

WTTW COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD

MINUTES of the
PUBLIC MEETING of the
WTTW Community Advisory Board (CAB)
Tuesday, August 20, 2013
WTTW Studios
5400 N St. Louis Avenue
Chicago, Illinois

Chairman Morris noted a quorum was present, and called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

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

Joseph Morris, Chairman
Doreen Wiese, Ed.D, Vice Chairman
Ava Holly Berland, Secretary
Jeff Berkowitz
Helen Bracey
Yvette Brown
Susan Buckner
Barb Cragan
Kimberly Frost
Jan Goldstein
Linda Jackson
Dr. Ron Kurzejka
Jim McClure
Lennette Meredith
Sharon Meroni
Mary Lou Mockus
Heather Penn
Donna Rook
Norma Sutton
Christopher Vaughn

The roster list was circulated, and CAB members were asked to provide any corrections/edits.

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
Reese Marcusson, Executive Vice President and CFO of WTTW
Yvonne Davis, Administrative Assistant to Chicago Tonight and Staff Liaison

No members of the public were present.

Good and Welfare

The Chair noted that Leatrice Campbell had hoped, but was unable, to attend because she is in the hospital. As Ms. Campbell is communicating electronically, the Chair encouraged all to wish her well by email.

Approval of Minutes

The Chair requested approval of the June minutes; previously, edits had been offered and incorporated. Ms. Cragan moved the minutes be approved; Ms. Rook seconded the motion; and, the minutes were adopted unanimously.

The Chair noted that noted that the April Minutes had not been submitted yet, and that consideration of those Minutes would be deferred for consideration at the October meeting.

Power Point Presentation by and Discussion with Mr. Marcusson

Reese Marcusson stated that he has lived in the area all his life, graduated from DePaul University, and has been employed at WTTW for 23 years. Initially, he served as Comptroller; and, for the past 15 years, he served as Executive Vice President and CFO. In his position, Mr. Marcusson stated that he is involved in accounting, strategic planning, and coordination and oversight of sales and technological advances.

Mr. Marcusson presented the WCCI 2012 Strategic Plan ("Plan") to CAB Members (a copy of his PowerPoint presentation is attached). The Plan, according to Mr. Marcusson, culminates a six year laborious process, in which consultant Cambell & Co. and all relevant stakeholders actively participated. Mr. Marcusson characterized the Plan as a flexible, adaptable road map designed to define WWCI's role in the ever evolving media landscape.

The Plan reaffirms WWTW/WFMT's mission: to bring diverse, accessible, balanced, trustworthy content to, and encourage the curiosity and exploration of, its viewers through existing and new media platforms; and, further, the Plan recommits the stations' vision: to provide its viewers and listeners a "window to the world."

The Plan outlines specific goals and objectives. Among other things, the Plan seeks to ensure that WWTW/WFMT be recognized and marketed as a top tier invaluable cultural, educational institution, and be a focal point for Chicago arts. The Plan seeks to build upon and improve the stations' technological infrastructure and enhance and increase its digital platform offerings. In this connection, Mr. Marcusson noted that WTTW joined the Mobile 500 Coalition that petitioned the Federal Communications Commission to allocate additional spectrum for the transmission of mobile television programming. Additionally, the Plan seeks to enhance WTTW's position as the most prolific producer of local public programming, by creating and distributing national quality programming (*e.g.*, Ten Buildings), by developing and owning financially successful educational children fare, by bolstering its public affairs commitment, by engaging and partnering with community organizations, and ultimately by contributing

to a well-rounded, better educated and informed audience. The Plan also seeks to increase the endowment from \$31 million to \$75-100 million, which will enable WWCI to meet its programming and technological goals and objectives -- particularly important, given the challenges faced in the competing non-profit arena and anticipated further cuts in federal funding -- and to review on an ongoing basis financial viability of projects and opportunities.

Following Mr. Marcusson's enlightening presentation, the Chair opened up the discussion with CAB Members.

Partnerships with Community Organizations: In response to Ms. Jackson's question regarding the status of such partnerships, Mr. Marcusson stated that cooperation has been developing over the past 15 months and will continue to progress. As an example, he cited "The American Graduate" Project, in which 20 top community organizations convened and collaborated with staff.

Underwriting: Mr. Vaughn asked how the station could garner underwriting without appearing "too corporate." Mr. Marcusson explained that sponsorship identification announcements on public broadcasting stations are governed by Federal Communications Commission rules (liberalized somewhat in 1982 in the wake of then-federal budget constraints, according to Ms. Berland). In this connection, Mr. Marcusson noted that, unlike advertisements airing on commercial broadcast stations, sponsorship identification announcements on public stations must be limited in duration, must occur during natural breaks in programming, and must not *promote* products, goods, services (and thus must be reviewed on a case-by-case basis). On a related note, in response to Ms. Bracey's question regarding informative programming on the Affordable Care Act, Mr. Marcusson explained the difficulty the station has encountered in producing such programming. Specifically, such programming cannot be underwritten by insurance companies, such as Blue Cross Blue Shield, given the inherent conflict of interest. (Mr. Marcusson nevertheless recognized the importance of, and expressed his hope to air, informative programming on this important issue.)

Programming: In response to Ms. Rook's question regarding metrics in evaluating whether children's educational programming has made a difference, Mr. Marcusson noted that the programming producers have researched and extensively documented the results over the past 40 years.

The Chair asked whether WTTW is obligated to counter balance the fragmented media landscape. Mr. Marcusson stated his belief that that no media outlet could achieve that end, but that WTTW's programming goals continue to serve its community by steadfastly adhering to its mission and vision.

Mr. Berkowitz asked about the diminished length of, and the ideological imbalance of journalists that appear on, the public affairs segments of Chicago Tonight. Mr. Marcusson responded that the public affairs programming should not be evaluated in terms of minutes -- but rather by quality -- and that such programming is being made available on air and in multiple formats. As for any perceived journalistic bias, Mr. Marcusson noted that journalism tends to attract idealistic individuals, but stood behind the rigorous analysis, coverage and interviewing presented.

Given the Plan’s goal for WTTW to become focal point for Chicago arts, Ms. Goldstein suggested live streaming of Chicago Symphony Orchestra concerts. Mr. Marcusson explained that such an undertaking would be very costly in terms of staff and technical resources, and further that the “Great Performance” series have not attracted a significant audience.

In response to Mr. Vaughn’s question whether WTTW’s storytelling is changing to adapt to online platforms, Mr. Marcusson acknowledged that producers have needed to think more creatively to prepare brief two/three minute clips. Referring to online content, Ms. Brown suggested APPs to provide information about nearby restaurants (as well as historical references, affordable care). Mr. Marcusson agreed that mobile applications need to be strengthened, perhaps not through APPS, but through other means, in a form more curated than YELP.

Reports of Officers and Committees

Given the duration of Mr. Marcusson’s presentation, and the following discussion, the Chair suggested, and CAB Members agreed, that the Technology Committee’s social media tutorial, and the Committee Reports, be deferred to the October meeting.

The Membership Committee distributed the attached Draft Protocol for consideration of CAB candidates and for addressing Members’ absences.

Ms. Rook reminded members that the CAB survey will be distributed in September, and that Members strive for 1,000 responses from a more diverse population.

The Chair shared with CAB Members the attached letter from Ms. Peggy Hall to Ms. Cragan and Mr. Morris, critical of the documentary, “Anyone and Everyone.”

The Chair concluded by reminding members of CAB’s responsibility to assist WTTW in fulfilling its mission to inform, inspire, and meet the cultural and educational needs of its audience. The Chair further reminded members that everything it achieves ultimately culminates in producing the Annual Report.

Next Meeting of the Committee on Cultural Research and Development: September 3, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.

Next CAB Meeting: October 15, 2013 at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Ava Holly Berland

Attachments:
WCCI 2012 Strategic Plan
Draft Membership Protocol
Correspondence from Ms. Hall