

WTTW COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD

MINUTES of the
PUBLIC MEETING of the
WTTW Community Advisory Board (CAB)
Tuesday, August 19, 2014
WTTW Studios
5400 N St. Louis Avenue
Chicago, Illinois

The Chair found a quorum present, and called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Introductions were made by the following present members of the Community Advisory Board:

Joseph Morris, Chairman
Mary Lou Mockus, Vice Chairperson
Ava Holly Berland, Secretary
Jeff Berkowitz
Helen Bracey
Yvette Brown
Susan Buckner
Leatrice Campbell
Barbara Cragan
Kimberly Frost
Janice Goldstein
Lennette Meredith
Maggie Steinz
Norma Sutton
Rita Tandaric
Felicia Townsend
Christopher Vaughn

In addition, the following persons were present and introduced themselves:

V.J. McAleer, Senior Vice President of WWCI for Production and Community Partnerships and Management
Liaison

Finally, the following members of the public were present:

Elizabeth Coffman
Tom Weinberg
Derrick Kimbrough, CAB candidate
Ed Moran, CAB candidate
Chet Szerlag, CAB candidate

Adoption of the Agenda

The Chair requested adoption of the Agenda. Ms. Cragan so moved; Ms. Tandarc seconded the motion; and, the Agenda was adopted unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

The Chair requested approval of the June 2014 Minutes, subject to Mr. Berkowitz' word change on pg 4. Mr. Berkowitz stated that the word should be "allowed," not "prevented." Mr. Berkowitz moved to further revise pg 4 regarding the Chicago Tonight's left leanings. Absent a second, Ms. Meroni moved to adopt the June Minutes with Mr. Berkowitz' word change, but not his additional revision; Ms. Mockus seconded the motion; and, the minutes as revised were adopted unanimously.

Public Comment

Elizabeth Coffman and Tom Weinberg introduced themselves, by stating that they are members of and represent the group "Fix Channel 11." Their group is comprised of 30 members and was organized for the purpose of improving Channel 11's delivery of content and its connection with and responsiveness to a younger, underserved audience.

Responding to Mr. Vaughn's question, Ms. Coffman stated that the group is focused upon content that would "open up programming to a larger audience" and add vitality to the station's programming fare, by serving the needs and interests of late teens and young adults. Mr. Vaughn noted that with web content delivery, there are expanded opportunities to reach that segment of the population. Ms. Coffman agreed, and added that the group has proposed a list of recommended 25 topics, which would be produced locally, independently and in an unfiltered manner. Responding to Ms. Mockus' inquiry, Mr. McAleer stated that the issue of locally independently produced programming did not appear to raise union issues.

Mr. Weinberg added that there is no transparency in how WTTW allocates programming costs, and, further, that the Board of Trustees is not representative of the community at large. Mr. Berkowitz asked why Weinberg believed the Board was not representative. Mr. Weinberg answered by characterizing the Board as comprised of wealthy donors. Following up, Mr. Berkowitz asked Mr. Weinberg if he knew how Trustees are selected. Mr. Weinberg stated most are recommended, but conceded that the Board has an application process and that even he could apply.

Ms. Meroni invited both Ms. Coffman and Mr. Weinberg to attend the Outreach Committee's Meetings. The Chair followed up Ms. Meroni's invitation, by inviting Ms. Coffman and Mr. Weinberg to attend all CAB meetings.

At the Chair's request, the three CAB candidates reserved their introductions for the Membership and Nominating Committee's report and discussion.

The Chairman's Report

The Chair addressed separately the following areas: (1) Planning for the 2014 Annual Report; (2) Committees' Work; and (3) WTTW News Standards.

Planning for the 2014 Annual Report: The Chair initiated the discussion by stating CAB's responsibility to assist and provide advice to WTTW in fulfilling the station's mission to inform, inspire and meet the

community's cultural and educational needs and interests. CAB's Annual Report embodies and serves as the main vehicle for providing such assistance and advice. Prior to issuance of such Annual Reports, the Chair recounted that CAB did not have the ear of the management or the Board of Trustees. However, with the issuance of the first Annual Report four years ago, the Chair noted the fostering of mutual respect and cooperation, and the attendance of senior management at CAB meetings (*i.e.*, Dan Soles, Senior Vice President of WCCI and Chief Television Content Officer at the Annual April 2014 Meeting; as well as Mary Field, Executive Producer of "Chicago Tonight" at the June 2014 Meeting; Daniel J. Schmidt, President and CEO of WTTW/WFMT at the March 2014 Meeting; August 2013 Meeting; Reese Marcusson, Executive Vice President and CFO of WTTW at the August 2013 Meeting; and Anne Gleason, Senior Vice President of WTTW for Marketing and Interactive Media at the June 2013 Meeting).

The Chair concluded by advising Members to "keep their eye on the ball," start thinking about the text, and strive to produce an effective 2014 Annual Report.

Work of the Committees: Given that CAB meets six times a year, communications by phone and email and attendance at Committee meetings by members serve a critical function by "keeping the ball moving," advancing CAB's agenda and ultimately enabling CAB to meet its responsibilities to advise and assist WTTW. The Chair suggested a healthy competition between committees may yield even better results and reports, which Mr. Berkowitz appeared to endorse, stating "competition is not a dirty word." Ms. Cragan took issue with a competitive approach, and emphasized cooperation instead. The Chair concluded by stating he does not envision any committee "dominating," but simply does not want to discourage any committee from pursuing and delving into areas of interest.

Also, the Chair stated that whereas all CAB members share a commitment to WTTW, they are volunteers that represent the community at large with diverse backgrounds and different perspectives -- and encouraged members to consider achieving even greater diversity in the nomination process. Ms. Campbell applauded the Chair's suggestion, and added that she thought the addition of some younger members would add vitality and a different perspective, which would prove beneficial to CAB in its deliberations.

The Chair concluded by advising members to appreciate and draw from -- not ignore -- our differences, to discuss -- not stifle debate -- let "a thousand flowers bloom," and ultimately reach a consensus.

WTTW News Standards: The Chair recounted Mr. Marcusson's recent decision to release the 1988 WTTW News Standards ("Standards"), which has been disseminated electronically to members. As the Chair stated, Mr. Marcusson's decision to release the Standards, initially deemed confidential and not subject to disclosure, demonstrates management's trust and confidence and confidence in CAB. The Chair concluded that Standards will be resent electronically, and will be placed on the October Agenda for discussion. Ms. Campbell was happy the Standards will be on the Agenda, and looks forward to contributing to the discussion.

Trustee's Liaison:

In Barbara Proctor's and Michael W. Gonzalez' absence, no report was presented.

Management Liaison:

Mr. McAleer noted several calendar items. Specifically, Mr. McAleer mentioned the program “Central Standard,” a collaboration between WTTW and independent producers. The program follows the application process of five eighth graders’ to select area high schools, and is unique in that it began as an original web-based digital series. He also mentioned that on Thursday June 21, 2014, at 7:40 p.m., WTTW will premiere a segment that will showcase the evolution of the Old St. Patrick Church (“Church”). Ms. Mockus noted that the Church survived the Chicago Fire. Finally, he mentioned that as part of “American Experience,” WTTW will be airing “Freedom Summer.”

Mr. McAleer added that Geoffrey Baer is in Pennsylvania, filming Frank Lloyd Wright’s “Falling Waters,” as well as working on programs involving homes and parks for national distribution.

Finally, Mr. McAleer announced that Elizabeth Bracket will be retiring, but occasionally will appear on “Chicago Tonight.”

Reports of Committees and Vice Chairperson and Secretary

1) Membership and Nominating Committee

Ms. Meredith confirmed the Chair’s pronouncement that there are four CAB vacancies. Ms. Meredith reported that the Committee followed its past practice, by advising all candidates that their nomination would be determined by the order in which they applied and their attendance at the CAB meeting(s). Ms. Meredith stated that three candidates were being nominated at the August 2014 Meeting. The fourth candidate, Charles Whitcomb, was not present. Ms. Meredith explained that if Mr. Whitcomb did not attend the October 2014 Meeting, Trey Cobb would be next in line for nomination.

Ms. Sutton added that the Committee’s nomination process strived to be fair, consistent and objective, and reiterated Ms. Meredith’s statement that its process was relayed to all candidates. As a member of the Committee, Mr. Berkowitz stated that he submitted guidelines to assist in the review of candidates, but received no response from the Committee members. Ms. Sutton acknowledged that, but suggested that any further consideration of guidelines or changes in the process should be considered separately. Ms. Goldstein and Ms. Meredith agreed, noting that it would be unfair to candidates, who have applied and are under consideration, to change the rules at this time.

The Chair took up Ms. Sutton’s suggestion, appointed a Committee to review the nomination process, with Ms. Sutton as Chair. Mr. Berkowitz, Mr. Vaughn, Ms. Mockus and Ms. Berland volunteered to serve, and Ms. Berland offered her apartment for an informal gathering (with wine and treats). Looking around the room, Ms. Campbell reiterated her suggestion regarding the benefits of encouraging the nomination of younger members.

Introduction by and Election of the Three Candidates

Chet Szerlag, nominated to serve for the term expiring in 2015, has served as an elected Commissioner of DuPage County and the appointed Ethics Officer of the Woodbridge Council, and has volunteered in

various organization. Mr. Szerlag views public television as an important institution that educates and informs. Having attended two CAB meetings, Mr. Szerlag looks forward to joining and serving on CAB.

Ms. Sutton moved to elect Mr. Szerlag; Mr. Vaughn seconded the motion; CAB unanimously approved Mr. Szerlag's election.

Derrick Kimbrough, nominated to serve for the term expiring in 2015, is a Chicago native, whose loyalty and love of public television began in early childhood and carried through his adult years as an educator and the Assistant Principal of Lorca Elementary School. Like Mr. Szerlag, Mr. Kimbrough has attended two CAB meetings, and is excited to have input, provide advice and become a member of CAB.

Ms. Sutton moved to elect Mr. Kimbrough; Ms. Steinz seconded the motion; CAB unanimously approved Mr. Kimbrough's election.

Ed Moran, nominated to serve for the term expiring in 2017, was raised in Oak Park, resides in Evanston, and is a criminal defense attorney. He also has been elected and served on the Evanston City Council for 18 years, and has published articles of interest to Evanston residents. Mr. Moran is an "ardent fan" of WTTW, and looks forward to joining and contributing to CAB.

Ms. Meredith moved to elect Mr. Moran; Ms. Mockus seconded the motion; CAB unanimously approved Mr. Moran's election.

2) Programming Committee

Ms. Cragan reported that the Committee, joined by Rita Tandaric and CAB candidates Ed Moran and Trey Cobb, met on July 22, 2014. She stated the Committee considered the Chair's proposed resolution recommending that WTTW establish a Content Acquisition Agenda, but determined that the proposal more appropriately should be considered by the full CAB. (A copy of the Proposed Resolution is attached.)

Ms. Cragan informed CAB that the WTTW website contains an archive of all topics addressed on "Chicago Tonight," and is an excellent resource to review topics that already have been aired in considering future program rubric submissions.

Finally, Ms. Cragan stated that the Programming Committee has considered, and was recommending, Felicia Townsend's program proposal. (A copy of the program rubric is attached.)

Ms. Townsend described the program, in terms of preparing unemployed/underemployed recent college graduates, seasoned professionals, and career changers paths that would enable them to "transfer their skills" to new fields and opportunities. Given Chicago's unemployment figures, Ms. Townsend concluded that the program would benefit WTTW by airing a segment that would appeal to and educate the audience by providing practical insight into career transitioning, and further would enable WTTW to extend its outreach and partner with interested organizations to conduct career transitioning workshops throughout the community.

The Chair applauded the Committee generally, and Ms. Townsend particularly, for identifying and responding to a need, and demonstrating how WTTW could connect with other stakeholders. Mr. Berkowitz seconded the Chair's thoughts, but took issue with the premise that college graduates are "disproportionately unemployed." Mr. Berkowitz stated that those without college degrees have even less opportunities and greater need for guidance. Ms. Townsend stated that the proposal does not address every aspect of unemployment; rather, the proposal was designed to address and assist only those who are transitioning careers.

Ms. Frost thought the proposal was fantastic, and suggested possible stakeholders (*e.g.*, Chicago Public Libraries, Women's Business Development Center, Linked Inn, and the Five O'Clock Club) that WTTW could partner with in conducting community workshops. Ms. Townsend welcomed Ms. Frost's suggestion, and stated that she would tweak the proposal to include the additional stakeholders.

Subject to Ms. Townsend's further "tweaking," Ms. Cragan moved to adopt the program rubric; Ms. Townsend seconded the motion; and CAB unanimously approved the rubric.

3) Outreach Committee

Ms. Meroni reported that the Committee circulated electronically a survey to determine members' interest in, and solicit ideas for effectively carrying out, CAB's outreach efforts. Ms. Meroni distributed copies of the results of the survey so far (a copy of which is attached), and encouraged Members who have not responded, to do so. Ms. Brown gave the Committee kudos for considering social media as a way to garner more responses.

Ms. Meroni stated that that the Committee planned to schedule a meeting next month, the time and place to be determined.

4) Technology Committee

The Committee did not present a report, but kindly offered the Outreach Committee technical expertise and assistance.

5) Cultural Research and Development Committee

Mr. Berkowitz reported that the Committee met on July 29, 2014, and delegated assignments. Mr. Berkowitz added that the Committee hopes to complete its work on educational reform before, and contribute to, the 2014 Annual CAB Report.

6) Education Committee

Ms. Steinz reported that the Committee planned to schedule a meeting next month, the time and place to be determined.

7) Vice Chairperson

Ms. Mockus did not present a report.

8) Secretary

Ms. Berland did not present a report, but stated that she would re-circulate the June 2014 Minutes with the agreed upon word change on pg 4.

Unfinished Business

Ms. Steinz stated that following the June 2014 Meeting’s discussion with Mary Field, some members raised concerns about the tone of some of the questions. With those concerns in mind, Ms. Steinz distributed an informative memorandum on “Adult Bullying.” (A copy of the memorandum is attached.)

Ms. Campbell believed that the discussion with Mary Field was robust -- but did not rise to a bullying level – and further believed that Ms. Field was a “tough” lady who must deal with far more contentious discussions and was not intimidated by the CAB questioning.

Ms. Steinz added that, in the future, she did not want to be taped during CAB and Committee Meetings.

New Business

As a direct outgrowth of CAB’s discussion with Mr. Soles, in which he acknowledged that WTTW does not have a formal strategy regarding program acquisition, the Chair prepared a Draft Resolution recommending that WTTW establish a Content Acquisition Agenda (“Agenda”). The Chair stated that the adoption of such an Agenda would discipline -- but not commit -- management, and further would inform and enable potential independent producers and donors to plan ahead. (Ms. Cragan touched on this topic in the Programming Committee’s Report.) Ms. Campbell enthusiastically endorsed the proposal. Mr. Berkowitz agreed, stating that adoption of an Agenda would enable WTTW to reach a broader spectrum of independent producers.

Mr. McAleer stated that he needed to review and consider the proposal before commenting.

Given the late hour, the Draft Resolution was tabled for consideration at the October Meeting Agenda.

Good and Welfare

The Chair reported that he is recovering nicely from a stroke suffered last month, thanked everyone for their good wishes, and joked that the Cultural Research and Development Committee adopted a four-to-one resolution wishing him well.

At the outset of the meeting, the Chair also reported that Yvonne Davis will be returning to work this week, and that Renee Summers underwent successful back surgery and is doing well. The Chair circulated cards for both ladies.

Sharon Meroni proudly reported that she received grant money, and was able to open four Republican election offices in minority communities -- a first in thirty years.

Susan Buckner reported that her daughter (and Helen Bracey’s niece) was named Dean of Nursing, City College on the Malcom X campus.

Finally, Ms. Berland excitedly reported that she attended the Antique Roadshow with her mother, a former antique dealer, that they had a memorable, wonderful time, and that they hope to take a mini-vacation and attend next year’s Midwest Roadshow.

Next Public CAB Meeting: October 21, 2014 at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Ava Holly Berland

Attachments:

Draft Resolution on Content Acquisition Agenda
Career Transitioning Program Rubric
Outreach CAB Member Survey Results
Bullying Memorandum