

Vermont PBS  
Community Council Meeting  
December 11, 2015  
Vermont PBS Studio - Colchester, VT

Present: Steve Alexander (chair), Toby Knox (vice chair), Jerry Aldredge, Offie Wortham, Joyce McKeeman, Bill Holiday, Jane Birnn, Nora Jacobsen, Cindy Weed

Absent: , Barbara Morrow Lars Hasselblad Torres, Randall Balmer

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

Guests: Cindy Waters, Emerald Drake, Kevin Ellis

### Minutes:

Steve Alexander called the meeting to order at 12:35. He welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions were made. Steve welcomed the newest member of the Council – Cindy Weed from Franklin County. Steve announced that Toby Knox and Hal Colston have been elected to the Vermont PBS Board of Directors. He thanked them for their time and service to the Council.

A motion was made by Toby Knox, seconded by Bill Holiday to approve the minutes of the August 14, 2015 meeting. None opposed, motion carried. The minutes will be forwarded to the Board of Directors and posted on the Community Council webpage.

The Council discussed various screenings and events that have happened in their communities. Joyce McKeeman partnered with the Thetford Academy to screen A Self Made Man. Students ran the project. There was a panel discussion after the screening of the film.

Bill Holiday screened Debt of Honor to over 200 people at the high school in Brattleboro. In addition, he screened Homestretch to an audience of 92. He added that all Vermont PBS content is superb and is a conduit in which students become engaged. Holly asked how Vermont PBS is recognized to the attendees of screenings. Bill explained that Vermont PBS is thanked in the introduction. Bill added that he has created a Facebook page for the Council. Any member can send him pictures from their events and he will publish them. Joyce cautioned that with her screening, the subject matter was quite sensitive and included adults and students in the audience and on the panel. It wouldn't necessarily be a good idea to use any photos as publicity. Joyce added that a Vermont PBS banner would be nice to have as a constant visual for the audience. Bill Holiday stated that he always asked about photos prior to the screenings. Holly suggested videotaping that request to have on record. Offie Wortham participated in a screening of Autism in Love at Johnson. The auditorium was filled with students. Chuck Pizer explained that the Vermont State Colleges can take the materials and make them part of the curriculum. Students then receive credit for attending.

Nora Jacobsen explained the Vermont Youth Filmmakers competition. This is for ages 14-30. Outreach is beginning now with entries to be due in April. There will be a festival screening in May. Last year was the

first for the contest. Technical issues resulted in not being able to broadcast the winners from last year on Vermont PBS.

Jerry Aldredge discussed the successful relationship between Vermont PBS and Catamount Arts. He is able to show a lot of content at Catamount. Every event is promoted to the public. He has found that posters/flyers put up around town have been successful in reaching potential attendees. Additionally, the Vermont PBS Kids film festival has had tremendous turnouts.

Cindy Waters, a guest at this meeting, stated that in her work at the Manchester Library, she values the opportunity to work with Vermont PBS. The library is planning on hosting a tea and screening of Downton Abbey.

Holly Groschner thanked the Council members for their engagement. Membership has been declining at a rate of 3-5% a year. Presently there are approximately 20,000 members of the station. Holly has made it a goal to reach 40,000. Holly explained to the Council that membership in Vermont PBS is not a financial transaction, but rather someone who has an active relationship with the station. Donors make members possible for the station. The station needs donors to give for those who can't. Vermont PBS is for all to share. An aspiration for the station is to become a platform for Vermont content.

George Hauenstein gave the council an update on Development activities. The first episode of the last season of Downton Abbey has been screened around the state. This gives the organization a chance to engage with fans, and also capture emails of those attending. Plans are underway for 'A Proper Cheerio!' where the full final episode will be screened at the Flynn in Burlington. This will be a ticketed event at \$85.00 per ticket.

Joe Merone reviewed a new upcoming local production. Poets in their Craft will premiere in March. This is a series that showcases Vermont Poets in local bookstores reading their poetry.

Chuck Pizer reviewed Engagement events. Spooky Saturday saw attendees from 11 counties. 307 kids and 260 parents attended the event. Indie Lens Pop-up will have screenings of Black Panthers and Peace Officer. The 21<sup>st</sup> PBS Kids Writers contest will kick off in January. Deadline will be March 18<sup>th</sup>.

Holly Groschner introduced Kevin Ellis. The Board of Directors encouraged station management to spend money on a lobbyist this year in hopes of restoring some state funding. Kevin explained that once again, this will be a difficult year in the legislature. It is important to get the message that Vermont PBS is an important asset to the state. Kevin encouraged the council members to be an advocate for the station in letters to the editors or in setting up meetings with their key legislators. Jane Birnn asked for talking points to be sent like last year. She also suggested that Seven Days might do a story on the importance of Public Television. It is important for the Council to be ambassadors for the station.

The nominating committee proposed the following slate of officers: Jerry Aldredge as chair, Bill Holiday as vice chair, and Steve Alexander as past chair. None opposed, motion carried.

Potential meeting dates will be sent to the Council by Chuck. The hope is to have 1-2 meetings a year on the same day as the Board of Directors to facilitate communications between the two groups.

Jerry thanked Steve for his leadership of the Council and presented him with a plaque of appreciation.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:40.