WMHT Educational Telecommunications
WMHT Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
November 19, 2020

A Meeting of the WMHT Board of Trustees was held on November 19, 2020 via a zoom visual and audio conference call. Kathleen Jimino, Chair of the Board of Trustees, presided.

Present
Kathy Jimino
Robert Altman
Don Appleyr
Bridget Ball Shaw
Karen Carpenter-Palumbo
Gloria DeSole
Doris Fischer Malesardi
Mona Golub
Susan Kress
John Kolb

Annemarie Lanesey
Martin Mbugua
Lee A. McElroy Jr
Steady Moono
Susan Novotny
Karen Opalka
Mary-Ellen Piche
Harry Rutledge
Viki Sand
Kelly Smith

Excused
Shelby Schneider
Teresa Zielinski

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 4:04 PM.

Consent Agenda Items
On a motion by Mr. Rutledge seconded by Ms. Golub the consent agenda of minutes and notes listed below was unanimously approved by the Board of Trustees.

Minutes and Notes
- September 17, 2020 Board Meeting
- October 1, 2020 Audit Committee Meeting
- October 7, 2020 Strategic Planning Meeting
- October 14, 2020 Investment Sub Committee Meeting
- November 5, 2020 Governance Committee Meeting
- November 12, 2020 Finance Committee Meeting
- November 16, 2020 Community Advisory Board Meeting

Finance Committee
Mr. Rutledge indicated that the Finance Committee concentrated on the October numbers and asked Mr. Altman to continue the report. Mr. Altman noted that net income before depreciation is $302,603 better than budget $72,242 better than last year actuals as a result of revenue being better and expenses lower than budgeted.
Especially notable, membership revenue is very strong with the caveat that the last six weeks of the calendar year are extremely important. Underwriting which is primarily from small businesses is meeting their reduced numbers; and the contract production business has had a good fall, taking advantage of a reduction in travel restrictions. The big unknown remains how much we will receive from New York State as it awaits news regarding federal stimulus. We have received $50,000 more than expected on the federal level due to a new allocation formula from CPB. Overall there is a positive outlook at this time.

Mr. Rutledge noted that the board designated fund had risen from $6.63 to $8.35 million from end of 2016 until now due in part to the board’s conservative board investment policy.

Ms. Jimino thanked him for leadership in this area.

Ms. Golub introduced the slate of officers for the following year:

On Motion by Ms. Golub duly seconded by Mr. Kolb, the following individuals were elected as Officers of the WMHT Board of Trustees, each to serve a one-year term ending at the close of 2021.

Officers:
- Chair – Kathy Jimino
- Vice Chair – Susan Novotny
- Secretary – Viki Sand
- Treasurer – Bridget Ball Shaw

Ms. Jimino introduced the auditor, Mr Testo of The Bonadio Group.

Mr. Testo shared that WMHT for FY20 has a clean audit free of any material issues and with no audit adjustments. Management adopted two new accounting standards per requirements and that was successfully tested. A supplementary schedule by CPB was audited per CPB requirements.

Ms. Jimino thanked Mr. Testo and Mr. Altman, Ms. Raskin and her team.

Ms. Jimino noted the departure from the board of two members and shared some of their contributions during their service. Mr. Jimino thanked Doris Fischer Malesardi for her many years of service since the 1960’s. Serving in many volunteer capacities, she made significant contributions to the success of WMHT auctions for many years, co-founding the major donor Edison Society, and she served three non-consecutive 6 year terms on the Board of Trustees. Ms. Jimino thanked Ms. Fischer-Malesardi for sharing her time, treasure and talent all these years. Ms. Fischer-Malesardi thanked everyone for the joy of meeting and working with tremendously talented people.
Ms. Jimino noted that Harry Rutledge was completing six years on the Board. During this time he has served as Treasurer and Chair of the Finance Committee and Investment Sub-Committee. He also served on the ad hoc Spectrum Auction Committee. Ms. Jimino thanked Mr. Rutledge for his leadership on the board and strong support of WMHT. Mr. Rutledge noted it has been a privilege and a pleasure to serve on the board will keep his commitment to WMHT.

**President’s Report**

Mr. Altman noted that this annual report is about the Fiscal Year that ended in June. That year was divided into two parts, the pre-pandemic year that ended in March and the time that followed. Speaking to the auditor’s positive report, Mr. Altman noted that audiences relied upon us and in turn have supported the station during this time. Mr. Altman shared that the robust individual support has continued during the current year, and has been helped by the smooth transition last year of our membership activity to an outside service provider.

Throughout the early part of last year WEXT experienced audience growth from the investment made in the expansion of the signal while WMHT-FM continued its trusted service to the community. The fall of 2019 was a busy time on TV, with a robust slate of local specials including, *The Scene*, our look at the Capital Region Music Scene in the ‘60’s and ‘70’s, *Lena, A Life in Folk* about a Saratoga legend, and *Creative Capital*, the culmination of our year-long look at the creative economy on our weekly program *AHA!* A year ago Matt Ryan left the helm of *New York Now* after a decade and Dan Clark arrived to produce and host the show at the beginning of the 2020.

In March, everything changed. We left the offices on March the 13th and didn’t return for the rest of the Fiscal Year. The work continued, focused on helping our community and its institutions navigate the unprecedented situation; responding directly in each of our areas of focus.

*New York Now*, continued to produce the weekly program which is broadcast across the state. Dan Clark created the entire show remotely, usually at the Capitol, as he reported on the Governor’s then-daily COVID-19 updates for many months.

To support cultural institutions the station created *Art in Residence*, a series of short videos that appeared on-air and online. This allowed the region’s cultural leaders to continue to connect with the community at a time when their venues were closed. The radio team created new programs highlighting the work of our local musicians and musical organizations, work that has continued into the new fiscal year.

The station provided *WMHT Home Classroom*. Working with the Capital Region BOCES our station broadcast a ten hour block of educational programming each weekday, drawn from the extraordinary library that is public broadcasting’s legacy.
The entire staff worked remotely, often in challenging conditions, to advance the work of the station. Donors were asked and thanked, bills (and staff members) were paid, equipment was repaired, and new communications protocols were established. We learned lessons about our own flexibility and resilience as well as how important the work we do is to the community that we serve.

Mr. Altman noted that much remains to be done. The new world we entered into in March continues on with the adrenaline and nimbleness of the early days of challenge replaced by the grit and determination that is going to be necessary to get us through the coming months. When we emerge from this period, we will face a community that will need to heal and to rebuild. Our cultural institutions are facing an existential crisis, our social fabric is frayed and our community will be looking to us to help pave the way forward. This is a challenge that the station will embrace, knowing that it takes a singular commitment of staff and board alike. Mr. Altman expressed his gratitude for the support and guidance received from the Board throughout this continuing adventure and looks forward to the work ahead.

**Chair’s Report**

Ms. Jimino gave a brief report to note some key aspects of the previous year.

She noted that the extraordinary events of 2020 included a global pandemic, significant unrest surrounding racial inequality, and incredibly divisive politics. She noted that WMHT has been at the forefront of all of these issues providing leadership and programming in an extraordinary fashion to help our communities respond.

Additional educational programming has been offered that aligns with school district learning requirements and there are near daily coverage of Governor Cuomo’s press conferences on what’s open, what’s closed, who is getting or needs funding and what color is your region, yellow orange or red.

As frustration with racial injustices boiled over into marches across the nation, WMHT offered national resources on racial inequity as well as local programming addressing the issue of race relations in the region to help our communities understand the problem and address it.

WMHT also provided coverage of elections both locally and nationally as well as programming around art and documentaries. Radio programming, including new content, helped our audiences channel angst and energies.

Ms. Jimino complimented Mr. Altman and his staff on a job very well done of swiftly implementing changes and responding to needs in the community. She noted that as a board member it is rewarding to be part of WMHT and thanked the other board members for all they contributed this past year. She shared her expectation that WMHT will remain a vital leader in the community and closed her remarks by wishing everyone a happy holiday season and her gratitude for a tremendous year.
In additional business, Ms. Golub asked that names of possible trustees for the board be shared with her.

**Adjournment**

On a motion by Mr. Mbugua seconded by Ms. Kress the board unanimously approved adjourning the meeting at 4:55.