonwealth. This is what public television is all about.
 - One of the challenges we were concerned with at the beginning of the stay-at-home mandate was how we could think differently to produce live television productions. Conversations Live had already been scheduled for April 30, so we used this as our pilot to see how we could coordinate remote productions. We had a very small crew of technicians at the studio, while the producer directors worked from home to answer and route the phone calls and direct the production. In that first episode, Get Your Garden On, I think we were quite successful with many calls and email questions fielded by our host Anne Danahy and answered by Penn State horticultural experts. You will also see here an example of the protocols mandates by Governor Wolfe being implemented with the wearing of masks by our employees who need to come into the office to do their jobs to make our operations possible.

content and the tone of our messaging and everything, we were doing related to WPSU.

- In the last several months WPSU has become even more core to our University and our communities. (1) Access to our timely and factual relevant information (2) Importance we have played in contributing to the University in order to distribute messages to large audiences. One of the key pieces of that is our staff really had to stretch and grow and develop and be flexible and creative in this time. I am very grateful to the WPSU team, especially the essential staff, IT and technical service staff who allowed us to pivot. The production and creative services teams, and leadership staff who are making many decisions.
- Dr. Susan McHale (Social Science Research Institute) and Kevin Black (Chief Academic Officer, College of Medicine) asked me to present to the University Health Sciences Council on WPSU and what they are doing in terms of pivoting and delivering content that is trusted, evidence-based content. I sit on this council and feel it is one of my most important appointments because of the opportunity to engage with all of Deans, the Senior VP for Research and all the interdisciplinary institute leaders and hear what they are doing and think about ways Outreach can engage to transfer that knowledge to an audience that is much more broad and diverse than a scientific audience. That is where the money for the opioid project came from and other projects. That group is looking on things like COVID in large groups, mutation detection by 2-D spectroscopy but they wanted to pause and hear about WPSU. I got to tell them how we are impacting from working with Science in the Schools, Science-U, Learning at Home, etc. I ended that presentation with the message that PBS is #1 most trusted brand for the 17th year in a row. When you take that distribution channel and you put that on top of a great research university that has all of the assets that we have in a University Licensee, you have a powerful antidote for sharing evidence based content that can be trusted and grounded in great disciplined science. We hope that they use that to consider the ways we can use our creative expertise to deliver to those audiences in the future.
- This team is truly remarkable, Town Halls with 30,000 viewers to a virtual commencement with 121 countries tuned in to a national documentary on Grief in 140 media markets, to a Learning at Home initiative for the Secretary of Education. Still while reporting the news, still producing a call-in gardening show because it's that time of year. Also, a new initiative called Conversation with the Class of 2024 to help with our yield rate that we are concerned with. In its first episode there were 4,000 logged on to learn about their Penn State experience and what that might look like in the fall. We are still did Board of Trustee streaming, engaging the community with things like Metronome at Home and it has been truly remarkable what has happened with WPSU in this time that they have been needed and so essential to everyone, the University, the Community and to each of us. Thank you all, staff and board. You all help us to find our focus, help to understand our mission and help us to foster that creative spirit and innovation that has enabled us to

position ourselves today and in the future for Penn State and the communities we serve here and across the country. Stay safe and well.

- Financial Review – Michele Demaree
 - The fiscal year 19/20 budget, as of March 31, 2020, was presented. The fiscal year ends June 30.
 - INCOME
 - On track regarding projected federal and state income. We did receive additional funding from the CARES Act. This will help close the gap (as intended by this stimulus bill). We believe we will receive additional funding from the State for the Learning at Home Initiative but do not know when that will arrive.
 - Some productions were cancelled due to COVID-19 however with the additional Livestream productions since, we should be on track for production income.
 - Development income has been impacted due to cancelled pledge drives and lack of ability to solicit underwriting in person, however we are trying to come up with alternative ways to gain development dollars.
 - EXPENSES
 - Most expenses will come in close to the projected numbers
 - Some initiatives that will benefit us include:
 - New revenue generating – hope to add a tenant to our tower @\$80,000/year
 - New transmitter may cut power bills significantly

Board Portal UPDATES

Carolyn Donaldson demonstrated this ONE STOP SHOP and how to access the board portal from WPSU's website and the various recent updates to this portal.

Committee Reports

The four committees met prior to this meeting via Zoom and each gave a short report out of their meeting.

- Community Outreach – Laura Miller – focus on presence in counties outside of Centre County. See committee report out presentation attached.
- Education - Cece Merkel – Activities in conjunction with the PDE initiative to get the seven PA stations working together and supporting learners (especially those with no constant broadband access).
 - Cece shared the education website at: <https://wpsu.psu.edu/learn/>
 - The group met and discussed activities in conjunction with the PDE initiative to get the seven stations across the state to work together supporting learners throughout the state.
 - We discussed the future of education being a collaboration between schools, communities and business in educating youth.
 - The education team had two weeks to put together our schedule and find activities to go with all the different shows.
 - Highlighted content by STEM related and by age/grade band.
 - Also have a link to some of the PSU OER resources that would be useful when finding lesson materials.
 - We were assigned IUs 8-11 and we have had contact with those IUs to let them know the resources are available to them.
 - Met with teachers to get ideas and feedback.

- The group discussed about the uncertainty of the future of education this fall.
- The goals would be to get into the IUs continuity planning for the fall.
- Workforce development was also discussed regarding staff training outreach and how to get the word out. Social media, newsletters, etc.
- In the near future we are looking to how we can serve families over the summer.
- We are hoping this opens doors to grant funding (grab and go bags, etc.).
- Exploring BrightbyText which sends customized messages to families and links them age appropriate content from WPSU and PBS.
- SEL Social Emotional Learning – discussions with the state and teachers to let their teachers and students know they miss them, and they are thinking about them.
- Will turn attention toward metrics – how many people are using these tools so we can tell stories about how people are using this content.
- Membership/Business Support – Rob Butler
 - Fundraising success – as Michele showed during the budget presentation, we were planning on a deficit but have seen improvements in the way we are doing our work, training our staff and with the leadership of Jessica and Don this should show success over time.
 - We are grateful we are a University Licensee and the resources that come with it.
 - Occasionally we must follow the decisions the University. For example, when the pandemic hit, Penn State decided the University would not do any mailing for at least a two-month period. This was the right decision to make due to rapidly changing news and information which could render a mailer irrelevant once received by the recipient.
 - Membership drives are a big part of donations, but mailers are also a very big part of our donation success. We had to put that option on hold this spring.
 - We also had to cancel our April radio fund drive. We plan to have our TV drive in the studio this month with permission from the University and plan to follow extensive safety protocols.
 - We also plan to hold an abbreviated radio fund drive in June. We are emphasizing a very mission focused drive (why we are here, the importance of our service to the public and why we need their help if they are able).
 - Business Support staff have been working from home but continuing to meet with businesses virtually and via phone. We have had some clients cancel support contracts due to the pandemic and also have had some postpone support until a later date once businesses reopen and hopefully recover.
 - You can find our membership numbers and our territory map on the Board Portal. We will be reaching out to the board members in those areas to discuss potential business support opportunities.
 - Jennifer Neely added that there were some good bits of news happening (sustainer memberships are growing and that for the first time, in the fall, web pledges surpassed phone pledges).
 - This team is coming up with creative and innovative ways to increase support in these challenging times.

- Government Relations – Carolyn Donaldson – letters to the editor for Learning at Home initiative being revamped to send out to legislators in hopes of getting additional funding. See attached report for this committee.

Feedback from last board meeting survey (November 2019)

- 3 board responses, rated 5 out of 5

Overview of Summer/Fall 2020 Radio, TV & Digital Production/Programming

- Radio – Cheraine shared local radio stories from WPSU:
 - Kids & COVID (MNMS student)
 - Business Owners assistance
 - Bradford Help group sewing masks
 - Local Pastor with COVID-19
- Digital Short
 - Kate Bennet with Staying at Home project idea (scrapbooking)
 - Metronome from Home series
 - How We Endure
 - Conversations Live via Zoom
- Production – Mindy shared recent productions:
 - Musical Theatre showcase Penn State presents
 - Speaking Grief (which is on Passport now, and a July virtual Facebook Live event)
 - Blue Band compilation playing the alma mater for the virtual commencement
- PBS Programming – Jeff shared upcoming line up for PBS.

Board Sharing - Lots of kudos to WPSU staff and leadership for the fine work they are doing! Some other news:

- John Pozza –
 - Be aware of special education students in Bucks County are suing the state in federal court because students are not getting one-on-one instruction as required.
- John Lacny –
 - Proud to be part of this board and the rapid response team WPSU has become on a number of fronts, on-air changes, education community involvement, I commend you all.
- Sara Songer
 - Great job Cece and staff on the recent education initiatives
 - Suggests we do a digital short on how to put gloves on
- Melinda Stearns
 - COVID-19 has been a terrible time but the way WPSU has stood up and accepted all of the opportunities. This shows our value to PSU faculty and leadership. Congratulations everybody!
- Ilona Ballreich
 - WPSU is my sanity hub where I go when I need it!
 - Moving to State College from Huntingdon hopefully
 - Large fire in the community
 - Some communities when it rains it pours
 - PSU has been a shining light even where there are no campuses.
 - The delivered what they promised to get their student through the end of the semester.
 - Her graduate class utilized the Our Town Huntingdon video of about 20 years ago in their course, so our work has a long shelf life!

- Proud of how Outreach and WPSU have helped all the Penn State students who could not return to campus finish up their semester (even in non-campus communities).
- Jennifer Neely
 - Grier School still has some international students (some as young as 13) still trying to make their way home.
 - Worked her first pledge drive answering phones. Enjoyed the experience with the Volunteer (Volgistics) System and the production staff. Looking forward to getting back to that.
- Tim Asinger
 - Great job WPSU for what you have done and so quickly too. I am glad to be a part of it.
 - Thank you for the Chamber recognition. Sometimes being a rural community, you don't think word of these types of things will get out. Point of clarification, both he and his wife were recognized.
 - Grateful the Bradford Help segment made it to WPSU radio.
- Jennifer Judd
 - Enjoyed working with the small committees in the last few weeks. She will keep her ideas coming.
- Amy Frank
 - Impressed with everything I have heard especially the staff's ability to pivot during COVID-19. Encourages continuing to do stories on small town, small businesses and artists/art venues who have been affected.
- Kelly Hastings
 - Echo there are good things that are happening in Clinton County, providing food to children in our community, bringing out the best in people. Great job for your efforts at WPSU.
- Sherry DelGrosso
 - DelGrosso Park will not open this season. On behalf of the DelGrosso's they are heartbroken that they couldn't continue the 73rd year of tradition but are looking forward to being creative during these times and hope to see us getting back open in '20-'21. In the meantime, I am enjoying work on the community outreach committee and look forward to the upcoming Bedford County outreach activities.
- Kevin Mead
 - Very impressed with everything I have heard!
- Gary Miller
 - Just finished a book "In the Shadow of the Valley" about growing up poor in Appalachia. The only TV they had was Kentucky education TV. She counted on that growing up and it was a great testament to the importance in rural central PA and around the country.
 - The lesson we learned regarding getting the education initiative off the ground will help us with the future and he appreciates all that staff has done to get this off the ground.

Next Meeting is August 11, 2020 at PBS39 (possibly).

Motion to adjourn (John), second (Jennifer Neely), motion carries.