



**WMHT Public Media**

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**WMHT Educational Telecommunications  
WMHT Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes  
September 17, 2020**

A Meeting of the WMHT Board of Trustees was held on September 17, 2020 via a zoom visual and audio conference call. Kathleen Jimino, Chair of the Board of Trustees, presided.

***Present***

Kathy Jimino	Martin Mbugua
Robert Altman	Lee A. McElroy Jr
Don Applyrs	Susan Novotny
Bridget Ball Shaw	Karen Opalka
Karen Carpenter-Polumbo	Mary Ellen Piche
Gloria DeSole	Harry Rutledge
Doris Fischer Malesardi	Viki Sand
Mona Golub	Kelly Smith
Susan Kress	Teresa Zielinski
John Kolb	

***Excused***

Annemarie Lanese	Shelby Schneider
Steady Moono	

***Also Attending***

WMHT Staff: Sandra Beer, Val Belden, Virginia Claus, Mary Gribulis, George Hauenstein, Julie Raskin, Joseph Tovares, and Chris Wienk.

***Call to Order***

Ms. Jimino called the meeting to order at 4:06 PM.

***Consent Agenda  
Items***

On a motion by Ms. DeSole seconded by Mr. McElroy the consent agenda of minutes and notes listed below was unanimously approved by the Board of Trustees.

Minutes and Notes

- June 18, 2020 Board Meeting
- June 18, 2020 Audit Committee Meeting
- July 15, 2020 Investment Committee Meeting
- September 9, 2020 Strategic Planning Committee Meeting
- September 15, 2020 Finance Committee Meeting
- September 15, 2020 Governance Committee Meeting
- September 16, 2020 Development Committee Meeting

***Finance Committee***

Mr. Rutledge noted that the Trustees had received preliminary FY20 results and the statements reflecting the first 2 months of FY21. WMHT ended the FY20 in very good shape and FY21 is looking good to date.

***FY 21 and FY 22  
Financial/Revenue  
Strategies***

Mr. Altman provided a financial overview of the end of FY20, the budget for FY21 and the longer term concern for FY22. He noted that the strong ending to FY20 in large part by a special grant from CPB. The FY21 budget includes the expectation of the federal paycheck protection program loan forgiveness of approximately \$700,000 which allowed WMHT, along with significant expense reductions, to plan for sustaining current staffing and service levels. It is becoming increasingly likely that WMHT will receive a reduction of funding from New York State both in FY21 and most likely in FY22 which would be more than \$200,000 each year. Comparing FY21 to FY22, without the PPP grant in FY22, WMHT could be facing a budget gap of more than \$200,000 for FY21 which in FY22 might be as much as \$1 million.

Trustees spoke about the situation affirming that need and value of WMHT's current level of programming to serve the community and an inclination to focus on how to increase the revenue stream, including ideas for how Trustees can help in this effort. It was noted that there are two huge external factors, the upcoming presidential election and the continued coronavirus pandemic making it more difficult to plan ahead. It was noted that the Trustees will be working on the next strategic plan throughout this fiscal year as they are considering the financial aspects of this year's budget and the next.

***President's Report***

Mr. Altman noted that he has reported to Trustees about what has been happening in the past months so he asked his staff to report on upcoming programs

Mr. Wienk shared that WMHT-FM has been working with a number of musical organizations, Close Encounters with Music, the Bard Music Festival, and the Schenectady Symphony. The Albany Symphony Hour is being extended for another 8 weeks and a new 13 week series, Radio Pro Musica hour will begin on October 4th. In anticipation of Beethoven's 250th birthday in December, WMHT is getting input and introductions from local conductors to the symphonies for two weeks of the Big 1@1.

WEXT landed on the TU Best of 2020 for the first time. WEXT is planning a Bruce Springsteen 100, preparing for its annual Trick Or Treat playlist, and continues to host weekly Zoom Hangs with DJs, listeners and artists and At Home Sessions with different musicians. Work is being done to transition WEXT website's back end, to offer greater flexibility to showcase the content we're generating.

Mr. Tovaes spoke of the tremendous work that the video production team is doing, mostly from home, though now moving back into limited use of studio. New York NOW host Dan Clark is working on a televised debate for the Democratic and Republican candidates for the congressional NY-19 district which will be held on Oct. 15. Other producers are working on a New York NOW special to be broadcast on Oct 26 at 9 pm called A Time for Reckoning. The program will explore race and social justice in Albany. Participants will include Albany Mayor, Kathy Sheehan, Police Chief Eric Hawkins, and others, and will feature community voices as well as in-studio discussion.

Mr. Tovares also noted that AHA! is now airing a new episode each Wednesday, with some production now once again taking place in the studio and new field segments.

Ms. Gribulis spoke about the recent work of the digital team to introduce Trello to the entire visual production team to facilitate project management and expanding the use of Hearken to create a way for hearing from our viewers.

Mr. Tovares finished the production update by sharing a clip of PBS American Portrait and sharing the news that WMHT has received a grant to create a half hour local broadcast as an extension of the program with a focus on highlighting the rural areas of our region.

Mr. Altman closed his report expressing thanks to the Karen Opalka and her husband Chet for their major gift to the New York State Writers' Institute of, a longtime partner of WMHT. He noted how heartening it is to see significant gifts being made within the community to important cultural organizations. He also extended congratulations to Ms. Jimino on the announcement of being awarded the Edward H. Pattison Citizenship Award by the Rensselaer County Chamber of Commerce.

***Chair's Report***

Ms. Jimino extended her thanks to the Mr. Altman and his team for the tremendous work they are doing. She also thanked the board for their work to support the station.

On a motion by Ms. Kress seconded by Ms. Piche the board unanimously approved moving into executive session at 5.25 pm.

***Executive Session***

On a motion by Ms. Piche seconded by Ms. Zielinski the board unanimously approved to adjourn the executive session. No action was taken.

***Adjournment***

On a motion by Mr. Mbugua seconded by Ms. Kress the board unanimously approved adjourning the meeting at 5:33pm.