

WVIA Community Advisory Board

Thursday, January 21, 2021 12 noon Zoom

The Community Advisory Board met at noon on January 21, 2021 by Zoom. Attending were Tom Hall (chair), Judy Hall, Tony Brooks, Dick and Barbara Briden, Nell Donnelly-O'Boyle, Bill Hudon, Caryn Powers, Tonyehn Verkitus. Absent: George Coulter, Linda Keene, Elaine Herzog, Murray Small, Francisco Torres-Aranda, Midori Yamanouchi. Carla McCabe and Chris Norton represented WVIA.

Tom Hall (chair) called the meeting to order, and the CAB approved minutes of the September 2020 meeting. Carla McCabe and Chris Norton reviewed highlights of recent and upcoming programs. With funding from Lackawanna County Arts and Culture program, WVIA TV taped and broadcast Scranton Civic Ballet Company's *The Nutcracker*, preserving a holiday tradition when the pandemic made a live performance impossible. PBS Masterpiece celebrates its 50th anniversary with a new *All Creatures Great and Small* series Jan. 10- Feb. 22. *American Portrait* features everyday people telling their own stories Jan. 5-26, and WVIA is producing 5 brief stories of diverse NEPA residents for April. WVIA is lead producing station for the statewide *Battling Opioids Part 7* Jan. 28. The 2-part special from Dr. Henry Louis Gates, *The Black Church: This Is Our Story, This Is Our Song* airs Feb. 16 and 22 during Black History Month.

WVIA's new weekly public affairs series *Keystone Edition* has program topics planned through May, and the schedule was shared with CAB members. Jan. 21 Arts: *State of the Arts in Our Communities*; Jan. 28 Health: *New Year for Health, Blue Zones*; Feb. 4 Reports: *State of the Region* (top issues in NEPA); Feb. 11 Business: *Made in NEPA* (manufacturing successes, jobs). Members commented on the variety of public service topics. Tony Brooks suggested the historic preservation link to economic development. Nell Donnelly-O'Boyle pointed out that downtown Scranton now has a historic district. Dick Briden urged an emphasis on economic developments. Tom Hall mentioned how drug problems have affected the workforce in Hazleton. Bill Hudon suggested guests for the issue of food insecurity: Bloomsburg Food Cupboard (Martha Sheehy) and Agape.

Other coming attractions include the next Ken Burns and Lynn Novick biographical documentary, *Hemingway* April 5-6-7. WVIA will feature several local physicians in a grant-funded promotion for *Oliver Sacks: His Own Life*, April 9, partnering with Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine, The Wright Center, and the Lackawanna and Luzerne County Medical Societies. The initiative will include a screening at the Dietrich Theater in Tunkhannock and a radio story about Oliver Sacks' favorite writing retreat in nearby Jeffersonville, N.Y. And WVIA's television, radio, and digital platforms are planning an extensive celebration of Jazz Appreciation Month in April, with dozens of special programs.

Chairman Tom Hall led a discussion of public media's coverage of recent political events. NPR and PBS Newshour have carried in-depth reporting on the November election, post-election recounts and challenges, January 6 riot at the Capitol, inauguration, and will broadcast upcoming

impeachment proceedings. PBS *Frontline* also sets these national events in perspective. Tom Hall praised PBS and NPR coverage of current events, asking if WVIA was planning any local programming about the election challenge. Carla McCabe said it is difficult to address such controversial issues well without professional journalists on staff. It's a worthy aspiration to work toward, but we're just not staffed at that level at present. Bill Hudon pointed out that Bloomsburg University's Conversations for the Common Good civic series is on hold due to the pandemic, but recent events may suggest future discussions in that series.

Chris Norton reminded the CAB that term limits in the bylaws mean that of the 7 members whose terms expire May 2021, 2 are eligible for re-election, and they have expressed interest in standing for re-election. The other 5 members must rotate off for at least one year. All have been notified and have agreed to this arrangement. Therefore we seek 5-7 new members. Please forward nominations to Chris by April 15. He'll contact nominees to determine their interest in preparation for election at the CAB May 20 meeting. Those elected will start 3-year terms in September 2021. The CAB will also elect new officers. Tom Hall completes his 3-year term as Chair, but continues as a member of the CAB. Tony Brooks completes his term as Co-chair and rotates off the CAB for At least one year.

In other business, Dick Briden expressed appreciation for George Graham's weekly album reviews, a regular feature of the *Keystone Edition* radio program. He also enjoys the variety format of the radio station. Tom Hall added that the radio hosts are a major factor in the station's appeal. Carla McCabe acknowledged that there have been discussions of the radio format, and that some minor tweaks were being considered, but that her prevailing position is "if it ain't broke, don't fix it."

The meeting was adjourned. Next meeting: **Thursday, May 20, 2021** at 12 noon , likely on Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Norton
Senior Vice President