

Vermont PBS
Community Council Meeting
August 14, 2015
Vermont PBS Studio - Colchester, VT

Present: Steve Alexander (chair), Toby Knox (vice chair), Jerry Aldredge, Barbara Morrow, Offie Wortham, Hal Colston, Ryan Doyle, Olga Peters, Lars Hasselblad Torres, Randall Balmer, Joyce Mckeeman, Bill Holiday, Jane Birnn, Nora Jacobsen

Absent: Leon Walls, Alisha Sawyer

Staff Present: Holly Groschner, Chuck Pizer, George Hauenstein, Rob Cunningham, Joe Merone, Ann Aikens, Andrea Rosencrantz

Board Members: Pat Sabalis

Guests: Lyle Holiday, Cari Kelly, Cindy Weed

Minutes:

Steve Alexander called the meeting to order at 12:35pm. He welcomed the newest members of the Council: Hal Colston, Randy Balmer, and Joyce McKeeman. A motion was made by Toby Knox, seconded by Randy Blamer to approve the minutes from the April 22, 2015 meeting. None opposed, motion carried. The minutes will be posted online and forwarded to the Board of Directors.

Reports from Council members:

Lars Hasselblad Torres reported that he was involved in a screening at the hospital in Berlin of Ken Burns Cancer. He found the experience moving and revealing. The panel of doctors discussing after the screening was quite powerful and hopeful.

Jerry Aldredge reported that Catamount Arts continues to hold screenings with the offering from Community Cinema. In addition, PBS Kids screenings with head start programs have been successful. Other screenings included Last Days of Vietnam and Limited Partnership.

Nora Jacobsen discussed the Young filmmakers contest. The contest goal was to encourage young Vermonters to make films about Vermont. There were 89 submissions. Some will be shown on Vermont PBS. Nora added that she attended the Masterpiece event at the Norwich Inn hosted by David Taplin. Randy Balmer also attended and felt that it was a successful event.

Hal Colston was involved in a screening of American Denial at Burlington High School. It was a small turnout but a great learning experience. The panel of teachers and students led to a great discussion.

Bill Holiday also did a screening of American Denial in Brattleboro. He thanked Chuck for brining PBS to the southern part of the state.

Ryan attended the Storytime for the Young Writers Contest in St. Albans. It was well attended and fun for the kids to share their stories. Chuck added that this was the 20th year of the contest with 150 entries. Nora added that there is a writer's project for older kids in the works.

Steve Alexander asked the Council for their thoughts on what can be done on the fundraising front in light of the recent state funding cuts. Holly commended the group for their efforts regarding the state funding. George Hauenstein added that one idea is to have 'house parties' where members of the Council invite their circle of friends into their home for an event. This could create networks of donors around the state. The station is also looking at more strategic prospecting of major donors. The Council might be helpful in the area in prospecting contacts. Chuck added that social media is a useful tool in showing the importance of Vermont PBS to others. Jane Birnn suggested have a 'draw' at an event that would entice people to attend. If anyone is interested in getting a group together, please let Chuck know. Holly added that the website now has a 'store' for people to donate towards a tangible item that the station needs.

Holly updated the Council on station activities. The Board of Directors met in June and approved the FY2016 budget. Thanks to Rob Cunningham and senior staff, this is a balanced budget. The Flynn Theatre was a great partner on the Discover Jazz series that will begin airing in October. PTAQ lost the appeal on charitable tax status. The Canadian tax authority ruled that PATQ was not sufficiently in control of the content it supported on Vermont PBS. Holly stated that she is grateful for the involvement of the Council. It is important for council members to bring what is important in their communities to the station.

Joe Merone reported Discover Jazz will begin airing on October 10th. A link will be sent to the Council in advance. Mike Dunn stated that Makin' Friends with Ryan Miller will continue for another season. Any ideas for interviewees are appreciated.

Chuck reported on engagement activities. The station is involved again this year in the American Graduate Initiative. This initiative casts a spotlight on high school graduation rates. The station has identified those making a difference in education and will award those individuals at an awards ceremony on October 1st. On October 3rd, Vermont PBS will air over six hours of programming focused on keeping kids in school. Approximately 120 kids attended a military kids party held at the station. Winners from the Vermont Youth Film festival will be aired on the Plus channel.

Holly will be sending out to the Council Members a revised mission statement. She would welcome feedback. It is important for the station to focus on why the station is relevant – not on what the station does.

There were no public comments at this meeting.

Steve Alexander recognized Council Members who are completing their last term of service. Alisha Sawyer has been on the Council since 2008 and served in the role of chair, vice chair, and past chair. Leon Walls joined the Council in 2010. He participated in Community Cinema discussions as a panelist and moderator. Olga Peters joined the Council in August 2008. She has been a panelist on Vermont This

Week, and was in Above the Fold. Ryan Doyle joined in 2010. He was the youngest member of the Council from Franklin County. Council members were thanked for their time and energy in service to Vermont PBS.

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