

WTTW COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD

MINUTES of the
PUBLIC MEETING of the
WTTW Community Advisory Board (CAB)
Tuesday, August 23, 2016
WTTW Studios
5400 N St. Louis Avenue
Chicago, Illinois

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:05 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; Barbara Cragan; Kimberly Frost; Jan Goldstein; Derrick Kimbrough; Lennette Meredith; Shonna Pryor; Maggie Steinz; Renee Summers; Rita Tandaric; and Felicia Townsend.

Note the following CAB members were absent: Leatrice Campbell; Susan Ivers; Linda Jackson; Sharon Meroni; Norma Sutton; and Chet Szerlag.

The following persons also were present: Dan Soles, WTTW's Senior Vice President and Chief Television Content Officer and CAB's management liaison; Mary Field, WTTW's Executive Producer of "Chicago Tonight;" and Yvonne Davis, Administrative Assistant to Chicago Tonight and Staff Liaison.

In addition, the following members of the public were present: Maryiline Blondell (CAB candidate); and Carol Sandburg Howe.

Approval of the June Minutes: Ms. Summers moved for approval; Mr. Bosco seconded; and, the motion passed unanimously.

Approval of the Revised Agenda: Mr. Kimbrough moved for approval; Ms. Cragan seconded; and, the motion passed unanimously.

Conversation with Mary Field: Ms. Field introduced herself, by stating that she grew up outside Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; majored in journalism at Oberlin College; did graduate work at Northwestern; took a sabbatical and studied at University of Chicago; and worked in radio and television, prior to coming to WTTW in 1996 to produce "Chicago Tonight."

Sharing "exciting news," Ms. Field stated that WTTW was gearing up for the political season, by providing the station's production facilities, resources and free time to the candidates for all the races, expanding its web based coverage. She added that the station's free time initiative last election cycle was very successful, and that it was surprised at the significant number of hits for obscure races (e.g., the Water Reclamation Board race). The Chair noted that CAB members are not surprised, and pointed out that CAB's 2015 Annual Report ("CAB Report") recommended expanded web coverage of all the races. Responding to Ms. Mockus' question regarding how candidates apply, Ms. Field

explained that the station reaches out to each candidate. In addition to the candidate free time initiative, Ms. Field reported that the station will also air candidate forums for the U.S. Senate and local Congressional races, the State's Attorney's and Comptroller's Offices, and the Cook County Clerk's Office. She also noted that the station has been regularly scheduling interviews with Mayor Emmanuel on "Chicago Tonight."

Ms. Field reported that the station has developed a successful relationship with Station WBEZ, and has set up cameras on Navy Pier. The station has also set up cameras at Crain's Business for the purpose of including a weekly segment on "Chicago Tonight." She also reported that "Chicago Tonight" has expanded coverage by hiring a correspondent in Springfield, and by broadening its web based content with an editor, three reporters, and a Callaway intern.

Finally, Ms. Field concluded by stating that the station hired V.J. McAleer, WWCI's former Senior Vice President for Production and Community Partnerships and CAB Management Liaison, to review and update the 1988 Journalist Standards ("guidelines"). The Chair commented that CAB's Journalist Standards Committee is reviewing those guidelines, is delighted that the station brought on Mr. McLeer in that function, and questioned whether the journalistic staff uses the guidelines. Ms. Field stated that each journalist who comes on board has, is familiar with, and refers to the guidelines "periodically as issues come up."

Mr. Bosco asked when politicians are interviewed, are they allowed to say anything even if untrue. Ms. Field stated that it is journalist's responsibility to be familiar with the topics, to call them out, but not to advocate any position. He then asked if WTTW does investigative reporting. Ms. Field explained that the journalistic aspect is but a "small piece" of the station's programming, and thus it does not do investigative reporting but rather engages in enterprise journalism, whereby each reporter has expertise in and covers certain topics (e.g., politics, education, arts, and business).

The Chair raised the issue of the station's "mishandling" of last election's mayoral candidate debate addressed in the CAB Report. He questioned whether it was "planned in some way," and further whether it prompted by a subsequent internal discussion. Ms. Field responded that the station acknowledged "mistakes," but emphasized journalists "walk a fine line between hard hitting questions and being respectful." Ms. Steinz and Ms. Berland commented that the questioning was relevant, that candidates enter races knowing their financial, professional and familial relationships will be scrutinized, that other news outlets shied away from such topics, and that the public had a right to know.

Ms. Cragan and Ms. Pryor asked about the program proposal included in the CAB Report, which sought to augment newsworthy topics featured on "Chicago Tonight" with local artists' creative pursuits. Ms. Field stated the station had limited resources, but that it was an interesting proposal and invited Ms. Pryor to discuss the proposal with her further.

Ms. Goldstein and Ms. Steinz would like to see more attention devoted to the arts. Ms. Steinz added that the Asian and Hispanic art community is thriving, and suggested that WTTW could potentially expand its viewership by showcasing it.

Ms. Frost noted the success of the "Check Please" newsletter in bringing younger audience, and suggested the same might hold true for "Chicago Tonight." Ms. Field stated that "Chicago Tonight" has a newsletter, which initially sent out promotions for upcoming programs, but now includes fully developed broadcast and web-based stories. Ms. Frost asked if that newsletter could target particular communities. Responding, Ms. Field explained that their capabilities are not that "sophisticated."

Trustees' Liaison: In Mr. Gonzalez' absence, no report was presented.

Management Liaison: Mr. Soles began by acknowledging the recent passing of John McLaughlin, who hosted the long-running “McLaughlin Group,” which WTTW launched. According to Mr. McLaughlin’s will, Oliver Productions (“Oliver”), named after his basset hound, upon his death, Oliver would cease producing the program. In the interim, WTTW will air Gwen Ifill’s “Washington Week” in the Saturday evening time slot.

Mr. Soles reported the station’s new initiative, “Neighborhood Project,” which will focus on specific communities (e.g., Pilsen, Englewood, Austin, and Back of the Yards), from their early development to present day from different perspectives, with positive stories that do not get coverage, that are designed to promote greater understanding of the areas that make up Chicago.

He also reported that Geoffrey Baer’s Navy Pier’s documentary completed filming and is being edited. Also, Mr. Baer just returned from Cuba, and will be working on his “Weekend in Havana” documentary. Working with a Cuban American producer, he has met an architect, ballerina and artist, who will introduce him to life and others on the island.

Additionally, he reported that the station has been working with a group that mentors young documentarians, and will be airing their programs (e.g. “Shine Man,” “Count Me In,” “In the Game”) in the near future.

Regarding “Nature Cat,” he happily reported that it is PBS’ third highest rated children’s program, and that PBS signed on for a second and third season.

Finally, he prepared and distributed copies of WTTW’s Program Guidelines, which explains the station’s objectives and implementation. (A copy of the Program Guidelines is attached to the Minutes).

Public Comment

The members of the public introduced themselves.

Committees’ and Officers’ Reports:

Membership: With Ms. Fletcher’s recent resignation, Ms. Meredith reported that there are now six vacancies.

Nominating: Ms. Meredith reported that the Committee received two more applications, and that one of the CAB candidates, Ms. Blondell was present.

Ms. Blondell accepted the Chair’s invitation to introduce herself, stating that she was born and raised in Chicago’s north side, that she along with her three children have long been avid WTTW viewers, that she had a career in television, and that she is enjoying a second career doing fundraising and development at a non-profit organization.

CAB unanimously elected Ms. Blondell to serve Ed Moran’s vacancy, whose term expires in April 2017. With Ms. Blondell’s election, there are now five vacancies.

Programming: Ms. Cragan reported that the Committee sent its questionnaire to nine local CABs, and that to date it received responses from CABs serving public broadcast station in Urbana, Fort Wayne and South Bend. The Committee prepared and distributed a summary of the responses. (A copy of the Summary of CAB Responses is attached).

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

Technology: With Ms. Fletcher's resignation, the Committee's Chair is now vacant, and no report was presented.

Committee on Cultural Research and Development: The Committee's Chair is now vacant, and 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 did not present a report.

Vice Chair: The Vice Chair did not present a report.

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:

Good and Welfare: None.

Adjournment: There being no further business without objection the Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:05 p.m.

Next Public CAB Meeting: October 18, 2016 at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Ava Holly Berland, Secretary

Approved:

Rita Tandaric, Secretary

Dated: October 18, 2016

Attachment: WTTW Program Guidelines

WTTW Program Guidelines

As a public service provider WTTW must serve and anticipate the constantly changing needs of the greater Chicago community in providing a variety of content offerings that educate, enlighten entertain and inspire. WTTW meets these challenges by pursuing programs employing innovative techniques to satisfy viewers' interests in a multitude of subjects including News and Public Affairs, History, How-To & Lifestyle, Science & Natural History, Drama & Performing Arts, and Children's Programming.

WTTW develops and acquires programming from multiple sources. Several programs are created internally like Chicago Tonight, Check, Please and Geoffrey Baer specials, while others are acquired from national and international sources such as PBS, American Public Television, NETA, BBC and Acorn Media. In addition, WTTW works with a number of independent producers to air their productions. WTTW places added emphasis on establishing partnerships with local content creators and curators like Kartemquin Films, Free Spirit Media and The Chicago International Film Festival to maintain a pipeline of programming with strong ties to Chicago. Though we appreciate the value of the programs submitted to us, as well as the enormous effort that goes into executing quality programming, we have limited opportunities and funding for new shows and specials in our schedule. WTTW is not in the position to commission productions, but is open to reviewing productions that are in development or have funding established.

WTTW is committed to serving the public interest by providing content of the highest quality that enriches the marketplace of ideas, unencumbered by commercial imperative, three fundamental principles have guided that commitment.

- *Editorial integrity:* WTTW content should embrace the highest commitment to excellence, professionalism, intellectual honesty and transparency. In its news and information content, accuracy should be the cornerstone.
- *Quality:* WTTW content should be distinguished by professionalism, thoroughness, and a commitment to experimentation and innovation.
- *Diversity:* WTTW must be responsive to a diverse public and has a responsibility to explore subjects of significance and the marketplace of ideas.

Communicated to the WTTW Community Advisory Board

**By Dan Soles, Senior Vice President and Chief Television Content Officer,
WTTW**

on August 23, 2016