

**Vermont Public Television  
Community Council Meeting  
January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2015  
Vermont PBS Studios  
Colchester, VT**

Members present: Steve Alexander (chair), Toby Knox (vice chair), Jerry Aldredge, Jane Birn, Ryan Doyle, Nora Jacobson

Members unable to attend: Bill Holliday, Offie Wortham, Leon Walls, Olga Peters, Barbara Morrow, Alisha Sawyer

Staff Present: Charlie Smith, Holly Groschner, Chuck Pizer, George Hauenstein, Kelly Luoma (via phone), Rob Cunningham, Neil Hilt, Andrea Rosencrantz

Board Members Present: Rob Hofmann (Board chair), Julia Andrews, Pam Mackenzie, Pat Sabalis, Jeremy Schrauf, Mary Moran, Brian Harwood

## **MINUTES**

### CHAIR'S REMARKS/COUNCIL BUSINESS

Steve Alexander called the meeting to order at 1pm. He welcomed Holly Groschner, the new president of Vermont PBS. He thanked board members for attending the council meeting. This will hopefully become a regular occurrence with the council and board meetings held on the same day.

### NEW PRESIDENT'S REMARKS AND DISCUSSION

Holly stated that she is proud to be the new president of Vermont PBS. She is grateful for Charlie Smith. She plans on listening to the Board, Council and staff to find out what change will be best for the station. Since being hired, she has been asking friends/neighbors their thoughts on Vermont PBS. There is stellar content on the station. Technology is evolving.

Rob Hofmann added that he is thrilled to have the Board and council meetings held on the same day. He hopes that this will continue on an ongoing basis so that there is increased interaction between the two groups. He noted that the station was extremely fortunate to have had Charlie Smith in the position of interim president for the past months. Charlie has provided a forward momentum for the organization to build on.

### STAFF UPDATES

George Hauenstein stated that Ann Aikens has joined development as the new major gifts director. December pledge was a little different this past year. Test stations are working on a three year long initiative to pledge around core programming. Fund your favorites will be part of pledge drives. Any feedback is appreciated. Events that are upcoming: State of the Station (4/22) and Britcom teas throughout April. Ideas for another Downton Abbey event would also be appreciated.

Glenn Dudley stated that in mid-December significant ice built up on the Mt Ascutney transmitter. When the ice shed, it caused significant damage to transmission line. Mt top engineers restored service by the first of the year. Additionally, there was a system failure with content servers. Pat

Sabalas asked about content that was lost with the failure. Glenn stated that the station has had to reacquire the media. Kelly added that they are still working on rebuilding the library.

A motion was duly made and seconded to approve the November 7<sup>th</sup> minutes. None opposed. Motion carried.

The April Board meeting date has been changed to Wednesday, April 22 to coincide with the state of the station event. The council discussed moving their meeting as well to that date. The June meeting will be held on June 15<sup>th</sup> in the Rutland area.

#### COUNCIL IN THE COMMUNITY

Jerry Aldredge of Catamount Arts noted that at Catamount Arts two series have been quite successful. Independent Lens each month and, Vermont PBS kids screenings had positive feedback and attendance.

Chuck reported that Bill Holiday has done a screening of the Last Days Of Vietnam. As a teacher, he gets interesting people into his classroom and brings in digital media.

#### STAFF UPDATES – PT2

Charlie Smith reviewed his 10 months at the station. There has been much accomplished. The station is moving forward with positive momentum. The rebranding has gone well. The Plus channel was kicked off last July. The vision of the Plus channel is to showcase local content. The CPB matter has been resolved. The local hockey documentary was a huge success that created a relevance to a different demographic. The Ryan Miller web series also is attracting a younger demographic. The station is strong financially.

Charlie Smith explained the FCC spectrum repacking and reverse auction. The FCC will hold a reverse auction in order to gain frequencies that can then be sold for new technologies. The station is in the process of researching if the station is able to participate in the auction with maintaining its mission to serve the state of Vermont. This is a complex issue that has the potential of great opportunities. The auction is completely voluntary. Over the air viewership is approximately 10% in Vermont.

Neil Hilt, producer of Outdoor Journal, asked the council for their thoughts on using user generated content in Outdoor Journal. Outdoor Journal started out being funded by a USDA grant. At the time, a regional series was proposed, but couldn't find any funding for a regional series. This might be a good time to revisit that concept.

Kelly stated that the Last Days in Vietnam will air at the end of April. As always, looking at ways to use our content in the community is important. Audiences are consuming content. Mass consumption of media is growing on all platforms. Vermont PBS needs to be on all possible platforms with content. PBS is looking at a streaming service for PBS content. This could be a good fundraising perk with an overall benefit for the organization. Rights issues could be problematic for Canadian viewers.

Chuck noted that the PBS Kid's writers contest will happen again this year. Flyers are available for handouts.

Steve Alexander presented Charlie Smith with a certificate in appreciation for his work as interim president of Vermont PBS.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:05.