

WRKF COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD

Tuesday, January 28, 2015

In attendance:

David Gordon Latricia Huston Blythe Johnson
Phil Smith Barbara Clark Rob Riley Rosemary Monaco

David and Latricia discussed the particulars of the Jazz Fest 2015 contest scheduled for 2/25/15. This has proven popular with WRKF listeners in the past.

The station has changed consultants and will work with Argan/Bright/Applebee for the next campaign. The new firm has already done an analysis of the membership program; there will be more of an effort to be inclusive and efficient. There will be some changes with the online pledge form as well as the digital services package. There will also be a “re-overhaul” of the station website—these changes are per NPR.

Phil asked about email addresses for listeners and if there is a way we can connect with people through their individual email addresses. David said there are five or six thousand email subscribers for the monthly newsletter, less for Amy’s weekly newsletter. David said the consultants are planning a new strategy that will connect with listeners on a more personal level. He stated that these new measures should be in place for the spring campaign, April 13, 2015.

Regarding the upcoming spring campaign, the consultants have determined that if the drive is longer, it is more successful. The plan is for the spring campaign to last 10 days rather than 8 days.

Elizabeth Eads has left WRKF for Atlanta which leaves a hole in the station’s personnel. David has made the decision to hire an operations director with public radio/NPR experience rather than worry about replacing Eads’ on-air ALL THINGS CONSIDERED position. Rob asked what does a local live host add to a national broadcast? David said that a morning live host is very important due to traffic, news and weather updates in the area, but the station’s need is greater for the operations director. Plans now are to hire an ALL THINGS CONSIDERED host in 2016 because it’s important to “live within our means.”

This led to a discussion about bringing in new members at a lower level. David said that previous tie-ins with NPR programs were not that effective. Tickets to see GARRISON KEILLOR and WAIT, WAIT, DON’T TELL ME did not work. Tickets to JazzFest, however, do work. Rob mentioned that it will cost listeners who win the JazzFest packages money. David said it is a very popular contest.

Blythe asked about different approaches for getting younger listeners to support the station.

There was a discussion about the podcast, SERIAL, and its popularity with younger listeners. David said presenting AN EVENING WITH SERIAL would be an obvious tie-in with LSU. If we’re going to get a younger audience, this would do it. The cost is 35,000, and the station would need to tie in with a venue.

Rob asked about an NPR equivalent to Pandora. He suggested we think outside the box if we are to cultivate a younger audience.

David said that NPR 1 is the Pandora equivalent and that it is a train wreck. Currently, we do not have a way to harness the different capabilities of the new media.

Phil has said that young people are coming together in ways that we cannot predict. Rosemary said we must be careful about developing a younger audience without alienating our core audience and because young people are not in a position to support the station.

David observed that very young people are not interested in public radio.

Barbara said that she suspects young people who are interested in public radio will continue to be interested in legislative issues and that their core interests will continue to be the same.

Rob had said there should be a way to hook the younger people with something they are interested in, perhaps a contest.

David said there are over 50,000 people listening to the station each week and there are about 3,500 paying members.

Just to continue what we've done is not enough. There are many people who are enthusiastic about the station who would be sorry to see the programs stop playing.

Latricia mentioned that the Board Challenge was successful for Fall 2014. She asked the CAB if they would be willing to become involved in a similar challenge for Spring 2015. All board members agreed. David and Latricia acknowledged that different people have different comfort levels of asking for money.

Blythe said she would be interested in helping to coordinate a Board Member Challenge.

Other items : Sue Lincoln has begun Capitol Access full time in January.

There is a winner for the Tote-Bag Contest, although there were not as many participants as hoped.

There has been some impact/loss of sponsors with Jim Engster leaving WRKF, but not a dramatic one.

The station is looking to hire an underwriting representative. The ideal candidate has had experience selling an intangible. It is a commission/selling position.

The next meeting is April 28, 20-15.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemary Monaco