

**WTTW COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD**

MINUTES of the PUBLIC MEETING of the  
WTTW Community Advisory Board (CAB)

Tuesday, October 17, 2017

WTTW Studios, 5400 N. St. Louis Ave, Chicago, Illinois

**The Chairman called the meeting to order at 6:25 PM with a quorum present.**

**The following CAB members were present and introduced themselves:** Chairman Joseph Morris (Chair); Secretary Rita Tandaric; Maryilene Blondell; Nora Bonnin; Joe Bosco; Leatrice Campbell; Barbara Cragan; Kimberly Frost; Susan Ivers; Aaron Lawler; Sharon Meroni; Carlton Triolo-Sapp; Herbert Sohn; Maggie Steinz.

**Note the following CAB members were absent:** Denise Avant; Dee Harrison; Linda Jackson; Derrick Kimbrough; Lennette Meredith; Mary Lou Mockus; Shweta Singh; Bruce Sutchar; Eleanor Wolfe.

**The following persons also were present:** James Mabie, Chairman of the WTTW Board of Trustees; Dan Soles, WTTW's Senior Vice President and Chief Television Content Officer and CAB's management liaison; and Yvonne Davis, Administrative Assistant to "Chicago Tonight" and Staff Liaison.

**And, the following members of the public were present:** Monique Anawis; Gene Koprowski; Nancy Koprowski; Katie Koprowski; Peter Kraus.

The Secretary called the meeting to order explaining that the Chairman was delayed in arriving. A quorum was present. Members of the CAB and members of the public introduced themselves. The Secretary presented the minutes of the June meeting and asked for comments or changes. There being none, the Secretary asked for a motion to approve. Ms. Meroni so moved and Ms. Ivers seconded. The June Minutes were approved unanimously.

The Secretary then presented the Meeting Agenda for comments or changes. There being none, the Secretary asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Ms. Cragan so moved; Ms. Meroni seconded, and the agenda was approved unanimously.

The Secretary then asked for comments from the members of the Public present. Mr. Peter Kraus, a retired actuary, explained that he is recovering from Lyme Disease, which is transmitted to humans by tick. Mr. Kraus stated that in his investigation of the condition he learned that there is a theory that connects Alzheimer's and brain infections, including the Lyme virus. A documentary is out entitled "Under Our Skin", which has investigated the possible connections between Lyme Disease and Alzheimer's Disease. This is a documentary that WTTW may be interested in showing, because people should know that a simple walk in the woods could have serious results. Ms. Ivers suggested that perhaps this is a topic that could be suggested to "Chicago Tonight."

Chairman Morris joined the meeting, apologizing for his tardiness. He mentioned that Vice Chairman Ms. Mockus would not be in attendance. The Chair was brought up to speed on the progress of the meeting and assumed control of the meeting.

The Chair asked Mr. Kraus to continue. Mr. Kraus briefly repeated the highlights of his comments. Dr. Sohn asked how the Lyme diagnosis was determined. Mr. Kraus answered that blood testing is rather poor but there are other levels that point to brain infections. Most specific diagnoses are made post-mortem. It took two years for a definite diagnosis. The Chair thanked Mr. Kraus for stepping forward as a candidate for the CAB.

The Chair asked for other public comments. Gene Koprowski, a journalist, introduced himself. He is primarily a science and technology and science and technology politics journalist with experience at Forbes, and Fox News Channel as a writer/producer. He is a graduate of Northwestern with a Masters from University of Chicago. He mentioned that with the recent death of Tom Petty, he is interested in whether a recent documentary about Tom Petty could be run on WTTW. Mr. Koprowski introduced his wife and daughter.

The Chair thanked Mr. Koprowski for his candidacy. With no other members of the public present, the Chair closed that portion of the meeting.

The Chair introduced The Chairman of the Board of Trustees of WTTW and WFMT, James Mabie, who has taken control of the search for a replacement for retiring CEO Dan Schmidt.

Mr. Mabie thanked the Chair. He then thanked the CAB for its important work. When Mr. Schmidt announced his retirement the Board met and formed a search committee of 5 members of Board. That 5 interviewed 4 search firms, in person, 2 of which are local and 2 are national. Ann Blinkhorn heads a small search firm specializing in media and technology. The firm was successful in filling a position at WBEZ, the Board of which Mr. Mabie is also a member, so he's personally familiar with the firm's work. The firm has met with about 8 key staff members and about 8 board members as well as meeting with the search committee several times. A list of about 20 possible candidates was formulated. The candidates represent a variety of fields, not just the media or public broadcasting backgrounds.

The committee was asked: What are you looking for? Mr. Mabie stated that the successful candidate must be familiar with all WTTW broadcast platforms, radio, television and digital, and must have a relationship with the next generation of viewers. The candidate must have an understanding of the digital landscape. They're looking for someone who has an understanding of the diversity of the audience and its diverse perspectives. They want an individual who can form partnerships in Chicago so that WTTW/ can become a leading player in the political climate in Chicago. High energy and high performance background and requires high performance from others. There must be creativity and an entrepreneurial spirit and the ability to devise metrics necessary to access progress. The person must be able to ensure fiscal health of the organization and develop recruiting so as to attract able senior staff. The person must be able to develop and maintain a strong relationship with PBS, which already exists, but must be maintained, and serve as a public spokesperson to the community and across the country. The search committee has received capsule biographies of about 20 candidates who represent a wide range of backgrounds and experience. A telephone meeting is scheduled for tomorrow, October 18, 2017, between the search committee and the search firm to discuss the possible candidates.

Mr. Mabie indicated that the search committee hopes to invite 3 to 6 candidates, for in-person interviews, perhaps in November, with the goal of reaching a decision by the end of the year. While they're currently on track, there are many variables to consider, including gauging the interest of the potential candidates and their availability for interviewing. The position is important to the communications community and the community at large. The Board is confident that it will be able to find a person with the required characteristics.

Mr. Mabie continued by stating that the organization is thriving, with many projects in progress and that nothing has stopped while the Board of Trustees searches for a new CEO. Mr. Schmidt will be with WTTW until year-end.

The Chair asked if, in addition to the characteristics already described, whether the Board is looking for anything in particular in regard to the vision of a candidate. Mr. Mabie answered that the Board knows that it wants to expand the audience and attract a younger audience. WTTW needs a greater appeal to a more diverse audience. The Board would like the new leader to have a distinct vision of his/her own, not necessarily that of the Board alone.

The Chair asked that without naming names, could Mr. Mabie indicate whether anyone already inside the organization might be considered for the position. Mr. Mabie indicated that anyone in the organization could apply for the position, and that one person within the organization has applied. Mr. Mabie held an all-company meeting with the staff about three weeks ago. It was very well attended. The purpose was to explain the search process and to obtain comments and feedback. Ann Blinkhorn also attended that meeting. Mr. Mabie will conduct another all-station meeting as the Board is closer to selecting the interview candidates.

The Chair asked if Mr. Mabie would now take questions on subjects other than the CEO search. The Chair mentioned that since the last CAB meeting with Mr. Mabie the WYCC spectrum sale occurred at a price much lower than originally predicted. Does Mr. Mabie have any additional thoughts on how the spectrum reallocation may impact WTTW and the implications of the demise of WYCC might mean to WTTW in the long run. Mr. Mabie said that the Board struggled with the issue and considered what the sale of WTTW bandwidth would mean to the organization. The Board decided that it would pass on the auction. WYCC collected about \$15 million for its spectrum, and it will go dark. WTTW is in negotiation with WYCC to possibly continue broadcasting, but in what form is to be determined. Since negotiations continue, not much more can be said at this time. It is not a done deal. It's thought that WYCC broadcasting would continue on WTTW's bandwidth as Channel 11.5, per Dan Soles.

Ms. Campbell asked Mr. Mabie if he could elaborate on his statement that the CEO candidate has to have a relationship with the next generation and how this relationship would be demonstrated. Mr. Mabie stated that the candidate would need to be personable and able to get along with others, including the Board, organization management and particularly the staff, and be a defined leader with the ability to formulate plans and carry out those plans. As this is a public entity, a successful relationship with the viewing public is essential. The person must be a face in the community. Upon further questioning, Mr. Mabie pointed out that the law prohibits asking a candidate's age but conceded that he'd rather not have a person who is 75, nor a person who is 15. The candidate must be able to relate to all age groups. This can be determined through obtaining extensive background information and referrals. The in-person interviews should be able to determine the candidate's ability to communicate with age groups and diverse populations. Ms. Campbell asked how Mr. Mabie thinks that the station can attract younger (under age 30, not the children) viewers. Mr. Mabie stated that the candidates would be asked on how the candidate would suggest approaching the issue. Some of the candidates will have experience in media and they will be asked about their audiences. However, the station does not want to lose its older viewers in the process.

In reference to Mr. Mabie's mention of the use of metrics by the candidates, Ms. Frost asked what the station has in place now, and how success is currently measured. Mr. Mabie listed viewership (television) and listenership (radio), fundraising, personnel turnover, reputation in the community. Some measures are qualitative other quantitative.

Ms. Meroni asked about the salary range and compensation package that is connected with the CEO position. Mr. Mabie does not know if such information is public or not, but the Board knows salary ranges for similar positions around the

country. The Chair then pointed out that Mr. Bosco is Chair of the CAB's Finance and Administration committee, and mentioned that he has reviewed the 990 forms that are filed with the government and asked if such reports list salaries? Mr. Bosco answered yes, that the reports do list salaries of key employees. The Chair asked if Mr. Bosco could relate such ranges. Mr. Bosco answered that he could not at this time as it has been some time since he reviewed those documents. Mr. Mabie said that the salary would be in excess of \$400,000, plus retirement benefits. Ms. Meroni then asked if any of the 20 potential candidates are known to Mr. Mabie. Mr. Mabie answered that with the exception of about 2, he is familiar with the organizations for which the candidates have worked, and he is familiar with 2 personally. He has not asked that question of the other members of the search committee, though. Ms. Meroni then asked how diversity is factored into the search, adding that the CAB is very interested in diversity. Mr. Mabie answered that it's important to the Board of Trustees as well and that the search firm has been so instructed. While it's not mandatory in the search it is definitely a consideration in the selection process. At this point the search committee has no idea how diversity is being evidenced in the group of 20 candidates. The Chair commented that the CAB appreciates diversity in ethnicity as well as diversity in philosophy and points of view.

Ms. Steinz commented that she's very enthusiastic about education and WTTW. She noted that she has been involved with First Robotics for some time and that it includes everyone and provides \$22 million in scholarships. She invited Mr. Mabie to attend the spring competition at UIC Pavilion.

Ms. Ivers mentioned that her interests have been in the history of PBS and its mission and the mission of public broadcasting. Ms. Ivers asked if any non-traditional methods were used in the CEO candidate search. For instance, was there an open call? Were women sought? At the station level, PBS has historically been dominated by white males. At the PBS level, there have been more women and women of color in prominent positions, but not at the station level. Was the position advertised in trade publications? Mr. Mabie said that the search was very open and that the 20 candidates include women but he was not sure how many, perhaps 3-5. It was not advertised and it did not occur to the search committee to advertise. He will talk to Ms. Blinkhorn about it.

Dr. Sohn mentioned that in his experience on search committees he was always interested in longevity in the position to be filled.

Mr. Mabie commented that it is impossible to know how long someone will stay in a position. A lot depends on their interests and levels of success. The position is assessed every year. Some turnover may be desirable. There are arguments on both sides. The search committee will not ask the question and it was not listed in the search factors. The committee has not taken a position on longevity. It's an assessment that's made over time.

Ms. Ivers asked about the length of the contract that will be offered. Mr. Mabie answered that it has not been decided yet. The length of the contract will depend on negotiations.

The Chair commented that the committee is conducting a national search for the head of a public media company, where the potential audience can now include every person on the planet. However, this is a public medium which began with a focus that includes the education and cultural needs of this community. What is being done in the search and strategic planning to ensure that the focus remains on this geographic area.

Mr. Mabie said that it will have to be communicated to the candidates that we have a responsibility to convey information to and contribute to the welfare of this community. However, there is also a responsibility to the country as

a producer and conveyor of information and entertainment to the entire country. It's become a digital medium and traditional broadcasting is changing.

The Chair then asked if the Cubs will beat the Dodgers in the next four games. The answer was yes, without question.

Mr. Kraus commented that major media outlets do not report on things that conflict with their need to generate revenue (for instance pharmaceutical industry). What is WTTW's position on this? Mr. Mabie said that the first obligation is to the public and that must continue. It is true that the station needs underwriting but it is secondary to the fact that reporting must remain authentic, honest and forthright. That is where the responsibility lies.

Mr. Mabie again thanked the CAB for what it does and that it is very helpful to the Board of Trustees.

Ms. Ivers asked Mr. Mabie if he had any information on the welfare of the two Board liaisons to the CAB. The Chair commented that the next portion of the meeting is typically the Trustee's liaison report. He reported that Ms. Proctor has been quite occupied with the care of a seriously ill family member and that Mr. Gonzales has had his own health issues this year.

The next item on the agenda is the report from Management's liaison to the CAB, represented by Dan Soles the Chief Television Content officer.

Mr. Soles commented that the station was set to broadcast a Tom Petty concert and was pulled by his family at the last minute.

The American Creed initiative: WTTW is the co-producing station and 10 other stations around the country. It's a nice mix of stations. WTTW and WBEZ are planning a large event for Chicago, including David Kennedy and Condoleezza Rice.

There is a screening of "City of War" which will air on Nov 9 and nationally next Memorial Day. It well done and narrated by Bill Kurtis.

Another film about a different war by a young film producer Mario Thorpe entitled "Fighting on Both Fronts" which is about the 370<sup>th</sup> Regiment which was a group of African American soldiers who fought in France in WWI. It will air on Nov 10.

"Hot Doug's – The Movie" will air on Nov 2. It features Dr. Sohn's son and the famous northside hot dog stand.

WTTW has partnered with the Joffrey Ballet to produce "Making a New American Nutcracker." PBS will offer it nationally for Christmas viewing, but it will premiere on Nov 16 in Chicago.

The next installments of Geoffrey Bear's series "10 \_\_\_\_ That Changed America" will air in the summer of 2018, this time exploring streets, marvels and monuments. His new Chicago River tour is currently in editing and will air the Monday after Thanksgiving. This tour follows the original 1995 program and it's 2006 follow-up. This one is a bit different, exploring the river in different vessels.

The next Community Engagement event will be Saturday, October 21<sup>st</sup> and is entitled "Gadget Girls" which explores middle school girls and what they can do with math and science skills. The screening will take place at 2 PM at the Chicago Cultural Center and will air the next day at 5 PM.

"I Am Not Your Negro" will in January or February 2018.

WYCC negotiations are in progress now and not much information can be shared at this time. The staff has been very cooperative. WTTW is also looking to pick up some of the British and Australian dramas that have previously had a home on WYCC.

Mr. Sohn asked about the status of the relationship between WBEZ and "Chicago Tonight". Mr. Soles stated that the two remain in partnership and produced "American Creed" together. There is a willingness on both sides to expand the relationship at the highest levels of management.

Ms. Ivers commented on the excellent quality of "I Am Not Your Negro," and said that all Americans should see it. She described it as not just history – it's current. Outreach around the film would be beneficial.

Ms. Steinz asked if there is any consideration of doing any remote broadcasts in connection with various screenings, perhaps at community colleges. It would be a good way to connect events. Mr. Soles commented that for the film "Tell Them We Are Rising" the station is partnering with the DuSable museum. WTTW is working to expand its footprint in other areas and with other organizations. This was done with the Pilsen film and it was very successful. Ms. Steinz then asked, regarding WYCC, about the funds received from the sale of the spectrum rights. The Chair answered that the license was held by the City Colleges of Chicago, so the funds would have gone to the City.

Ms. Ivers returned to the subject of remote broadcasts from film screenings. Mr. Soles responded that the station tries to have the filmmakers appear on "Chicago Tonight".

Ms. Cragan asked if there are still plans to expand the Pilsen project to other neighborhoods. Mr. Soles said that they learned much from the Pilsen project. Reaching out and telling the stories of other neighborhoods is important and still under consideration.

Ms. Cragan then commented that she's heard much positive feedback on the Cuba program, "A Weekend in Havana."

Ms. Steinz would be interested in a documentary or coverage of the pipeline issue which started in Alaska and will now be impacting the Great Lakes. WTTW would be doing a great public service to expose the issues. The Great Lakes are at great risk.

The Chair commented that Chicago is a railroad center and that any movement of resources must include a discussion of railroads and safety concerns.

Ms. Ivers asked about WYCC and commented that she is encouraged by the possibility that WYCC would not replace a current WTTW channel but have one of its own. Mr. Soles reminded everyone that everything is still under negotiation and nothing has been decided yet. Ms. Ivers encouraged Mr. Soles to consider two WYCC programs that should be retained: "Democracy Today" and various European dramas.

Ms. Blondell also commented about the Great Lakes issue and suggested that it might work well with the children's programming – teaching the next generation about the Great Lakes and how important they are to the country. Mr. Soles commented that Elizabeth Brackett has been very passionate about the Great Lakes issues and has done stories for the "PBS Newshour". Documentaries are more complicated, though.

The Chair seconded Ms. Blondell's comments. Chicago is here only because of the Great Lakes and the portage between the lake and the river system. Ms. Blondell then asked if multi-layered programming is ever used to take news programming into the area of children's programming. Mr. Soles responded that core PBS children's programming is geared to ages 4-5 and it's difficult to take complex issues and break them down for children. PBS Learning Media does take subjects down to 6 or 7-minute segments. Ms. Steinz commented that it's very easy to use educators to take programming to children and it's done all the time. Ms. Steinz also mentioned that ISIS has threatened the Chicago openly because of its railway hub, which increases the importance of the issue.

Ms. Campbell asked if once a CEO is selected and welcomed, will there be an opportunity for the CAB to meet the new CEO? The Chair then stated to Mr. Mabie that as soon as a person is selected, the CAB will invite the new CEO to come to a CAB meeting. Mr. Mabie assured everyone that it would happen.

The Chair thanked Mr. Soles. The meeting moved to the committee reports.

**Membership Committee:** The Chair thanked absent Membership Committee chair Ms. Meredith for the work done on presenting candidates for the CAB. There are three applicants for the four vacancies. We've met Mr. Kraus and Mr. Koprowski but have not met Ms. Wicks. The Chair collected contact information from Mr. Kraus and Mr. Koprowski. It is expected that the CAB will act on membership application at the December 19<sup>th</sup> meeting and thanked the candidates for attending. There are two other candidates under consideration.

The Chair also commented on the minimum attendance requirement and we are required to warn members who have not attended the required meetings. Several members have been contacted and the Chair thanked Ms. Bonin for her attendance at this meeting.

Mr. Mabie excused himself, but before leaving was asked by Ms. Meroni whether there is anything he would like to receive from the CAB. Mr. Mabie encouraged the CAB to continue to provide feedback and suggestions – what the CAB likes and dislikes about the operation. The Chair encouraged Mr. Mabie to never hesitate to contact the CAB with specific projects. The Chair thanked Mr. Mabie.

Ms. Bonin responded that attendance and participation could come in other committees. The Chair commented that much work is done via email. The issue of electronic participation in plenary meetings was raised and has previously been explored but has been rejected.

Three other CAB members have been contacted about attendance and have not responded (Ms. Harrison, Mr. Kimbrough and Ms. Singh) to either the Chair or Ms. Meredith. As such, the Membership Committee has moved to vacate these seats. Mr. Bosco seconded the motion of the committee.

Ms. Ivers commented that she is saddened by this turn of events and suggested that the three members in question attended meetings that were quite lengthy and that the situation may have scared them off. She feels that these people may not have seen the CAB at its best.

The Chair asked for additional comment. There being none, the CAB voted unanimously to remove Ms. Harrison, Mr. Kimbrough and Ms. Singh.

**Journalistic Standards and Ethics Committee:** The Chair commented that a committee meeting was held in September and that a report of the meeting was in preparation for the entire CAB. The Journalistic Standards report will be distributed before the meeting of the Committee of the Whole, at which the annual report will be prepared.

**Program Committee:** No report.

**Technology and Digital:** No report.

**Cultural Research and Development Committee:** No report.

**Education Committee:** No report.

**Station Administration and Finance Committee:** No reports.

**Secretary:** No report.

**Vice Chairman:** No report.

**Chairman's Report:** The Chair reminded CAB members to submit materials to other CAB members (only) for the annual report. A tentative date of Tuesday, November 14 at 6:30 PM is set for the meeting of the Committee of the Whole. The meeting will not require attendance by Mr. Soles, Ms. Davis or CAB candidates. A draft of the annual report will be circulated to CAB members prior to the meeting. If anyone wishes to submit minority reports, those should also be circulated to the CAB members. All minority reports will be published as part of the annual report.

Ms. Ivers asked when the annual report would be made available to the public. The Chair responded that it would be published after CAB approval at the December meeting. It is published on the website and distributed to station management upon approval by the CAB.

Ms. Steinz mentioned that she intends to schedule a meeting of the Education Committee in November in conjunction with Native American Month.

Ms. Meroni questioned whether the meeting could be scheduled later in November. It was determined that a date later in the month would be difficult to schedule.

The Chair confirmed the November 14 date and again encouraged submissions for the annual report.

Ms. Ivers asked about the status of the Committee on Committees. The Chair believed that a streamline approach to the CAB meetings had been adopted, but Ms. Ivers indicated that her belief was that several CAB committees were "on hold" pending the report of the Committee on Committees. Ms. Ivers wondered if she had misunderstood. The Chair acknowledged that some committees are currently un-chaired and undefined but that generally committees are active.



**Unfinished Business:** Ms. Cragan brought up the subject of pledge nights and asked Mr. Bosco to relate that Boston's WGBH is exploring other ways to raise funds other than pledge nights. Mr. Bosco has become a member of WGBH to keep abreast of their progress. The subject of the Vietnam series was raised as a possible membership perk and Ms. Ivers mentioned that it is available in whole under the Passport initiative, which is available through WTTW membership.

Mr. Soles mentioned that the only bold experiment of which he is aware is at WNET in New York, where they are limiting pledging to Thursday nights and every Saturday and Sunday morning, but at no other times. It works out to the same number of days, but on a different schedule.

The Chair commented that pledge drives are a divided issue – viewers hate pledge drives, but others love the programming that is available during a pledge drive.

Ms. Cragan mentioned that giving value to the membership and allowing the members to feel invested in the station really helps. Mr. Soles commented that Passport seems to be catching on and effective.

Ms. Blondell asked if there is a PBS app. Mr. Soles said yes. PBS Video is the name, then identify WTTW as your station. "Chicago Tonight", "Check, Please" and episodes of "Vietnam" are available.

Dr. Sohn asked if videos can be purchased and the station obtain benefit from the purchases. Mr. Soles answered yes, through WTTW.com.

**New Business:** Ms. Ivers commented that the issue of conference calling should be revisited. The Chair commented that the decision was not made by station personnel but by the CAB. The Chair suggested that the matter be added to the agenda for the next plenary meeting if the issue should be revisited.

Ms. Meroni commented that the Outreach Committee would meet via conference call later in October. She also suggested that the Outreach Committee move that the CAB propose that a CAB member be included as an *ex officio* member of the Board of Trustees. Ms. Meroni asked that the item be added to the December agenda and indicated that a report of the Outreach committee would be submitted for CAB review.

Ms. Meroni reminded everyone to participate in the CAB's Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Ms. Ivers noted that the film "I Am Not Your Negro" has a public screening on November 18, and RSVPs are now being accepted on the WTTW website.

**Good and Welfare:** Ms. Meroni mentioned that Judge Evans, the Chief Judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County, has ordered an investigation of the Chicago Board of Elections. Ms. Meroni was contacted by the Investigator General of Cook County. Mr. Soles said that he would take the issue to "Chicago Tonight".

**Adjournment:** The Meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.

**Next Public CAB Meeting:** December 19, 2017 at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rita E. Tandaric, Secretary

**Attachments:**

