

Minutes of ECB Board meeting, October 21, 2022

Jim Zylstra called the meeting to order. David Jones on the roll. Chairman Zylstra. Here Niles Berman.

Unknown Speaker 8:43

Here, Senator Janet Dooley.

Unknown Speaker 8:50

Deal with Chris Patton.

Unknown Speaker 8:54

Sorry, Chris Patten. Are you on the line? And Chapman? Yeah.

Unknown Speaker 9:05

Hector cologne. Here.

Unknown Speaker 9:08

Representative Dave Considine. President, Senator Alberta Darlene. Alyssa Kenny.

Unknown Speaker 9:19

Luke, here. Eileen linic. Here, other LeRoi here.

Unknown Speaker 9:27

Representative Pat Snyder, here Baudin Zach Zachary,

Unknown Speaker 9:33

here by phone.

Unknown Speaker 9:35

And also joining us from the Department of Public Instruction is Barbara van Haren. Here Thank you.

Unknown Speaker 9:45

Well welcome, everybody. This is my first meeting chairing. So hopefully if things go smoothly, we have a quorum, so that's a good start.

Unknown Speaker 9:54

I thought since we actually have some new board members, we should take a few minutes to just introduce our ourselves. So I think I think I'll start right over here with you Alyssa since you're in the room?

Unknown Speaker 10:07

Sure. Can people hear me? Like sir? Um, the morning my name is Alyssa Kenny I. Let's see, I've been on the board for two years, I think. And in my day job I work at the Public Service Commission. I'm the director of broadband and digital equity for the state. In addition to that, I'm a web PR and US content PBS lover, I think is important.

Unknown Speaker 10:36

Thank you. I think I'll just continue to rip. David, wait, you want to just say a few words?

Unknown Speaker 10:41

Hello, I'm David Cobb. I'm

Unknown Speaker 10:42

the executive assistant at the ECB. And I'm sorry to report that today is my last day in this position, because I've accepted a new position, another state agency. So thank you for letting me introduce myself. I hope I've been helpful too. Over the years. Eileen Lytec. I really miss seeing you here in person for meetings. And I've enjoyed getting to know all of you. So thank you so much. We just go around.

Unknown Speaker 11:14

I'm Jennifer Dargan. I'm the Deputy Director at ECB.

Unknown Speaker 11:18

I'm Amy Wright, finance director here at the ECB.

Unknown Speaker 11:23

And I'm Jim Sell Shaw. I'm the Executive Vice President for the Wisconsin Technical College System. And I've been on the board for 17 years already. Oh, time flies. Chair now. So anyway,

Unknown Speaker 11:38

I'm here to battle. I'm the Executive Director of the ECB. I have been at ECB only slightly longer than Jim. I've been here 18 years, and I've been the Executive Director for the past four.

Unknown Speaker 11:50

I think I'll just kind of read off people's names that I know are here. So Niles.

Unknown Speaker 11:56

Thanks, Jim. I'm Niles Berman. I have been on the board for a little over two years. And I served on the board by virtue of serving as the chair of the Wisconsin Public Radio Association.

Unknown Speaker 12:12

Thank you Representative Considine. Yeah,

Unknown Speaker 12:21

Dave Considine, I represent the variable soccer area in the State Assembly and I'm an assembly rep on

Unknown Speaker 12:26

the committee. Hi, sorry for the delay. Lea, Luke and I have been serving for two years, I think and are a year and a half appointed by the governor and representing K through 12. Public education. Thank you, Eileen. Eileen, yeah,

Unknown Speaker 12:56

yeah, I'm I have served on the board. For many years. I've had second gubernatorial appointments. I'm a citizen representative. In my real life. I'm an independent, who serves on a program on Nova April on the Alzheimer's and so glad to be sitting on the board. Baudin

Unknown Speaker 13:19

Good morning. I'm Baudin Zachary. I have been for almost seven years, the vice president and general manager of Milwaukee PBS. I left the station A week ago and continue as acting general manager and will be consultant to MATC and Milwaukee PBS. As as they College. Let's for this my successor.

Unknown Speaker 13:51

Thank you, Heather.

Unknown Speaker 13:55

Good morning. Yes. My name is Heather LaRoy. I am the Director of Strategic Communications at the UW system. I am here representing President Jay Rothman. And I believe I've been on the board three or four years and I've been at UW for 14

Unknown Speaker 14:10

Thank you. There are a couple of new members and champion.

Unknown Speaker 14:17

Morning everyone, this is my first board meeting I just joined for a little bit ago. And I'm representing citizen representative and I but I have a background in the K 12 are Rico and I'm a non partisan policy researcher in the K 12 row. So I'm really happy to be here. Nice to meet you. Well,

Unknown Speaker 14:39

thank you. Hector cologne.

Unknown Speaker 14:43

Yes, they do. Some a representative from the Board of Regents. I've been on the Board of Regents for about three years now a time flies during the pandemic. But here I am. It's so nice to join you to be a part of this board. You Well, my job is I'm the president, CEO of Lutheran Social Services in Wisconsin and Michigan. And again, thank you for having me.

Unknown Speaker 15:09

Welcome. Both of our new board members really appreciate your service on the board. I don't know if I missed anybody, but I did. Please speak up. I don't think I did. But someone may have joined since I marked off who was here.

Unknown Speaker 15:24

Not a board member, but can introduce myself, Bart van Haren, I have about three years in the K 12. world and have served at the Department of Public Instruction since 2014. Retired in 2021, and returned recently as the Interim Assistant State Superintendent for the division for libraries and technology, which I'm pleased to be representing GPI.

Unknown Speaker 15:53

Thank you. Representatives, Schneider, are you on the line?

Unknown Speaker 15:59

Yes, I'm here, enjoying this 50 degree weather we have up here right now. I'd represented the 85th assembly district boss offs in the metro area. And I've been on the board about four years.

Unknown Speaker 16:13

Right. Thank you. Hopefully, that's everyone. Now, I hope hopefully I didn't miss anyone else. Well, so that's basically my report was to have everyone introduce themselves to each other today. I'm very pleased to be sitting as chair. And in. I think later, we'll talk about approving meetings. So I have a couple more things to say then. But otherwise, I'll turn it over to Martin.

Unknown Speaker 16:38

Okay. Great. Thank you. Thank you, everyone, for joining us today. Just a couple of things from my report to share and to answer any questions you might have. The first Under Strategic Plan direction to is responsible stewardship of agency resources. So in the board packet, I sent you the link to our biennial budget submission. That was due to the legislature to the state budget office on September 15. All we are requesting in this budget is standard Budget Adjustments only. So that amounts to an increase of just over \$800,000 over our chapter 20 amounts in the current biennium. Any questions about those figures? Or issues?

Unknown Speaker 17:26

Is it the same as cost to continue?

Unknown Speaker 17:29

Or essentially,

Unknown Speaker 17:32

I guess I'm saying is it? Are we actually taking any cuts? No. No,

Unknown Speaker 17:37

we are. We are this agency uses our GPR funds for staff, primarily debt service utilities, and small amount of operational expenses that mostly go back to do a in terms of lease and building lease and assessments and things like that. So the standard Budget Adjustments account for the percentage the incremental increases over time those have you know, there's a, I think it's a two and a half percent rent adjustment that goes up for the agency, their gross wage adjustments in the salary line, those kinds of things. So the standard Budget Adjustments account for those things. So hitting utility increases. So yes, and I've been in touch with a budget office this week about utility increases. It is the budget officers job to figure out what the trends on kilowatt hour expenditures are around the state and they will adjust our use by that. We have stayed within our GPR for utilities over the last three or four years. Prior to that, we often didn't have enough utilities, and I had to we had to spend program revenue to cover our utilities bill. But as we've been moving to the new liquid cooled transmitters, it's a better technology, it's a less draw. We've been able to keep our utilities expenditures within frame better. So we do have W EPP coming online in the next biennium, our new radio station in Rice Lake so that signal will use about \$14,000 a year more in electricity. And we've reported that to the budget office for forecasting. So we feel like they've got the information they need to assign our utilities numbers and we are we believe that we will operate in within whatever frame they set for us. So that's included in that. Yeah. Other questions about the budget request. We also submitted our capital budget request that was due that same week. It includes all agency and small project requests only. The total for that request is \$5.3 million it includes six radio transmitter upgrades, some next gen TV equipment as we move toward the new television standard, and some guy wire replacement in lacrosse, and which is a little bit of a high ticket item. So we have good relationships with that building office, we trust that they understand our work and know, I've been in communication with the staff there to talk about these expenditures, we have not received any red flags or warning signs or things that make us nervous. So we are hopeful for those that those requests will be approved. And then we'll just wait and see when we get our funding letter. Because we don't have anything that falls under the enumerated line in terms of dollar value. We don't have to make a case or, you know, be heard before the Building Commission. And we will wait for the building office to get back to us and let us know what our agency allocation will be for these projects in the coming biennium.

Unknown Speaker 21:06

And then they'll flip around as debt services to your city. So that's how that works. So any other questions about that?

Unknown Speaker 21:18

On the federal side of things, there is nothing to report. Nothing will be we don't expect anything until after the elections are over. To hear any more about that. We do know that the next generation warning system grants that were approved in the FY 22 federal budget. CPB will be monitored, we'll be administrating those. So we are expecting details on their criteria later this winter. It's only a \$40 million pot of money. But our agency has reason to believe we could be eligible for some of that they have set a priority for rural service. And we are a largely rural state. So we've been meeting with our FCC legal counsel and as well as as an agency and with our partners on the UW side of things to sort of start gaming, what we think the project's eligible projects might be and getting our ducks in a row for when the criteria is announced. And we can consider applying for those given the small amount, we know the competition is going to be fierce across the country for those dollars. And we will we will do our best and we will see if the priorities make us eligible or not. So we're working on that in the meantime. Questions. All right, then I will move on. David. If you want to share the screen, I would like to show you some lovely pictures from our tower site tours. Under direction one action three, I am charged to inform legislators and the public on the value public media delivers to Wisconsin. So in light of that. We did our we scheduled our first ever tour across the country or across the state of tower site visits with the idea being that we wanted to proactively meet with legislators and transparently show what the GPR does for the state what our networks do, and give them an opportunity to meet with the people that manage and those transmitters. So we did eight visits to the tower sites that are shown on this graph here. Six TV FM sites and two radio sides. Our goal was to meet with our legislators and our board members, we invited all of the members of the state and federally legislated legislators for Wisconsin we invited the ECB board members, friends of PBS Wisconsin, Wisconsin Public Radio Association, and then associated friends and partners as those invitations were circulated. Our talking point was to talk about the statewide reach of our networks, the reliability of our transmitters as are necessary to meet our public safety mission. To demonstrate our collaborations with the Wisconsin Division of Emergency Management, Department of Military Affairs, Department of Homeland Security, State Patrol, Coast Guard, Civil Air Patrol, and county and municipality first responders. We wanted to showcase the expertise of our staff give them a little opportunity to remind people how smart and talented they are. To demonstrate the varied backgrounds of the people on our staff, including military and corporate telecommunications, people that now work here And to really showcase the stewardship of these sites, including demonstrating the utilities reduction numbers, with our recent transmitter upgrades, and really talk about the transparency of service. So if David will flip to the next slide, you can see that every single day we had a tower site visit was a gorgeous day. We very purposefully planned these to happen in September, because it's the most reliable weather, typically, in our state. You can flip to the next page too. And we just really wanted to invite people at since most of the tower tour is conducted outside or in sort of barren facilities, they're not real pretty on the inside. We just wanted to make sure that it was

a nice day to be out in the office and, and in the community. So we have some takeaways. And I thought I would share those with you. If you want to flip to the

Unknown Speaker 26:07

the last minutes or the next page here. There was bipartisan interest in nearly equal RSVP numbers as we looked at the people who had responded. So we felt like That was a very healthy showing for our organization, we had great opportunities for learning. A lot of people maybe slept through high school physics class, and did not always understand how these signals work. And so we had some real teaching opportunities where people who, unless you're at a place in in a situation where you are actually watching this technology at work, you might not be able to understand it. And when you can see and see the equipment and have the technicians that work on it everyday speak to you. It really contextualize is how this how the physics of broadcasting works. And we found a lot of our guests were really excited to finally be able to wrap their heads around around what broadcasting is. gonna flip to the next one, David. Yeah, it was also a great opportunity for staff development, we really had a lot of our broad production broadcasters, the people who sit in the radio studios join us in our various locations. And for them. Also understanding what happens to their show after they are broadcasting it in the studio was really good staff development, people really enjoyed seeing broadcasting at work and getting a better sense of their tech their relationship with their tower technicians and understanding the system. So we we saw really great benefits that way. We had some lessons learned, you can see that they were beautiful days. And September was a really pretty time. And it's an election year. And we had a lot of bipartisan RSVPs. And we had a lot of bipartisan cancellations. Because in election year, if you have an opportunity to meet with someone who can actually cast a vote, versus meeting with someone who runs a state agency and is going to ultimately be asking you for money, you're gonna make the decision to meet with the voter. And I fully understand that. And I appreciate that they're doing the good work of running for office. And realize that if we choose to capitalize on September dates, again, we should do those in even numbered years, or odd numbered years, not even numbered years going forward. So timing matters. One of the other things we understand is that group size matters, too. Tower sites are small places, and they're noisy. And if you really want the group to be able to hear the technician describing things, you need to stand a little closer together in order to hear. So other feedback would be to have smaller groups or to run small groups and smaller cycles on a single day. So we're looking at how we might schedule these better so that people have a better personal experience when they're in the site. So those are kind of our big takeaways. We think it was really beneficial. All the feedback we got from the legislators or their staff, or our board members that went was that it was a it was a good experience. It was nice to be outside it was nice to you have a better sense of what we do. And and it's something we should keep doing. So we're going to refine, look at our calendars refine the ways we meet with people to bring them in, but it was definitely worth it. So lots of benefits we were hoping for and benefits we hadn't predicted. But also things We could do to make it better. So I just wanted to share that with you. Representative Snyder and Considine both attended. And I don't know if either of them have any comments on their experience, but you can take it off now. We'd be open to comments if you've got them.