

Board Meeting Minutes  
Friends of Yellowstone Public Radio Board of Directors  
August 12, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 5 p.m. by Scott Mitchell.

1. Roll Call. In attendance:

Scott Mitchell, President Emma Fuller, Treasurer Janna Wittenberg, Secretary Barbara Phinney Terri Kaercher Denice Elison Horatio Potter Susan Foster Emmy Chuck Jessie Perius Melissa Boehm Susan Gilbertz Mutt Dickson (joined in progress)	Ken Siebert, General Manager Jill Hirschi, Director of Development & Major Gifts Jamie Granzella, Business Manager Dan Carter, Communications and Marketing Director at MSU-B
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2. Call for Public Comment. None.

3. Secretary's Report. **Vote:** Whether to approve the minutes of the May 6, 2025, meeting? Moved by Denice. Seconded by Emmy. None opposed. Passed.

4. University Update. From Dan: Students are coming back in a few weeks so activities are ramping up. Orientation went well – we had a few hundred people on campus last month and they had a good experience. We have a new Master of Science and Criminal Justice program starting, and a new program to support employers and business owners with entrepreneurial mindset – the College of Business program will help workers train to start a new business. There are grants available through the state that if companies apply the state will pay to get a worker through the 24 session program. Last Friday, a Billings resident donated a grand piano signed by Wynton Marsalis to the university, so anyone who wants to can come play that in the LA Building. The University stands behind YPR and its mission in this time of Rescission and we will do what we can to help monies come in.

5. Station Update. From Ken: The Senate negated funding for 2026 for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, which will be closing down as of September 30, and will have a skeleton crew through January 2026, when it will completely close down. Our fiscal 2025 community service grant is here, but there will be no federal money coming in after that.

When the Rescission vote was finalized, we started to see an uptick in our donations. In our preliminary look from July 17 through today, we can attribute \$144,622 to people making donations or increasing their sustaining membership to our call to cover the more than \$300,000

gap next year from the lack of federal funding. Our messaging has been incredibly consistent that we need the \$300,000 on top of our regular funding, but it's hard to say how this increase today will be affecting our fall fundraiser.

Jill had the idea to create a longer term midterm ask for our major donors, to provide a 3-5 year gift in addition to the gift they are already giving to provide a relief fund. We need to create whatever cushion we can for the next 3-5 years. We have already raised \$550,000 of that \$1.5 million based on verbal statements of intent.

Thus, we are looking at being 75-80% funded from listener donations and business underwriting. We are expecting a Rescission Relief Reduction from Public Radio for some program fees, but we haven't received that yet so we are moving ahead with our current budget for federal FY26.

The Dead of Night Live got kind of rained out in Billings, but 400 people showed up in Bozeman the next night.

From Horatio Potter: I will commit to up our match for family owned farms and ranches twice a year from \$3000 to \$5000 – I hope other board members will do the same and at least raise their donations by at least 25%. We should consider a feasibility study to warm up the fires of the heart of those people who are thinking about making a gift, making an alignment between the donors and the mission of the non-profit. A feasibility study can be done without a consultant – maybe we can, at Ken or Scott's direction, work with Jill to do this to give donors a heads up.

From Scott: Thank you.

From Denice: What is your definition of a major donor?

From Jill: \$1000 or more given in any fiscal year. Thank you Horatio. We did not do a feasibility study, as this has been put on us rather suddenly. That said, it is not a huge campaign, as we are only looking at \$ 1.5-2 million. Our goal is for this to be able to carry us for the next 3-5 years, and hopefully in that time we can adjust our donors so that our budget just becomes what we need to carry on without federal funding. It would be good to do a feasibility study for an endowment campaign in 3-5 years, which will help carry YPR for many years to come. We are looking at major donors all individually to see what capacity they have to increase their donations.

From Scott: One more point about a feasibility study - One of the things we are very fortunate in is that we have a very good rapport with our major donors – we have “warm up” conversations on a regular basis anyway. They understand where we are at and why we are coming to them for this particular ask.

Thursday and Friday we are doing a mini-drive: an on air fundraiser outside the regular schedule. We aren't setting a dollar goal – our goal is to get at least 75 new contributors over those two days. We are still a non-commercial entity per the FCC so we can't start selling commercials. We are letting people know that they will be hearing a lot more from us because we are living in

a new fundraising reality. We know we will be able to capitalize on people's understanding that we need them to fill in the lack of federal funds for us to continue.

From Jill: We are having a lot of new major donors come in, and our goal is to have them stay at that level in the coming years.

[Further discussion about how to obtain new donors got into the weeds – Jill and Ken will talk with anyone who wants to think about how to personally reach more people as a board member.]

6. Committee Reports.

a. Finance Committee. From Scott: The finance committee put this budget together before the Rescission. We have not taken into account in this budget any loss of funds, as we don't have any in this budget: this is the last budget with CPB monies in it. We will hopefully meet the budget we are about to present – the things we have been talking about so far in this meeting are for FY27 and beyond.

From Emma: Our endowment fund is up almost \$63,000, year over year, on top of taking out the \$ 69,000 we talked about at the last meeting. The board directed fund closed a savings account, and overall we had growth in that fund as well. Now we are down to one savings account, and we are maintaining our checking account closer to the minimum because the interest is so low. So, our money is working for us.

We spent most of the year thinking we would need to pull money from our board directed funds to balance our FY25 budget. We did not, which is good. While we raised less money, we also spent less money.

From Ken: This is the third year we've had increases to salaries and wages. These increases are required by the state legislature – we are just adapting to them. We did let go of a vacant position we had this year, so we have lost a reporter position to make budget. We had an increase in our programming fees, which might be decreased by NPR, but it's a good idea to leave the higher number in our budget right now.

**Vote:** Whether the FY26 budget recommended by the finance committee should be approved? Moved by Horatio. Seconded by Denice. None opposed. Passed.

7. Old Business. None.

8. New Business. From Scott: We've already handed the budget. Now for election of officers. If you look at the board sheet and board terms that Ken sent out in the packet, if there's anyone whose term expires at the end of 2025, we would like you to re-up. We amended our bylaws to allow for longer terms. We have a strong board now, and rather than spending the time to recruit and bring up to speed new board members, we decided to keep what we have. We probably ought to also look for a few additional board members. I want the Vice President spot to be filled for optics. That doesn't mean that person needs to move into the President spot, but it would be nice to have it filled and Susan Foster has agreed to do that.

**Vote:** Whether to accept the proposed slate of officers for FY26 (Scott Mitchell, President; Susan Foster, Vice President; Emma Fuller, Treasurer; Janna Wittenberg, Secretary)? Moved by Barbara. Seconded by Emmy. None opposed. Passed.

**Vote:** Whether we should approve the meeting schedule for FY26 as set forth in the agenda? Moved by Susan. Seconded by Denice. None opposed. Passed.

**Vote:** Whether we should adjourn? Moved by Denice. Seconded by Susan Foster. None opposed. Passed.

Next regular meeting is November 4, 2025, at 5 p.m. [a short discussion about this being election day resulted in no changes because it is an off year].