

**WCBU Community Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
January 11, 2023**

Board Members Present:

Jennifer Essig, Lenora Fisher, Diane Hahn, Sara Netzley, Megan Pedigo, Jim Runyon, Bill Shock, Brittany Strickland, Chama St. Louis, Jessica Thomas

Board Members Not Present:

Becky Doubleday, Tom Mellor, Kiran Velpula, Yolanda Wallace

Ex-Officio Attendees:

Jennifer Armstrong, WCBU Development Director; Anne Chumbley, WCBU Corporate Support Director; Melissa Liebert, WCBU Development Director; RC McBride, WCBU General Manager

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 5:03 p.m.

Approval of Minutes: The November 2022 board meeting minutes were approved as-is.

General Manager Report:

RC updated the board on the station's fundraising efforts, with particular praise for the work of Melissa Liebert and Ryan Denham. He reported that NPR's \$12 million budget shortfall is a symptom of national advertising trends, with media companies such as CNN and Facebook expecting similar budgetary outlooks. NPR has responded to the forecast with a hiring freeze rather than the more drastic cuts other companies have instituted. For this reason, WCBU has a vacant newsroom position that's being held for the time being. Still, improvements continue at the station and a new automation system is coming online in June that will improve the efficiency and the sound of the station.

In mid-November, RC will attend his first meeting as a member of the NPR board, which is made up of 12 elected station general managers and presidents.

Development Director Report:

Melissa reported that underwriting levels for WCBU are fine, although the station experienced two unfortunate underwriter losses at the end of the calendar year: Charles Schwab and David Vaughan Investments. However, the decrease in financial support will be partially offset with a few development wins, including a major estate gift and \$19,000 in matching funds. Melissa indicated an upcoming focus on finding two long-term sponsors for All Things Peoria.

One option to potentially spur public support is a meet-and-greet opportunity with the WCBU staff prior to fall fund drive, as well as events for donors and underwriters. The board discussed

potential venues, including Mackinaw Valley Vineyard, with a goal of 75 to 100 people attending.

Old Business:

Board members are still refining the responsibilities assigned to each of the standing subcommittees, with conversations ongoing.

New Business:

Becky Doubleday is helping prepare the required annual letter to Bradley University, which is due next week, and it will be shared with the board when it's ready.

RC shared listenership statistics showing that WGLT's numbers are consistently double WCBU's even though the Peoria market is double the size of Bloomington-Normal's. He attributed this in part to WCBU's smaller staff and lack of a dedicated social media employee. He sees potential for growth, with progress being aided by Bradley University students getting involved at WCBU as interns.

The station will launch a local brand campaign soon as part of the NPR rebranding. This is another area where WCBU has the opportunity to build awareness and grow audiences.

Meeting Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 5:58 p.m.

The next Community Advisory Board Meeting is Wednesday, March 8, 2023, at 5 p.m. CDT on Zoom. The link is available on the WCBU website.

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