

WCBU Community Advisory Board Meeting Summary

May 13, 2026, 5 P.M. | Caterpillar Global Communications Center

Present

Board: Becky Doubleday, Diane Hahn, Terry Galvin Matthews, Toni Moretto, Eileen Setti, Bill Shock, Carolyn Sloan, H. Wayne Wilson; Staff: Rich Draeger, R.C. McBride,

Board Chair Bill Shock called the meeting to order at 5:03 P.M.

WCBU Executive Director R.C. McBride presented a station update, including:

- On March 31, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia issued a decisive ruling declaring the key provision of Executive Order 14290, "Ending Taxpayer Subsidization of Biased Media," unconstitutional. Judge Randolph D. Moss granted summary judgment in favor of NPR (and PBS, who was later added to the lawsuit) regarding those key provisions, permanently enjoining the administration from enforcing its directive that sought to punish NPR, and the entire public media system, based on allegations of bias.

Statement from Katherine Maher, President & CEO, NPR: Today's ruling is a decisive affirmation of the rights of a free and independent press — and a win for NPR, our network of stations, and our tens of millions of listeners nationwide. The court made clear that the government cannot use funding as a lever to influence or penalize the press, whether as a national news service or a local newsroom. Public media exists to serve the public interest — that of Americans — not that of any political agenda or elected official. NPR and our Member Stations will continue delivering independent, fact-based, high-quality reporting to communities across the United States, regardless of the administration of the day.

- In mid-April, NPR announced philanthropic gifts totaling more than \$110 million, including what is the largest single gift from a living donor in our organization's history. Philanthropist Connie Ballmer has committed \$80 million to fund the digital innovation necessary to reach public media audiences wherever they are. An anonymous donor has directed an additional \$33 million toward strengthening the sustainability of the broader NPR Network, enabling NPR to build and share tools and services with public media organizations across the country.

While this was welcome news, it's important to understand this in no way replaces either the loss of federal funding to NPR stations or the ongoing need for stations like WCBU to raise money locally. The gift is an investment that will pay dividends for the entire system, whereas donations to WCBU support WCBU ongoing operations – funding local news, national programming, and community service.

- WCBU reached its Spring Fund Drive goal of \$60,000, and WCBU currently sits at 145% of its individual giving goal for FY 2026. The amount over goal roughly makes up for last summer's loss of federal funding. The community has really turned out in support of public media since then, but sustainability of this level of giving will be difficult. As a reminder, only 1% of WCBU's audience contributes financially to the station.
- WCBU continues to slowly but steadily build back its local content capacity, with regular contributions on-air and online of Steve Stein, Joe Deacon, and *Out and About's* Mae Gilliland Wright, new correspondents Molly Hughes and Tim Rosenberger, and Rich Draeger assuming the role of Morning Edition host. In addition to more stories online at WCBU.org, the increase in part-time staff has led directly to more locally-produced *WCBU Reports* segments airing during daytime NPR programming. WCBU plans to post for a full-time journalism position this summer.
- McBride also provided updates on personnel changes within Bradley University's administration, a content sharing partnership with WTVN/PBS likely to launch this summer, the May NPR Board of Directors meeting, an appearance on a panel at the Illinois Local News Summit that featured an address from [Governor Pritzker](#), the possibility of implementing NPR's "[For Your Right to Be Curious](#)" marketing campaign locally, WCBU.org and Fanfare newsletter usage, and WCBU's operating cash on hand.

Shock and McBride led a discussion about optimizing the CAB's role to benefit its members, the station, and the community overall. McBride agreed to draft an update of the CAB's bylaws to submit to the Board for review.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 P.M.