



## Educational Communications Board

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### EDUCATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS BOARD MEETING

ECB Board Room

3319 West Beltline Highway

Madison, Wisconsin

April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016

9:30 a.m.

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#### MINUTES

#### Roll Call and Introductions

Board Chair Dr. Rolf Wegenke called the meeting of the Educational Communications Board to order at 9:40 a.m. A roll call of Board Member attendance was recorded and a quorum was present. The complete attendance list follows:

Board Members Present:

- Dean Dietrich
- Eve Hall, Ph.D.
- David Hutchison
- Kurt Kiefer (representing Superintendent Tony Evers)
- Rich Lepping
- Eileen Littig
- Senator Luther Olsen
- Senator Fred Risser
- Karen Schroeder
- Rolf Wegenke, Ph.D., Chair
- Bohdan Zachary
- Jim Zylstra (representing Morna Foy)
- Cate Zeuske (representing Scott Neitzel)

Absent:

- Erin Kastberg (representing Ray Cross)



Approval of Minutes from the January 15th, 2016 ECB Board Meeting.

Eileen Littig moved, seconded by Karen Schroeder to approve the January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016 meeting minutes. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

**AGENDA ITEM 1.** Report of the Board Chair

Dr. Wegenke commended the ECB staff and expressed how proud he is of the staff's ability to maintain a high level of service during the last year, which was challenging due to budget cuts to the agency. On behalf of the board, Dr. Wegenke thanked ECB staff as well as those of the partners of public broadcasting.

**AGENDA ITEM 2.** Report of the Executive Director

Dr. Wegenke reminded board members that a copy of the Executive Director's written report was included in the board packets distributed prior to the meeting. Dr. Wegenke noted that Mr. Purcell will highlight his report for the board and encouraged members to use this time to raise questions for Mr. Purcell regarding the report or other issues affecting the agency.

Dr. Wegenke introduced Executive Director Gene Purcell. Mr. Purcell thanked Dr. Wegenke for the kind words and compliments regarding ECB staff which Mr. Purcell said were well deserved.

Mr. Purcell informed the Board that the ECB audit (Agenda Item 3) would be presented via telephone conference call at 10:00 a.m. and he would try to keep his report brief.

Mr. Purcell provided an update on the FCC Spectrum Auction which is now underway. Mr. Purcell believes the reverse auction process will be completed by late summer or early fall, after which we will be notified whether any ECB stations will be subject to the repacking process. Mr. Purcell reported that the National Association of Broadcasters estimates 800 – 1200 stations will be subjected to repacking. According to Mr. Purcell, the costs associated with repacking are estimated at \$1 – 2 million per site. These costs are supposed to be reimbursed by the FCC as part of the repacking process. While it remains unknown if any ECB stations will be repacked, Mr. Purcell reported that ECB Delivery staff are preparing plans for each site. Mr. Purcell reported the FCC's timeline for the repacking process is 39 months. Mr. Purcell indicated there is concern within the industry of shortages of equipment and tower crews and there are questions as to whether a 39 month window is realistic. In the meantime, Mr. Purcell and the Delivery Division have been working with the Department of Administration Legal and Purchasing departments to obtain a general waiver to facilitate the purchase of new transmission equipment as part of the repacking process.



Senator Luther Olsen inquired about the price estimates to replace transmission equipment and wondered if those estimates were calculated before or after the FCC Spectrum Auction was announced. Mr. Purcell responded that the estimates reflect pre-auction prices and he is concerned that the costs may rise due to overwhelming demand.

Cate Zeuske asked if it were possible to buy equipment ahead of the auction and also whether it's possible to coop with other broadcasters in order to negotiate lower prices. Mr. Purcell replied that it's not necessary to buy equipment until we know whether or not a station will be repacked. Mr. Purcell added that he believes public broadcasters may explore the possibility of combining buying power but will remain at a disadvantage to large broadcast groups.

Dave Hutchison inquired about the 39 month timeline for implementing the repack and asked what the consequences are if a broadcaster fails to meet that deadline. Mr. Purcell replied that FCC Spectrum Auction rules stipulate that stations that have not completed the repack within 39 months will go off the air until the repack is complete. Mr. Purcell added that the FCC has stated they don't want any stations to go off the air.

Mr. Purcell continued his report by with a brief overview of the ECB's state budget submission which is due September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016. Mr. Purcell reported that the ECB's submission will include a request for partial restoration of funding for the Wisconsin Media Lab (WiML).

Mr. Purcell continued by acknowledging the on-going work of Kristin Leglar and Erin Campbell in maintaining the WiML website, resources and outreach with limited funding. Mr. Purcell added that Ms. Campbell has been working with the Department of Public Instruction to implement a new open source content management system (Drupal) which will integrate with our partner websites and facilitate the sharing of content more efficiently.

Following Mr. Purcell's report there were a few questions and comments from board members. Eileen Littig inquired about the future of the WiML. Mr. Purcell replied that WiML's website and outreach to educators continues. Mr. Purcell added that as programming licenses expire, some content will be removed from the WiML website but there remains content which was licensed in perpetuity as well as originally produced content for which ECB is the copyright holder. Mr. Purcell also indicated that work to identify alternate funding sources is on-going.

Karen Schroeder asked Mr. Purcell to elaborate on the efforts to identify alternative funding. Mr. Purcell responded that representatives from each member of the public broadcasting partnership have engaged in discussions and begun collecting research to identify alternative funding ideas. Mr. Purcell anticipates this research to continue through the summer and is hopeful a recommendation can be made by fall.

Eileen Littig inquired about what resources are needed for Wisconsin educators that are not currently available but could be produced by WiML. Kristin Leglar replied that based on



outreach and surveys of educators, educational media focused on agriculture in Wisconsin is the most requested and remains a high priority for future WiML projects.

Dave Hutchison asked if there has been any consideration to collaborate with trade associations or interest groups as a means to bring in new funding for educational media. Mr. Purcell replied that it's an idea worth exploring. Mr. Purcell added that editorial integrity policies become important in these situations since they can present conflicts of interest.

As part of the discussion regarding alternative funding methods, Cate Zeuske shared an example of collaboration between multiple state agencies related to the 100 year anniversary of the State Capitol. Ms. Zeuske encouraged the ECB and WPT to consider reaching out to other state agencies for resources and programming ideas.

Kurt Kiefer highlighted the ongoing collaboration between WiML and the Department of Public Instruction to secure licensed, open content digital media and suggested that a documentary about the State Capitol would be welcomed and appreciated by educators.

There were no additional questions or comments regarding the Executive Director report.

**AGENDA ITEM 3.** Acceptance of Annual Financial Audit Results, Carrie Gindt, CPA  
Reilly, Penner & Benton LLP

Gene Purcell introduced Carrie Gindt, CPA, who joined the meeting via telephone. Ms. Gindt provided a brief review of the audit report which was provided to board members in advance of today's meeting. A complete copy of the report will be included with the official minutes of today's meeting. Following Ms. Gindt's review, there were a few follow up questions from board members and a brief discussion.

Karen Schroeder moved to accept the audit, seconded by Cate Zeuske. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

**AGENDA ITEM 4.** Young Performers Initiative Update, Jon Miskowski, WPT

Gene Purcell introduced Jon Miskowski, WPT Director, who had been asked to update the Board regarding WPT's "Young Performers Initiative". Young Performers Initiative is a statewide effort to raise the visibility of the arts, celebrate the creative achievements of Wisconsin youth and support the arts in education. Wisconsin Public Television, in partnership with Wisconsin School Music Association, collaborated on the project to highlight Wisconsin's talented young performers and those who inspire them. Mr. Miskowski introduced Megan Aley and Steve Doebel from Wisconsin Public Television who worked on the educational and videography components of the project. Mr. Miskowski displayed a preview of the video for board members and announced the final version will air during the fall.



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### **AGENDA ITEM 5.** Financial Report

A finance report was not presented.

### **AGENDA ITEM 6.** Evaluation of WECB Executive Director

Pursuant to s. 19.85(1)(c), Wis. Stats., the Board convened in a closed session for the annual performance evaluation of the WECB Executive Director.

Upon return to open session, Board Chair Wegenke informed those present that the Board's performance evaluation of the Executive Director was completed and that Mr. Purcell would continue to serve as Executive Director.

### **AGENDA ITEM 7.** Questions/Comments from Board Members

There were no questions or comments from board members.

### **AGENDA ITEM 8.** Adjournment

Senator Luther Olsen moved to adjourn, seconded by Karen Schroeder. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote. Dr. Wegenke announced the meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.