Interlochen Public Radio
Community Advisory Meeting
March 19, 2020

Staff Present:
Peter Payette, Trey Devey, Gretchen Carr, Noelle Riley, Nancy Deneen, Emily Culler, Andrew Bucholz, Stephanie Pierce, John Roddy, Kate Schlomer,

Members Present:
Margaret Pierson, Beth Fitzsimmons, Bill Northway, Isaiah Wunsch,
John McDonald, Larry Mawby, Marcia Curran, Pamela Horne, Sarah Helge, Tom Berg,
Walter Muellenhagen, Whitney Waara

All member and staff joined in via Google Hangouts.
The meeting began with Peter stating that the week at IPR has been exciting.

“It is very clear what our mission is in Public Radio during this time. Our news staff accelerated their work and they have been continually covering the story. Highlighted stories include Kaye LaFonds’ report about the challenge in tribal communities and the decision to close their casinos. Noelle Riley did a story about the concerns of Munson nurses. Munson is now changing protocols to address those concerns. The staff is striving for journalism that has high public value. A slack channel has been set up with the Record Eagle.”

The classical staff continues to work in the same fashion, providing a service that our listeners expect but also providing a measure of comfort and sanctuary. We are looking for ways to expand our family and children audience.

The Academy students have gone home, and as a result, the broadcast of From the Top will not take place. We are in the process of listening to all the all the IAA students who auditioned for From The Top, and a program may be created from that content.

On the operations front, the main concern is that the risk of somebody becoming sick or having to quarantine. Most of our staff is working remotely. At this time, there are 4-5 people in the building at a time. Our hope is that IPR can really find new methods to be useful and indispensable under normal conditions.”
Marcia Curran commented that IPR was doing a fabulous job and it is exciting to see how the News staff has jumped up and done such a great job. “What is going on locally, and how it fits in the state and the nation as whole is very important. I love what the classical is doing for us as well.” She also stated with ICA being such a great resource, you have a maintenance staff that can do a deep clean. Peter remarked that N-95 masks have been secured for our reporters.

Pam Horne echoed how wonderful the coverage has been and how the classical side has been such a sanctuary. If there can be a children’s programming, and a push out of information for that demographic that would be valuable. She expressed about the return of the snowbirds and how this would be a great story to cover.

Beth Fitzsimmons thought that informing Kids Commute and any other programs offered for children would be helpful to share with regional school districts.

Bill Northway asked if a survey has been implemented to find the best additional time for more children’s programming.

John McDonald felt that there was great interest in how the tribal communities were adjusting to the situation. Regarding the Kids Commute, there is a whole new desire to have rhythm in our homelife, and as we structure our programming, could IPR reconsider current programs and possible news ones. IPR has a good collaborative opportunity to help families structure their daily lives in their homes.

Marcia Curran commented that she is now turning off the daily live updates from the White House. She feels that it is more of a PR show. She mentioned that we could make the daily White House briefings a link on the website instead of aired daily. She prefers to listen to the regularly scheduled programs because she learns more from that content.

Bill Northway stated the White House will now be reducing the quantity of reporters in the press room.

John McDonald said that the daily briefings are seen as a daily touch point, and that medical experts have joined the press releases, making them very valuable. The briefings drive people to go out and find information on their own. From a crisis management standpoint, he thinks the benefit of the daily briefings outweigh the negative aspects of the current administration’s style and delivery, which could be perceived in the way that Marica explained.

Peter moved on to discuss the upcoming scheduled fund drive. He mentioned the recent e-blast that highlighted the fact that IPR was here for our public audience during this uncertain time. He requested feedback from the advisors on this.

Marcia would not find it inappropriate to do fundraising. The phone banking would be difficult. Get the word out to our people. She suggested that CAC members could all be making phone calls.
Beth Fitzsimmons relayed concern of fundraising and stated, “We don’t want to be tone deaf especially of those who are out of work and having trouble getting food.” Perhaps sending a note to people who have already contributed in the past.

Bill Northway concurred with Beth. He feels that IPR should state that we (IPR) are aware of the difficult times and we feel it is necessary to have this support. He thinks that if IPR shortens the duration of our request for money that would be better.

Isaiah Wunsch stated that the biggest concerns would be that the fund drive would be taking away important coverage. A soft ask might be better.

Larry Mawby feels that the organization needs funding to do its job. A significant amount of money can come from people who will not be experiencing a financial pinch. Perhaps IPR could reach out to the general public when things return to normal. The tone of how to ask is very important.

John McDonald felt that IPR needs to publicly acknowledge that normally a fund drive would be taking place, but given the situation, we will not be doing that, however now more than ever IPR needs your support. We need to value our high value targets and reach out to them specifically.

Peter then asked for general input before adjourning the meeting.

Larry Mawby encouraged thoughtful but up to the minute reporting on the local situation. He thinks as things progress over the next few weeks a daily time segment could be aired and published each day. The local aspect of the story is very critical.

Tom Berg commented on how the Classical has been reading updates for how people can get help and how they give help. This is the time that new listeners will come to listen to IPR on a regular basis. He mentioned the reminders how public service reminders are important such as checking in on the elderly.

John McDonald stated that the idea of reaching out is very important, and inviting people to call in, will help ease the loneliness.

Marcia Curran commended IPR for all they are doing.

The meeting was adjourned.

Minutes submitted by Gretchen Carr