



Board of Trustees Meeting
Tuesday, February 24th, 2026
5:30-7:30 pm
Location: Zoom

Board Members in Attendance: Ian Harrop, Ann Marie Adams, Jill Shea-Feury, Renata Dabrowska, Darryl Wood, Rohan Jayasena, Duane Spilde, Carl Speicher, Diana Riesman, Juan Vazquez- Leddou, Carol Beechy, Daniel Norton, Beth Bossong, Maria Strinni, Allen Buyck, Rob de la Fuente, Linda Biemer, Susan Pirozzolo, and Gary Kuch

Staff: Andy Pioch, Michael Micha, Brianna Moreno, Amelia Pena, Natasha Thompson, Carol Young, Chris DiRienzo, Christine Dempsey, Peter Zayac, Bob Proehl, Sharon Gould, Stacey Mosteller, Rich Maynard, Phoebe Taylor-Vuolo, Marley Vavra

I. Welcome & Check-In - Linda Biemer, 5:31pm

II. Announcements - Linda Biemer

- No announcements

III. Review and Approve the December 9, 2025 Minutes - Linda Biemer

Beth motioned to accept the minutes and Diana seconded; Duane noted that his name was misspelled. All in favor of approving the minutes with the change. None opposed.

IV. President & CEO Report

- Natasha shared her President & CEO report with the group. She shared some personnel updates and noted that two part-time Education Outreach Coordinators were hired for the Corning/Elmira and Ithaca regions, while Brianna continues leading outreach in Broome County. If successful, we hope this regional part-time model may expand to Oneonta and provide additional support in Broome.
- The Chief Development Officer search stalled after two candidates did not advance, prompting a repost with revisions to the job description and salary range. Board members will be asked to share the LinkedIn posting.
- Our grant efforts have focused on general operating and capital support, with potential FY26 revenue projected at approximately \$1.1 million if all proposals are funded.

V. Management Report - Natasha Thompson & Managers

- Natasha asked the group if anyone had questions about the report.
- Bob was asked if the Community Advisory Board (CAB) could expand involvement in activities such as donor thank-a-thons. Bob shared that CAB members have been invited to participate in various activities, including the Thank-a-Thons, and some have participated, though involvement has varied.
- Phoebe was asked whether the concerns about reporter safety shared at the December meeting had been addressed. Phoebe shared that facility safety protocols at the Vestal and Ithaca offices have been clarified, but we have yet to develop a formal written policy to help reporters assess field safety. Safety considerations remain a priority, particularly in light of

recent national incidents. Board members expressed continued concern and support for staff safety.

- Christine was asked a question about the radio charts included in her report. She explained that Nielsen trends show WSKG News continues to outperform WSQX Classical, while the classical station has grown over the past three rating periods and stabilized since returning to an all-classical format. Morning drive ratings improved after Emi Wilbert became host and afternoon drive improved after Seth Nichols took over, with weekly listenership now nearly equal between both time slots. Overall trends are positive and reflect programming changes and strong audience connection with hosts.
- Amelia was asked for more details on the unpaid Cooperstown tower rent.

VI. **Community Advisory Board (CAB) Report** - Bob Proehl

- Bob reviewed the CAB annual report with the group. He was asked who is on the CAB and how they were identified. Bob shared that the CAB was restructured 1.5 years ago to recruit members who represent different parts of our region. We are also trying to identify opportunities for the CAB to contribute beyond just attending meetings. Over the past year, CAB members provided guidance on engagement and partnership strategies, helped establish new connections, including support for an educational outreach role and a partnership with Cornell Cinema, and assisted with donor thank-a-thon efforts. Their contributions continue to strengthen our community engagement and outreach.

VII. **Board Education: Tiger Team & Action Planning Updates** - Christine Dempsey, Chris DiRienzo, Bob Proehl, Natasha Thompson, Peter Zayac

- Natasha, Christine, Chris, Bob and Pete provided an update on the Tiger Team and Action Planning process. The Tiger Team, a cross-departmental group of 12 staff, was formed to develop strategic priorities and a post-rescission action plan aligned with station goals. Guided by an internal positioning statement emphasizing WSKG as a trusted, independent, multi-platform public media organization, six priorities were identified and assigned to a larger Tiger Team comprised of staff from across the organization. The priorities are: local content and audience development led by Christine; partnerships and community engagement led by Bob; operational excellence led by Pete; mitigating risk led by Chris; and financial stability and tracking industry trends, best practices & shared services both led by Natasha.
- Action plans for each strategic priority are targeted for completion by March 31st and will guide work through FY28, with updates at board and staff meetings.
- Board members expressed strong support, noted significant progress, encouraged inclusion of board and community input, and emphasized continued transparency. Leadership acknowledged capacity challenges but stressed that improved processes will strengthen efficiency, collaboration, and long-term organizational resilience.

VIII. **Committee Reports**

- Executive Committee Report — Linda Biemer
 - The Executive Committee will conduct the CEO evaluation in April using a confidential Survey Monkey tool for staff and board feedback, alongside Natasha Thompson's self-assessment.

- Finance Committee Report — Carl Speicher
 - Carl reviewed the January financials with the group. He noted that the Finance Committee continues focusing on long-term sustainability through stronger cash reserves, expanded fundraising, underwriting and grant revenue, and improved financial SOPs.
 - Cash on hand reached \$2,077,000 through January 31st, with projections of approximately \$930,000 by June due largely to donations and an unexpected estate gift.
 - Carl reviewed a revised FY26 budget with the board that includes the revised “super goal” for fundraising and projects a surplus of \$14,000. He noted some increased projected expenses driven largely by the CDO search and higher credit card fees as a result of increased donations. The budget also no longer assumes the sale of the Savona Tower or CentralCast interest, creating a non-cash net income reduction of \$472,000 from depreciation, though the tower remains listed for sale.
 - **Gary made a motion to approve the revised FY26 budget. Sue seconded the motion. All voted in favor. No objections or abstentions.**

- Development Committee Report — Rob de la Fuente
 - Rob congratulated Carol and the Development team for the incredible performance throughout the year. Carol noted that we have seen a net gain of nearly \$2 million through the end of December, driven largely by additional member gifts, re-engaged lapsed donors, new contributors, and strong renewal rates.
 - Rob shared that our donor stewardship Thank-a-Thons have been going really well and thanked all of the trustees who participated. The next Thank-a-Thon is scheduled for April 28 immediately before the board meeting.

- Governance Committee Report — Dan Norton
 - Dan noted that the Governance Committee is working to finalize the FY27 slate of directors. The committee continues reviewing board and committee attendance to identify members who may not be participating regularly and to follow up as appropriate.
 - A proposed conflict of interest policy is also nearing completion, adapted from a version developed by the Development Committee and modified for full board use. The committee expects to have the policy ready for board review at the April meeting.

- Investment Committee Report — Darryl Wood
 - The Seed account statement on BoardSpot shows an ending market value of \$645,240.06 as of February 12th and a one-year performance of 12.4%. Because the portfolio is invested conservatively, returns do not track as closely with broader market performance across time periods; full investment details are included in the report.
 - The committee is also developing policy statements to guide investment operations for the endowment and the staff retirement plan.

- Infrastructure Committee Report — Allen Buyck
 - The committee met on January 7th and focused primarily on a content strategy presentation from Christine, outlining current operations, future goals, and ensuring infrastructure, equipment, and software decisions align with organizational direction.
 - Mike Micha also presented an overview of current infrastructure conditions, including aging studio and field equipment requiring attention.

- Ongoing challenges with Central Cast were discussed, as withdrawing and assuming operations internally would require significant financial investment and careful consideration.

IX. Chairperson's Report - Linda Biemer

- Linda had nothing else to report.

X. Open Discussion - Linda Biemer

- Board members discussed the potential conflict of interest of an elected official serving on the board, noting it may create public misunderstanding about newsroom independence.
- Natasha referenced her recent email about the APBS sign-on letter and petition supporting potential additional state funding for radio and possibly television, noting growing momentum for the referendum among many state officials.

XI. Adjournment - Linda Biemer, 7:27pm

**AI motioned to adjourn the meeting. Rohan seconded the motion. All in favor.
No objections or abstentions.**