

**Vermont PBS
Community Council Meeting
April 22nd, 2015
Elley-Long Music Center
Colchester, VT**

Members present: Steve Alexander (chair), Toby Knox (vice chair), Jane Birnn, Nora Jacobsen, Offie Wortham

Members unable to attend: Jerry Aldredge, Ryan Doyle, Bill Holiday, Barbara Morrow, Olga Peters, Alisha Sawyer (past chair), Lars Hasselblad, Torres, Leon Walls

Staff Present: Holly Groschner, George Hauenstein, Chuck Pizer, Andrea Rosencrantz

Board Members Present: Rob Hofmann (chair), Julia Andrews, Pam Mackenzie (past chair), Jeremy Schrauf, Mary Moran, Brian Harwood, Jim Clubb, Carrie Havelka

Guests: Randall Balmer, Joyce Mckeeman, Hal Colston

MINUTES

Steve Alexander called the meeting to order at 2:05.

A motion was made by Toby Knox and seconded by Jane Birnn to accept the minutes of the January 2015 meeting. None opposed, motion carried. The minutes will be posted on the website and sent to the Board of Directors.

Steve noted the importance of Council members reaching out to their legislators and media about the funding reductions for Vermont PBS. Chuck Pizer can help with any messaging questions.

Offie hosted a screening of American Denial at Johnson State. 95 people attended. Chuck reported that Bill Holiday also did a screening of American Denial at the high school. In addition, he did a screening of Last Days in Vietnam. Chuck reported that Jerry continues with Community Cinema at Catamount Arts with 15-20 people attending each screening. PBS Kids film series is doing well with 75-135 kids attending the monthly screenings. Chuck reported that Alisha Sawyer hosted a screening of ODD Squad at her local library.

The Council discussed ways that Vermont PBS can be more relevant in member communities. Holly Groschner stated that she wants to see more Vermont content on Vermont PBS. Vermont PBS needs to hear about issues in the community. Council members are encouraged to bring topics and ideas for content to the station. Jane Birnn noted her frustration when she brought a topic for content to the station a few years ago and nothing happened with the idea. Nora Jacobsen is concerned about the lack of local programming on the plus channel. The Vermont Movie premiere last year on Plus with only two other local films airing over the past year. In addition, Vermont PBS does not compensate local filmmakers for airing their films. Holly added that she is starting a meeting with staff where anyone can bring ideas for content. Holly is also reaching out to content providers (Mt Mansfield Media) to showcase their content on the Plus channel. Toby stated that the work that the Council has done is great. However, the Council needs to become more active rather than reactive; the composition of Council members needs to be considered. Perhaps have the number of representatives from counties tied in with the population of the county. Market research needs to be done on brand identity.

Holly updated the Council on the status of state funding. The station is continuing to plead its case for funding to the state legislators. It is important to have community members contact their state representatives on Vermont PBS' behalf. Holly asked for the Council members' thoughts on using the airwaves to address the public on the potential loss of state funding. Toby felt that it would be better to reach out to donors through email communications and not on the airwaves. Brian Harwood asked Holly to send out talking points to Council and Board members. Rob Hofmann felt that it was best to have people call the statehouse and have messages delivered to representatives. David Taplin asked if there is any conflict using the airwaves since the station receives state funding. Holly noted that there is no legal problem in using the airwaves, but potential perception issues.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:25.