

**WVTF Friends Council Meeting Wednesday, November 10, 2021, 1:00pm**  
**Zoom meeting hosted by Director of Development Bruce Marquis**

WVTF staff in attendance: Roger Duvall, Bruce Marquis, Danielle Bonds, Dutchie Mirolli, Jeff Schapiro

Friends Council members in attendance: Anna Lawson, Dana Martin, Nick Mirra, Lucas Thornton and Margaret Grayson (in person)

Community Members in attendance: Michael Bentley, Brent Riley

1:00 pm Bruce Marquis welcomed attendees and introduced Anna Lawson, Chair of the Friends Council.

Anna Lawson called the meeting to order then called for a motion to approve the minutes of the April 28 meeting. Friends Council member Dana Martin presented the motion. The motion was approved and the members voted to approve the April minutes.

Roger Duvall gave the General Manager's Report:

The Virginia Tech Foundation Executive Committee has approved the budget for FY22 which started on July 1. Roger can provide a copy of the budget for those who are interested. He noted that NPR programming fees have increased for FY22. We are looking into some of the programs we currently air to see where we can decrease costs.

We are looking for sponsors for the Civil Discussion Series - the first segment aired in September.

Our Chief Engineer, Paxton Durham, will be retiring in the spring and the job opening has been posted on the VT website. One of our reporters Mallory Noe-Payne will be returning from her studies abroad in Germany soon and we look forward to having her back.

Radio IQ will be a part of a CPB digital training program that will train up to 6 members of the staff in digital content sharing, social media usage and digital philanthropy.

We met and exceeded our fundraising goal for FY21. The goal was \$2.75 million and we received \$2.9 million. This year's goal is \$2.8 million. Our Underwriting team added a new Corporate Support Representative, Anne Booze Adams, and the goal this year is \$750,000.

Our news team received a record breaking seven regional Edward R. Morrow awards this summer and Sandy Hausman received a national Edward R. Morrow award. We also just won nine Associated Press of Virginia awards.

We have had some internal promotions. Kevin Sanders has been promoted to Associate Program Director, Nick Gilmore will be our new Senior Producer, and Lucas Currie will be promoted to Operations Assistant. Dutchie Mirolli is back as an announcer/producer. Reporter Robbie Harris retired so we are also looking for a replacement for her. VT is interested in us having a spot on their campus for Robbie Harris' replacement. Our Strategic Plan will be updated this FY and we are looking to our Friends Council members to join this committee.

Jeff Schapiro was guest speaker for the meeting. Jeff is a Radio IQ commentator and Political Columnist for the Richmond Times Dispatch. His discussion was based on "A Look at Last Week's Virginia Elections." Jeff discussed his background and his role at Radio IQ and noted he'll be doing some evergreen pieces with reporter Michael Pope during the holidays about Virginia politics.

So what did Virginia learn with this last election? We learned that while there were issues specific to Virginia, many were national issues - as well such as voter's frustrations with Biden and the Democrats not being able to get anything done. There were also lingering issues such as cultural and racial awareness and, of course, the pandemic with mask mandates. School parents were also frustrated with

McAuliffe saying that they shouldn't be involved with what their children learn at school. Voters also had issues with the US's withdrawal from Afghanistan. All of these issues seemed to sway the voters more red than light blue.

Bruce Marquis then reviewed Old Business. We learned that listeners last fiscal year tuned in to WVTF due to the pandemic and the election. Many donors mentioned that they were donating all or part of their stimulus payment they received. In addition, our car donation program grew by 30%. The Poor Mountain transmitter project has begun and has been partially funded by federal funds but funding is not complete yet, so we are using funds from other areas of our budget to move the project ahead. However, we will need help to replenish those funds, which will total \$250,000 that we still need to raise. As far as the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary planning, we are looking to engage a major NPR figure to be present at events. The tentative date for an official celebration is August 2023.

Anna Lawson declared the end of discussion of old business and invites discussion of New Business.

Bruce Marquis stated that WVTF has been slowly expanding its regional engagement. WVTF staff have attended several job and community fairs. We are hoping to get out more in the public, but it has been a challenge with the pandemic restrictions and people not being comfortable enough yet to do so. There are talks of possibly doing virtual events. If anyone has any suggestions or experience with successful virtual events, let us know. Also let us know if you know of any opportunities for Roger Duvall to speak at meetings or regional events as well.

There will be Strategic Planning meetings and focus groups starting up after the first of the year. We hope to engage the Friends Council as a part of this process. We would also like to recruit new Friends Council members, including those from the regions that are not represented as well as the Roanoke Valley. We could communicate interest through the WVTF website. We are looking to possibly do four meetings a year, two in person and two over Zoom and make the requirement for members to attend at least two of these meetings a year.

Discussion: Community member Michael Bentley posted the following note to the Zoom meeting chat platform:

*For some time we in Plowshare's Public Information Committee have found the majority of the programming at the 8 PM hour of Radio IQ to be gratuitous entertainment. A waste of time and a far cry from inventing the future...almost all of which are repeated on weekends. On Point, 7 PM, on the other hand is doing excellent journalism at least once a week. Always issues-oriented. On Point is a two-hour production but was cut back to one some time back. A while back on the assault of academic freedom from anti-Semitism charges. Plowshare's Public Information Committee members frequently respond to programs on WVTF's news outlet directly to the program's producers and announcers.*

Roger Duvall pointed out that On Point is now a one-hour program, which was a decision made by the show's producers.

The meeting was adjourned by Anna Lawson at 2:30 pm.