

Draft Minutes WBAI LSB Finance Committee 8-16-23

Voting Participants: Jack de Palma, Jim Dingeman, Noel Jameson, R. Paul Martin, Matt Mazza, Carolyn McIntyre, Daryl McPherson, Ale Murphy, Berthold Reimers, James Sagurton, Geoffrey Sterne, Michael D.D. White, M. Kay Williams

Not present: Bruce Greif, Cerene Roberts, Neale Vos,

Also attending: Otis MaClay, Mario Mastrandrea

Final Agenda

1. Call to order 7:00 PM ET
2. Approval of agenda (20 minutes)
3. Identify time keeper (2 minutes)
4. Excuse absences (5 minutes)
5. Minutes approval (10 minutes) from meeting 7-19-23
6. Treasurer's Report (15 minutes) – R. Paul Martin
7. Strategic Plan (10 min) – James Sagurton
7. General Manager's Report on WBAI's finances (30 minutes) – Berthold Reimers
8. Set next meeting date (5 minutes)
9. New Business (10 minutes)
10. Adjourn no later than 9:30 PM ET

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7:09 pm ET Call to Order – a Quorum, the Chair, and the Secretary being present

7:10 pm ET Motion (RPaul) To adopt agenda as read by R. Paul Martin

Amendment (James Sagurton) From the PNB meeting, add item on adopting a Strategic Plan after Treasurer's Report (10 min).

The amendment passed without objection. Then the motion to adopt the agenda as amended also passed without objection.

7:14 pm ET Geoffrey Sterne volunteered and was accepted as time-keeper.

7:15 pm ET There were three requests to excuses absences, one was already at the meeting at the time of roll call, one came later, and one came after the meeting had already been called to order and therefore doesn't count as advance notice. Hence the three remaining absences were not excused.

7:20 pm ET The Chair read the announcement regarding meeting attendance requirements. Matt Mazza came late but it was his third consecutive meeting, so he is now a voting member. Mario Mastrandrea has had two consecutive meetings and will be a voting member if and when he comes to the next meeting.

7:22 pm ET (M. Kay Williams) Motion to accept the minutes from 7-19-23 which were previously sent. Passed without objection.

7:23 pm ET Treasurer's Report (R. Paul Martin)

Highlights

- KPFK and WBAI both presented draft FY23 budgets which were deficit budgets.
- Good News: Payroll dates of 7-31-23 and 8-15-23 were met
- Pacifica held onto the Health Insurance, although some other insurance policies lapsed, including
  - Earthquake in LA
  - Equipment Insurance – all stations

- Excess Liability – all stations
- Media Liability – all stations
- This may affect the sale of the KPFK building. The ED is seeking the advice of counsel re selling an uninsured building or using that building as collateral for a loan, which it is in the case of the FJC loan of \$2.6 million.
- This may also impact the plan to return to volunteers to answer the phone at 388 instead of depending so much on the call center. The lawyer is working on a waiver for volunteers.
- Accounts payable amount to \$2.3 million, of which \$988K are “of concern.” Some vendors are more anxious to be paid than others. Specifically the EIDL loan of \$3.1 million has been referred to the Dept of the Treasury as delinquent. What they may demand is the interest on this loan.

The Committee discussed the report.

7:40 pm ET Strategic Plan – James Sagurton

#### Highlights

- Discussed at last PNB NFC meeting. The ED was tasked with drafting a new plan, the last one was from 2022.
- History: Some challenging statistics.
  - People listening to radio have decreased 40%. It declined during the Pandemic but has continued to decline even coming out of the pandemic.
  - WBAI’s audience has decreased 75-80% since the 1980’s
  - Some Pacifica stations get 20% of their income from a few members.
  - WBAI gets 80% of its income from a small number of members
  - Only KPFT income went up. KPFK and WBAI were down \$20-40K, KPFA and WPFW remained about the same.
  - Income from private and local foundations was 6% for all Pacifica stations, 1-2 % for WBAI
  - The CPB money was 16% of the total income all stations. We still hope to get it.
- This is why the motion to go out and seek underwriting passed. It’s still limited to concerns compatible with the Pacifica mission. Corporate and business underwriting is still controversial.
- The ED has looked into Bridge Loans, but the interest is 14%, brokers get their cut also, and we have the same problem with uninsured collateral. We have no choice but to roll up our sleeves and get to work.

The Committee discussed the report.

7:51 pm ET Motion (Daryl McPherson) To extend discussion 5 min. Passed without objection.

Berthold noted that WBAI has as many online streaming listeners as KPFA, which is the highest in the network.

Jim Dingeman noted that National Broadcasters are in conflict with car manufacturer’s who want to remove car radios from new cars due to not enough listeners. Sen Ed Markey is involved in this issue.

8:01 pm ET Motion (Daryl McPherson) To extend discussion 5 min. Passed without objection

Suggestion (Mario Mastrandrea): Instead of palm cards, we can easily adapt these cards as already designed into post cards and make them available. People can send them to their friends and relatives and they will pay the postage.

8:07 pm ET General Manager’s Report (Berthold Reimers)

#### Highlights

- ❖ Accounts payable include:
  - 4 Times Square – about \$85K, for 5 months
  - Call Center - \$30 K, Paid \$7K. Now have \$40 in bank.
    - ◆ ACD (?) is following up with them to help us contact lapsed members.
  - Rent 388 – owe 6 mos @ \$5,300 per month. (\$31,800)

- ❖ The taskforces agreed to by the LSB include the following. Anyone interested needs to email him:
  - Premium finding – Need 2-3 new per month. Need participation of producers and Board Ops.
  - PSA's – Need to increase revenue from these to \$2-3000 per month. Listeners can get ideas for new PSA's by listening to other radio stations, NPR, etc., to see what PSA's they are doing that are compatible with Pacifica's Mission and then he and Linda can pitch them on giving us some of that business.
  - Underwriting – To find publishers willing to underwrite shows that advertise their books, like Leonard Lopate's.
  - Outreach – Need to contact lapsed donors by directly calling them, as many either do not have or don't respond to emails.
- ❖ Other fundraising plans:
  - Fall Fund Drive to begin Sept 4<sup>th</sup> – have a commitment for a matching fund for 4 mos of rent for 388, but only will match as much as we raise. If we raise the whole amount (\$26,500), we may also get the extra month (\$5,300).
- ❖ Some specials for which we can offer premiums and fundraise:
  - Eddie Palmieri Interview Special
  - Serious 9-11 Show, emphasizing conspiracy theories about it that are becoming more mainstream now
  - Health Day
- ❖ Grants – A grant specialist is offering pro-bono help and we may obtain a grant for the 4TS, Call Center, and Rent arrears.
- ❖ Plan for Volunteers in the Station to displace some of the dependence on the Call Center
  - The Corporate Counsel is working on a waiver in view of the lapsed excess liability insurance for visitors (and staff) at the station. Volunteers by signing these waivers promise not to sue the station for incidents such as falls, etc. plus they will be bonded for taking listener's financial information on the phone. Also working on iPad programs for taking this info in a blinded fashion.
- ❖ Provided spreadsheets showing the top fundraisers by program, the top 20% of programs, and the top 20 premiums.
  - Gary Null, Kristine Blosdale, and Tony Bates remain the top pitchers.
  - He's aiming for a 1:10 ratio of cost vs revenue for premiums.
- ❖ There was a bequest from the Bolton family of \$189K, which is still in escrow, but when we get it, we will have to give \$120 K of it to Central Services.

The Committee discussed the report

8:32 pm ET R. Paul Martin read the requirements for voting membership in the committee and called roll again. Advised Mario that this is his second consecutive meeting in a row and he will be a full voting member if he makes the next meeting.

The Committee continued to discuss the report.

8:41 pm ET Motion (Jim Dingeman) To extend discussion another 15 minutes. Passed without objection.

Jim Dingeman invited people to email him at [jimdingeman@yahoo.com](mailto:jimdingeman@yahoo.com) their comments re why BAI is important to them, as he is working with a current candidate for the LSB who is a professional fundraiser. Using these comments, they plan to draft a fundraising letter.

A member pointed out the insurance question regarding volunteers is serious, as the station had to pay out \$30K in the past over one fall incident. Another volunteer sabotaged the elevator. We have to be vigilant on vetting who we let be volunteers, as just signing a waiver may not be enough.

Another member pointed out that there can be teams of volunteers, where one is a bonded person and the other three bring to this person any pledges that require that a listener give their financial information over the phone.

Matt Mazza stated that our bank balance has increased since he deposited checks totalling \$3K today.

Another suggestion for volunteer vetting is to only use people you know and who know the station, keep video surveillance on in the volunteer room, and warn them when they sign their waivers that they do not want to be contacted later by the FBI.

8:59 pm ET Motion (R. Paul Martin) To set next meeting date for 9-20-23 at 3:30 pm. Passed without objection.

New Business was then discussed.

Daryl McPherson suggested we look into setting up reciprocal promotion agreements with other independent news services, like Blackstone News. And that we focus on finding computer programs that offer an automatic system to take down confidential financial information. He also pointed out he earned \$50 this month for WBAI from his Good Search activities.

Michael D.D. White liked the idea of a Conspiracy Day focused on 9-11. He also stated he has a 12 page document outlining 750 other conspiracies with info rated "mostly true" on Wikipedia.

9:02 pm ET Motion (R. Paul Martin) To Adjourn. Passed without Objection.

Submitted by M. Kay Williams, Secretary