

**NPR Illinois Community Advisory Board Meeting
December 13, 2021 Meeting Notes**

ATTENDEES

Executive: Bethany Jaeger (chair), Adam Porter, (vice-chair), Karen Witter (past chair)

Members: Natalie Beck, Deanie Brown, Cindi Canary, Jamie Dunn-Thomason, Monique Garcia, Kelly Glass, Bill Holland, Mario Jimenez, David Kohn, Gina Kovach, Mario Jimenez, Lisbeth Leanos, Laurence Msall, Kent Redfield, Nikita Richards, Chuck Scholz, Richard Schuldt, Christina Schutt, George Van Dusen.

Ex-officio/guests: Jen Bettis, Sean Crawford, Randy Eccles, Terri Hempstead, Molly Lamb, Ariel Van Cleave

Absent: John Carpenter, Stephanie Rhodes, Jerimiah Stephen, Timothy Killeen, Karen Whitney, Robin Fretwell Wilson

NOTES

Chair Bethany Jaeger welcomed everyone to the Zoom meeting. Minutes of the last meeting were accepted. New members introduced.

Bethany noted a lot has been done for the **50>Forward Plan** as she introduced its progress report.

GM Randy Eccles concurred there has been progress on parts of the plan, he noted that hiring challenges all businesses are experiencing have slowed the anticipated pace of implementation. The development director is in the interview stage with final interviews in January 2022. Even without this key position, UIS Advancement has been contributing in multiple ways. Development officer Terri Hempstead has secured a couple major gifts and there are others that have been committed. Development officer Jen Bettis has been working on corporate relations and began a partnership with the Grant Center to research grants that will be applicable to NPR Illinois. The year-end drive is in progress. Staff have come together to execute the fundraiser in absence of station development staff. Advancement's Kate McKenzie has also assisted with direct and email campaigns in collaboration with Greater Public. We will have a better sense of giving results in mid-January. Bill Holland noted that he appreciates what the plan is but is interested in what has happened, what the Advancement office has done since the plan was adopted, and whether Molly Lamb has been able to get university administration to ask the legislature to add a special appropriation for NPR Illinois. Molly replied that a strategy is needed on how to approach this. Randy mentioned it would be more likely to gain additional funding, beyond the Illinois Arts Council Agency grant, if the request is for all the public media in Illinois, a joint proposal.

The business manager position has one finalist. That interview is set for after the holidays. Currently, daily business tasks and the annual CPB audit are being handled by graduate intern Tyler Curry and business coordinator Audrey Bellot. Securing this position is important for measuring results and compliance.

The lack of staff has delayed some plan implementation by about six months.

Mario Jimenez asked for current financial results. Randy explained we are on track with plan margin so far. Although university funding is dropping \$67,000 plus benefits, several open staff positions reduce our expenses beyond covering that cut. Also, annual giving results have increased incrementally so far, and we have seen a few major and mid-level gifts. Randy noted he would rather have the staff as several are revenue-generating positions and will be net positive when hired. Randy explained the station has cash flow to keep a positive balance sheet at least through FY 2023.

Bethany noted it is important for board members to be positive ambassadors for NPR Illinois and have information that allows each to explain the attainable goals and impact being achieved.

The transition of the **Statehouse** headline service is moving forward effective January 2022. This will continue to provide the government coverage NPR Illinois has provided while allowing for editor Hannah Meisel to focus on feature-length government and politics coverage under the Illinois Issues brand. WBEZ senior editor Ariel Van Cleave shared how the statehouse service is evolving in the transition. The transfer in management was prompted by slow university hiring processes and WBEZ no longer willing to pay cash to NPR Illinois for the service. The vision is that WBEZ will have more resources to fundraise and better connection to Chicago foundations that will eventually reduce the cost of the service to the other stations in the state. Until they complete the hiring of two Springfield-based reporters, Chicago news staff will file reports. Deanie Brown offered she hopes this increases diversity. WBEZ has contracted with stations through June 2022 and is beginning work on the FY2023 agreements.

Bethany noted the **DEI working group** has some work to do to better define its scope and goals. Group chair Maureen McKinney stated that the group wants to increase diversity in the station staff. The group is also working to align with broader university directives on DEI at NPR Illinois and the Center for State Policy and Leadership. Internal staff have stated it is important to them to have a good portion of this effort reflect on matters at NPR Illinois. NPR Illinois is looking at staff composition, audience composition, and source tracking. The group will share key metrics with the CAB at future meetings. Center executive director Molly Lamb noted that although the group is governed by the CAB we want to keep the board informed especially due to past conversations on the culture at NPR Illinois.

CAB 100% giving campaign was updated. Bethany emphasized all board members giving at a level they are comfortable. It was suggested that potential board members be given a pledge form as part of CAB orientation, then annually, prompting them to contribute. This form should include the types of gifts that can be accepted. Recurring giving (Calendar Club) is one of the simplest ways to give. Deanie Brown concurred that a form of reminder at whatever level is comfortable would allow any income level member to fulfill this goal. Kent Redfield mentioned that grant applications frequently ask for board giving percentage. Adam Porter suggested CAB members make an annual day sponsor level gift (\$25/month) and identify their board membership in the message. Bethany received no objections and many thumbs-up on this course for the 100% campaign. Randy mentioned the meeting appointment reminder also had a Ways to Give listing attached.

Bethany asked for **nominating committee** volunteers. Mario Jimenez, Jamey Dunn-Thomason, Cindi Canary, Nikita Richards, and Gina Kovach volunteered.

Story ideas. Time ran out for story ideas, but it was noted members can email ideas directly to Sean Crawford or Randy at any time.

NEXT MEETING

The meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m. The next meeting is March 8, 2022, noon to 2 p.m.