

WVIA Community Advisory Board

Thursday, May 20, 2021 12 noon

The Community Advisory Board met at noon on May 20, 2021 at WVIA.. Attending were Tom Hall (chair), Judy Hall, Tony Brooks, Dick and Barbara Briden, Nell Donnelly-O'Boyle, Francisco Torres-Aranda, Bill Hudon, Tonyehn Verkitus, George Coulter . Absent: Linda Keene, Elaine Herzog, Caryn Powers, Murray Small, Midori Yamanouchi. Carla McCabe and Chris Norton represented WVIA.

Tom Hall (chair) called the meeting to order, and the CAB approved minutes of the January 2021 meeting. Carla McCabe and Chris Norton reviewed highlights of recent and upcoming programs. The public affairs show *Keystone Edition* is concluding its first season, including a one-hour special on the PA State System of Higher Education plan to consolidate six universities into two entities. Tom Hall expressed appreciation for the radio series forerunner to the TV/multi-platform *Keystone Edition*. Dick Briden pointed to the diversity of topics covered as a strength. Bill Hudon noted that the controversy over the PASSHE plan was well-handled. Several members suggested possible future topics. Bill Hudon noted good education coverage and mentioned Bloomsburg University's work in veterans' affairs. Tony Brooks itemized most common complaints to local governments: potholes and trash, and he identified a lack of public awareness of what local governments are responsible for and who does what. He also urged consolidation among municipalities. Dick Briden stressed the need for regional ambulance service, and Judy Hall added that the pandemic highlights the need for a regional public health service. Tonyehn Verkitus suggested a discussion of how Pennsylvania is different as a commonwealth. Nell Donnelly-O'Boyle proposed 30-minute conversations with knowledgeable people in various areas. Tom Hall mentioned the size and cost of the Pennsylvania legislature and the need for reform.

After much discussion of *Keystone Edition*, the CAB heard about several other spring highlights. WVIA celebrated Jazz Appreciation Month in April with numerous music specials on TV and radio. The Ken Burns documentary *Hemingway* drew a large audience over three nights and was the focus of multiple community engagement events at the Dietrich Theater in Tunkhannock. A grant supported content and screening/discussion events promoting the documentary *Oliver Sacks: His Own Life*. And WVIA produced five videos celebrating diverse individuals from our region reflecting on being an American today, leading to two screening/discussion events for the PBS *American Portrait* grant-funded project. Tom and Judy Hall attended the Hazleton screening. Event attendance has been modest due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but we are hopeful to be able to host more events once the pandemic fades.

Carla McCabe announced WVIA's intent to launch a journalism initiative, adding a news director and several reporter/hosts to add more regional radio news to the fine NPR national and world news of *Morning Edition* and *All Things Considered*. The plan is to build a multi-media news department for a stronger information presence in radio, TV, and digital content. Recruiting begins over the summer with the hope of launching the expanded service in the fall. Chris Norton invited CAB members to help identify venues where WVIA could hold community "listening sessions," to hear about various community concerns as we plan future public affairs programming. Tony Brooks mentioned the Washington Square High Rise, where active senior citizens might be interested in such activities. Tonyehn Verkitus suggested asking the audience for venue ideas in their neighborhoods.

Chairman Tom Hall requested input from members as he prepares his annual report to the board of directors on the CAB's work this year. Bill Hudon noted WVIA's new *Keystone Edition* program series, upcoming journalism initiative, and food bank campaigns and volunteer shifts have enhanced WVIA's role and importance in the community. Tony Brooks added that the *Our Town* series instills pride of place and can be inspirational. George Coulter praised WVIA for doing a great job despite all the challenges of 2020-21. Tonyehn Verkitus valued how *Keystone Edition* highlights local residents with expertise in various fields. Tom Hall will circulate his report to CAB members and present it to the board of directors at their June meeting.

In accordance with the CAB bylaws, five long-serving members are rotating off the CAB, and WVIA presented them with "star" awards, thanking them for their service: Tony Brooks, George Coulter, Linda Keene, Caryn Powers, and Murray Small. After reviewing nominees, the CAB unanimously re-elected William Hudon and Tonyehn Verkitus, each for a second term, and unanimously elected seven new members, each for a first term: Arthur Breese, Della Hutchison, Stephen Lindenmuth, Ursula Myers, Doug Myers, Erica Rogler, and Omar Camacho. Chris Norton noted that these are all excellent candidates, representing some parts of our region previously unrepresented, and increasing the diversity of our CAB. With thanks to Tom Hall for his service as chair and Tony Brooks as co-chair, the CAB nominated and unanimously elected William Hudon as incoming chair and Tonyehn Verkitus and co-chair. Tom and Judy Hall continue to serve as CAB members for 2021-22.

The CAB selected as meeting dates for the upcoming year:

September 23, 2021

January 20, 2022

May 19, 2022

Meetings are held at 12 noon at WVIA studios, unless otherwise announced. With no other business, the meeting was adjourned by Tom Hall, chair.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Norton
Senior Vice President, WVIA