

WTTW COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD

MINUTES of the
PUBLIC MEETING of the
WTTW Community Advisory Board (CAB)
Tuesday, June 21, 2016
WTTW Studios
5400 N St. Louis Avenue
Chicago, Illinois

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

The following members of the Community Advisory Board (CAB) were present and introduced themselves: Joseph Morris, Chairman (Chair); Mary Lou Mockus, Vice Chairman (Vice Chair); Ava Holly Berland, Secretary; Denise Avant; Joe Bosco; Leatrice Campbell; Barbara Cragan; Jennifer Fletcher; Jan Goldstein; Susan Ivers; Linda Jackson; Lennette Meredith; Sharon Meroni; Shonna Pryor; Maggie Steinz; Norma Sutton; Chet Szerlag; and Felicia Townsend. **Note: The following CAB members were absent:** Kimberly Frost; Derrick Kimbrough; Renee Summers; and Rita Tandaric.

The following persons also were present and introduced themselves: Michael Gonzalez, WTTW's Board of Trustee's representative and CAB's trustee liaison; Dan Soles, WTTW's Senior Vice President and Chief Television Content Officer and CAB's management liaison; Beth Murnane, WTTW's Pledge Drive Director and Lisa Tipton, WTTW's Programming and Pledge Drive Staff Person; and Yvonne Davis, Administrative Assistant to Chicago Tonight and Staff Liaison.

The following members of the public were present: Kathleen Morris (the Chair's wife); Addison Vandawalker (the Chair's brilliant granddaughter) and CAB candidates: Maryiline Blondell; Nora Bonin; and Aaron Lawler.

Salute to V.J. McAleer: With the arrival of V.J. McAleer, WWCI's former Senior Vice President for Production and Community Partnerships and former respected and cherished CAB Management Liaison, and his daughters Allie, Shay and Mariel, CAB members honored, and presented a gift, to him. The Vice Chair summed up the remarks made by various CAB members, noting that the accolades and sentiments were universal and all bespoke of V.J.'s unsurpassed kindness, even temperament, patience and professionalism. The Chair added that V.J. is everything a broadcast executive should, or strive to, be. With the arrival of V.J.'s wife Mary and son Quinn, the cake was cut, and CAB finally learned that V.J. stands for "Vincent James." V.J.'s presence and guidance will be greatly missed, and as the Secretary noted, V.J.'s successor Dan Soles will do a great job, if he proves half as good as V.J.

Conversation with WTTW's Pledge Team Leaders, Beth Murnane and Lisa Tipton: Ms. Murnane introduced herself, by stating that she is WTTW's Pledge Drive Director, and that she been in that position for a year. Before WTTW, she was affiliated with the "Make-A-Wish" Foundation, and was responsible for fundraising and securing wish packages. Ms. Lipton introduced herself, by stating that she began her career at WTTW as an intern in 1998. She has held various positions, and has been involved in the station's programming and assisting its pledge drives since 2002.

The Chair initiated the discussion, by remarking that WTTW's pledge drives disrupts the station's regular schedule, annoyingly interrupts substituted programming with over-the-air fund solicitations, and by asking whether pledge

programming could generate revenue as well as serve the station's mission to meet the community's cultural and educational needs.

Responding, Ms. Murnane stated that the pledge drives raise about \$ 5 million. That \$ 5 million covers the cost of WTTW's PBS annual dues, which entitles it to carry the network programming. According to Ms. Murnane, WTTW holds four major pledge drives (in March, June, August, and December, dictated by PBS' schedule), which comprises 60 days of the station's annual broadcast schedule. Summarizing, the Chair noted that 1/6 of the WTTW's broadcast schedule is devoted to pledge drives, which generates about 1/10 of its annual \$48 million budget.

Ms. Murnane added that, during the major pledge drives, volunteers (from various companies and organizations as well as individuals) man the phones, with call centers handling the overflow. Volunteers' involvement and on-air appearance raise the station's profile with friends and families and create an audience buzz. She also noted that when organizations' and companies' staff volunteer as a group, WTTW gains potential corporate sponsors and partnerships.

Regarding the pledge drive content, Mr. Soles and the three-member Pledge Drive Team review PBS and locally produced documentaries and other offerings, as Ms. Tipton stated, to "decide what would work" with its audience. They base their decisions on targeting specific ethnic groups' history (e.g., the Irish Rebellion), showcasing cultural (e.g., artists such as Andrea Bocelli) and entertaining (e.g., British mysteries and Carol Burnett television shows) experiences, presenting locally produced programming (which comprises 1/5 of the pledge drive schedule, e.g., Geoffrey Baer's documentaries), and providing educational content (e.g., financial self-help guru Suze Orman). Mr. Soles added that the self-help programming is most successful in generating pledge programming.

Ms. Cragan stated that others have told her that they watch and appreciate WTTW's regularly scheduled programming, but "constantly complain" about the station's disruptive pledge drives. Ms. Berland, however, noted that several people told her that they believe the most interesting programming is aired, and that they only watch public television, during pledge drives. Whereas pledge drive programming may seem disruptive to many regular WTTW viewers, Ms. Berland surmised, occasional viewers may look forward to the special programming fare offered during these periods. Ms. Tipton noted that, during pledge drives, Channel 11 viewers always could opt to watch the station's digital sub-channels.

Mr. Szerlag remarked that in addition to the four major pledge drives, he receives numerous direct telephone call and mail solicitations, which is "a bit much." Ms. Campbell mentioned that she supports and contributes to PETA, that PETA sends her email and text solicitations, and that it also asks for her opinions (which she really appreciates). Following-up, Ms. Berland suggested that WTTW solicit feedback from its viewers when directly seeking donations (e.g., questions regarding their favorite programming, types of programming they would like to see more of).

The Vice Chair observed that \$5 million in pledges is a "long way from \$48 million," and asked how WTTW meets its annual budget. Mr. Soles explained that corporate, trust and large individual donors (large donors) make up the difference. Ms. Blondell asked whether it was possible for individuals to request that their donations be earmarked for specific programs. Responding, Ms. Murnane stated that the pledge drive donations are deposited in a general fund. Mr. Soles added that large donors' contributions are earmarked for specific programs.

Ms. Pryor and Ms. Goldstein commented on how "fun" and "imaginative" the gifts associated with pledge drives are. Whereas the pledge drive budget is small, Ms. Murnane remarked that the staff strives to get appropriate gifts (including tickets to performances, trips) at low cost that relate to the specific pledge programming aired.

Ms. Steinz suggested that the Pledge Drive Team consider inviting student groups as volunteers -- a suggestion enthusiastically embraced by Mr. Soles and Ms. Murnane. Ms. Cragan opined that volunteer student groups may provide an incentive for their school communities (teachers, fellow students, families and friends) to tune in and pledge, as well as potentially expand WTTW's audience to include younger viewers.

Dr. Townsend suggested that the station provide volunteers with pledge materials, in advance, so that they are better prepared to handle the incoming calls during the pledge drive. Ms. Murnane thought it was a good suggestion and mentioned that the station is considering offering online training modules to better prepare pledge volunteers.

The Chair concluded, by thanking Ms. Murnane and Ms. Tipton for sharing their knowledge of pledge drives, and engaging in an interesting discussion with CAB members.

Approval of Minutes: Ms. Ivers offered minor edits to the March and April Minutes. Ms. Berland stated that she would incorporate the edits, and send the revised versions to the Chair to convert to PDF files for CAB's webpage. Mr. Gonzalez moved for approval of the March Minutes; Ms. Ivers seconded; and, the motion passed unanimously. Ms. Meroni moved for approval of the April Minutes; Ms. Cragan seconded; and, the motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Revised Agenda: Ms. Avant moved for approval of the Revised Agenda; Ms. Steinz seconded; and, the motion passed unanimously.

Trustees' Liaison: Mr. Gonzalez appreciated the informative discussion between Ms. Murnane and Ms. Tipton and the CAB members, and all participants' "intense ... [and] critical thinking."

Management Liaison: Mr. Soles echoed Mr. Gonzalez' sentiments, stating that it is always healthy to have this kind of engagement, and that WTTW appreciates feedback from CAB as representatives of the station's viewing audience.

As part of WTTW's partnership with Chicago's Cultural Center, Mr. Soles provided an update of upcoming previews (always scheduled for third Saturday of the month at 2:00 p.m.), which include:

"TRENCH," about a boxer training for the Olympics (July); "All the Difference," about two local high school students as they prepare to go off to college (August); "In the Game," about a girls' soccer team in Chicago's Latino community (September); and "Count me In," a program being offered to other PBS stations that features several Chicago aldermen who are collaborating with their respective communities to decide how to allocate their budgets and resources (October).

He added that WTTW is working with the Spertus Institute to develop a program about individuals who saved Jews from the Holocaust. He noted that WTTW is also considering new artists to showcase on "Sound Stage."

He stated that production for new seasons of "Nature Cat" and "Interviews" are in "full gear." Further, he mentioned that Geoffrey Baer's documentary on Navy Pier's history is progressing. Mr. Baer also is working on new local, national and international documentaries (i.e., "Ten Monuments," "Ten Houses of Worship," and "Ten Man-Made Marvels").

Finally, regarding WTTW's gavel-to-gavel coverage of the Republican and Democratic Conventions, he stated that "Chicago Tonight's" Paris Schutz will attend and broadcast live from both conventions. He added that Mary Field, "Chicago Tonight's" Executive Producer is scheduled to attend the next CAB meeting. To accommodate her schedule,

the Chair asked CAB members to hold the August meeting on the last (instead of the third) Tuesday of the month. Without objection, it was agreed that the next plenary public meeting of the CAB will be held on August 23, 2016.

Ms. Cragan asked about management's response to Shonna Pryor's program proposal. Mr. Soles assured her that a response would be provided at the August meeting. Ms. Meroni asked whether it would be possible for CAB to set up a table to solicit survey responses at the station's Chicago Cultural Center's previews. Mr. Soles believed that "something could be worked out," and suggested a conference call be held with Jessica Lawson, Director of WTTW's Community Engagement Division.

Public Comment

The members of the public declined to comment.

Committees' and Officers' Reports: Ms. Ivers suggested that Committee Chairs prepare a short written report prior to meetings. The Chair embraced her suggestion, because it would "focus" and "speed up" discussion at meetings. He asked Committee Chairs to submit their reports, if possible, a week before the meeting to him so that he could electronically send the reports to members.

Membership: The Chair began by noting that CAB has updated and distributed its committee roster, with corrections added at the meeting. (A list of CAB members' term expirations also was distributed.) Ms. Meredith reported there were three vacancies. (With Chris Vaughn's recent resignation, there are four vacancies and the Cultural Research and Development Committee's Chair to fill.)

Nominating: Ms. Sutton reported that the Committee was reviewing five candidates' applications, and will present the candidates for consideration at the August meeting.

Programming: Ms. Cragan reported that the Committee sent its questionnaire to nine local CABs, and that to date it received two responses. She noted that public broadcasting stations affiliated with University of Wisconsin do not have CABs. For the second stage of the project, the Committee plans to send questionnaires to CABs of public stations that are similar to WTTW (e.g., in audience reach).

Community Engagement: Ms. Meroni stated that a meeting will be scheduled in the near future.

Technology: Ms. Fletcher reported that most students have accounts, and are active, on Facebook and Twitter. She further reported that many GAFE schools (Google Apps for Education) include Social Media and YouTube as part of the students' interactive experience. In addition, she noted that NPR currently uses a platform called Disqus (www.disqus.com), which are free and facilitate live discussions. She suggested that WTTW could utilize these interactive platforms, to enable it to view online comments via a third party without having to monitor or mediate those comments. This can be done with all or individual programming. With these and emerging technologies, she stated that she would like to consult with Anne Gleason, WTTW's Vice President for Marketing and Interactive Media, to explore how these sites and platforms could be used to engage and ultimately expand WTTW's demographics to include a younger audience. The Technology Committee would also like to compose a list of questions for Ms. Gleason that covers upcoming dynamic digital formats, Virtual Reality, YouTube and Twitter (noting Twitter recently changed their enhanced format to include live video within tweets). In the latter regard, Ms. Meroni, Community Engagement Committee's Chair, stated that she would like to interface with the Committee.

Finally, Ms. Fletcher noted that she is a Committee of One; Ms. Avant then joined; and it is now a Committee of Two.
Committee on Cultural Research and Development: As the Committee's Chair is now vacant, no report was presented.

Education: Ms. Steinz reported that the Committee lost four members, mostly attributed to recent resignations.

She further reported that schools across the nation have been closing for lack of funding, an alarming problem of particular relevance, given CPS' financial woes. (Prior to the meeting, Yvonne Davis shared with CAB the link, which highlights the problem. Ms. Steinz stated that she would resend the link.)

On the local front, she reported that Dunbar High School recently was reinvented as a trade school, and further reported that the Lawndale community has spearheaded a computer work program for adults with felony backgrounds. Such programs represent local efforts to prepare the students and ex-felons, respectively, for employment opportunities. She plans to invite representatives from both programs to a future CAB meeting (as well as schedule a return visit with "Sit, Stay and Read" folks and pets).

Finally, she urged the Programming Committee to consider proposing a segment on robotics for "Chicago Tonight."

Station Administration and Finance: Noting that the station's financials are public, Mr. Bosco stated that he prepare a report in the next several weeks.

Digital and Interactive Media: In Ms. Frost's absence, no report was presented.

Journalistic Standards and Ethics: The Chair, in his separate capacity as chair of the Committee on Journalistic Standards and Ethics, reported that the committee held its first meeting on May 19, 2016, at the studios, and that on May 21, 2016, he had sent to all CAB members a detailed written report on the meeting. At the meeting the committee inventoried and refined the questions that it plans to investigate and heard from a practicing broadcast journalist, not on staff at WTTW, about how a broadcast newsroom works and about how ethical considerations affect a broadcast journalist's work on work-a-day basis. The consulting journalist recommended follow-up reading, set forth in the report. The committee will hold its second meeting, this one for a mini-seminar in journalistic ethics with an academic expert, on Tuesday, July 19, 2016, at 6:30 p.m. at the WTTW studios. The meeting will be open, of course, to all committee members and to all CAB members.

Secretary: The Secretary thanked the Vice Chair for taking excellent notes and preparing the first drafts of the March and April Minutes.

Vice Chair: The Vice Chair reported that the Court of Appeals (D.C. Circuit) upheld the internet neutrality regulations promulgated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The Secretary added, "On to the Supreme Court."

The Vice Chair also reported that NPR succession could be an issue, as the network is experiencing an "existential crisis" with the retirement of Garrison Keillor and other well-known on-the-air personalities.

Chair: The Chair reminded CAB members to "keep their eye on the ball," and bear in mind that there are only three meetings left before the 2016 Annual Report is drafted, reviewed and ultimately finalized for adoption at the December meeting.

Unfinished Business: Ms. Campbell requested that consideration of the "Content Acquisition" proposal be deferred to the August meeting. The Chair agreed, and will add it to the August agenda.

New Business: Ms. Ivers moved for adoption of a position statement, in letter form addressed to the Board of Trustees of the Chicago Community College System in its capacity as the governing board of WYCC, another public television

station in Chicago, urging WYCC not to participate in the FCC's auction of surplus spectrum rights. Ms. Avant seconded the motion. (A copy of the proposed letter-statement is attached.) The Chair relinquished the gavel to the Vice Chair and the Vice Chair took the chair. The Vice Chair recognized Ms. Ivers. Ms. Ivers spoke in favor of her motion, arguing that it would be appropriate for CAB to issue the letter because the loss of WYCC's programming may impact WTTW, and because WYCC has other options (e.g., leasebacks). The Vice Chair recognized Mr. Morris. Mr. Morris opposed sending the Letter in the name of the CAB, because such action would be outside the CAB's mission to advise WTTW, and would require it to make determinations about City College's finances and plans, about which it knows nothing. Nevertheless, Mr. Morris said that if the CAB adopted the letter statement, in his capacity as the Chair and as the servant of the CAB, he would sign it in the name of the CAB and would duly transmit it. Ms. Goldstein remarked if CAB votes not to issue the Letter in its name, Ms. Ivers could so individually. Ms. Ivers stated that she would do so.

Ms. Steinz moved to close debate. Mr. Bosco seconded the motion. The motion to debate was passed on a voice vote. The Vice Chair then called for the ayes and nays on the main (Ivers-Avant) motion. The motion to adopt the proposed letter statement did not pass, and it was agreed that the CAB will not issue the proposed letter statement.

The Vice Chair relinquished the gavel to Mr. Morris and Mr. Morris resumed the chair.

The Chair recognized Ms. Ivers for her report on the 2016 Annual Meeting of the Public Broadcasting System, which was recently held in Chicago. Ms. Ivers asked that her report be deferred to CAB's next meeting. Ms. Cragan moved to so defer consideration of Ms. Ivers' report; Ms. Jackson seconded; and the motion passed unanimously.

Good and Welfare: Ms. Berland reported that she and Peanutz (her beloved Havanese) will participate in the Gold Coast's First Best in Show, benefitting "Sit, Stay and Read." She also reported that she has begun giving tours at the Chicago History Museum's new exhibit, "Lincoln's Undying Words," which examines how the President's views on slavery changed by examining his five speeches from 1858-1865. She welcomed CAB members to attend, and will provide information regarding her schedule, of upcoming tours.

Adjournment: There being no further business without objection the Chair adjourned the meeting at 10:00 p.m.

Next Public CAB Meeting: August 23, 2016 at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Ava Holly Berland, Secretary

Attachment: Ms. Ivers' proposed letter-statement