



WMHT Public Media

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**WMHT Educational Telecommunications
WMHT Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
January 16, 2020**

A Meeting of the WMHT Board of Trustees was held on January 16, 2020 at WMHT, Troy, New York. Kathleen Jimino, Chair of the Board of Trustees, presided.

Present

Kathy Jimino	Martin Mbugua
Robert Altman	Steady Moono
Don Applyrs	Susan Novotny
Bridget Ball Shaw	Karen Opalka
Karen Carpenter-Palumbo (phone)	Harry Rutledge
Doris Fischer Malesardi (phone)	Viki Sand
Mona Golub	Shelby Schneider
John Kolb	Kelly Smith
Susan Kress	Teresa Zielinski

Excused

Gloria DeSole	Lee A. McElroy Jr
Annemarie Lanese	Mary Ellen Piche

Also Attending

WMHT Staff: Sandra Beer, Val Belden, Virginia Claus, Mary Gribulis, George Hauenstein, Keith Martin, Julie Raskin, Joseph Tovaes, and Chris Wienk.
Guest: Noble Applyrs

Call to Order

Ms. Jimino called the meeting to order at 4:08 PM.

***Consent Agenda
Items***

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

Minutes and Notes

- November 21, 2019 Board Meeting
- January 15, 2020 Investment Sub-Committee Meeting
- January 15, 2020 Finance Committee Meeting

***Finance Committee
and Investment Sub-
Committee Report***

Mr. Rutledge asked Mr. Altman to provide a brief synopsis at the half-way point of the current fiscal year. Net Income before Depreciation is \$31,759 better than budget primarily because of expense control, as Operational Income is somewhat worse than budget. Membership, at 96% of goal, is not quite what we hoped but December was quite strong, as is true with the first two weeks of January. We are having an extraordinary year in Program Underwriting.

We will have some increased expenditures in second half of the year due to new staff and a new situation with our membership fundraising yet there is confidence that we will get to year end close or at the budget.

Mr. Rutledge shared about WMHT's portfolio and Hugh Johnson's presentation to the Investment Sub-Committee. Mr. Johnson discussed WMHT's portfolio of \$8.1 million regarding the quarter ending December 31, 2019. HJA has had WMHT's fund since July 2014. For the most recent quarter, the portfolio is 53 basis points behind the benchmark; gross of fees.

Productions Update Mr. Tovaes spoke about WMHT's three on-going video/television series.

The Local Feed was developed by Mary Gribulis and was WMHT's first "digital first" project, and will continue to share content digitally before being packaged into broadcast form. This winter WMHT will work with Amy Goldman Fowler, an expert on heirloom seeds. The narrative arc shows one growing season as we follow four different farms, each growing a different indigenous American heirloom seed. Learning about each farmer and four different chefs, the series will culminate in a grand meal prepared by the four chefs, and enjoyed with the four farmer families and Amy. *The Local Feed* will be a lens to explore a variety of important themes: business, the economy, industrialization, history, health, rural issues, climate change, and science. *The Local Feed* may be shared as part of a PBS digital series.

With the need to hire a *New York NOW* host, WMHT is doing a refresh of this long-running program. Dan Clark will be the new host, starting full time on January 21st. Increase digital and audio content for the program. We intend to build on our current partnerships with other NY public media stations and are in discussions with additional partners to work towards a state-wide news and public affairs collaboration project.

The new season of *AHA!* will begin on February 12th when the program, completely devoted to the arts in our communities, will return with a new host, Lara Ayad, an art historian who teaches at Skidmore. He concluded by sharing a couple clips of the two new hosts.

President's Report Mr. Altman reviewed the dashboard. The television audience is slowly but surely decreasing, though this chart shows a more dramatic drop than what we usually see. It is offset in part by growth in video streaming. The classical radio audience is steady and the WEXT radio audience is growing.

Mr. Altman reported that the Board Committees are beginning to get going on their work for the year and introduced Keith Martin, our new Director of Technology. He reported that the move of membership data, direct marketing and processes has taken place over the fall and the final portion of the change happened this week. This change is an opportunity to drive down costs, to experiment and to improve margins in our membership area.

There has been a great deal of contract work in the studios in the past few months. WEXT has been busy, including at First Night in Saratoga Springs and 200 live sessions recorded in the studios in 2019.

WMHT Classical co-sponsored its 11th Bach at New Year's Concert on January 1st with Berkshire Bach. WMHT-FM is planning a new venture -The Next Generation Festival on April 18th at Troy Savings Bank Music Hall with performances by area college musicians.

On the digital side, the New York NOW site was moved to a new platform and WMHT launched on the YouTube Channel in December. PBS is negotiating with other platforms, trying to make the brand ubiquitous, while also keeping it local and finding a way monetize it.

He asked board members to keep an eye out for an announcement of an event to kick off AHA! in early February.

Chair's Report

Ms. Jimino thanked Mr. Kolb for the wonderful job he did as Chair of the Board and also thanked the trustees for their service. She thanked board members who had responded to the year-end appeal as that is part of being a steward of the organization.

On a motion by Mr. Rutledge seconded by Ms. Sand the board unanimously approved moving into executive session at 4:55 pm.

Executive Session

On a motion by Mr. Rutledge seconded by Mr. Applrys the board unanimously approved moving out of executive session at 5:15 pm. No action was taken during the session.

Adjournment

On a motion by Ms. Ball Shaw seconded by Ms. Novotny the board unanimously approved adjourning the meeting.