

## **WTTW COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD**

MINUTES of the PUBLIC MEETING of the  
WTTW Community Advisory Board (CAB)

Tuesday, December 15, 2020

Electronic Meeting via Zoom

**The Chairman called the meeting to order at 6:06 PM with a quorum present.**

**The following CAB members were present:** Chairman Joseph Morris (Chair); Vice Chairman Susan Ivers (Vice Chair); Secretary Rita Tandoric; Charles Beavers; Maryilene Blondell; Joe Bosco; Leatrice Campbell; Barbara Cragan; Dr. Simuel Hampton; Carol Howe; Linda Jackson; Peter Kraus; Aaron Lawler; Lennette Meredith; Sharon Meroni; Mary Lou Mockus; Kristin Mount; Frederic Rizzo; Iqbal Shariff; Nancy Simon; and Chester Szerlag.

**Note the following CAB members were absent:** Sinhue Mendoza and Dr. Sheila Wicks.

**The following persons also were present:** Graham C. Grady, Board of Trustees Liaison to CAB; Geoffrey Baer, Vice President of Original Content Production for Television; Timothy Russell, Vice President of Community Engagement and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; Lisa Tipton, Head of Programming and Pledge; and Yvonne Davis, WTTW administrative liaison to the CAB.

**The following members of the public were present:** none

The Chair called the meeting to order and declared that a quorum was present.

The Chair asked for a motion to approve the agenda for the meeting. Mr. Kraus so moved, seconded by Ms. Campbell. The agenda was unanimously adopted.

The Chair commented that no member of the public was present but that the CAB has received a complaint from attorney William Hogan about a Christina Amanpour piece on the "PBS Newshour". Mr. Hogan stated that he might not be available for the meeting. The Chair explained the CAB's meeting schedule and offered Mr. Hogan three minutes at any future meeting.

The Chair introduced Geoffrey Baer, WTTW's Vice President of Original Content Production for Television. Mr. Baer was invited to the meeting as an important part of WTTW, a familiar face to WTTW viewers for many years through his "Ask Geoffrey" segments on "Chicago Tonight" and his Chicago tours, but also now as a senior manager at WTTW, in production, following in the footsteps of V.J. McAleer and Dan Soles. The Chair asked Mr. Baer to tell the CAB about himself and his new role with the station.

Mr. Baer thanked the Chair and started by describing his newest project at WTTW. It is a quiz show that will debut in March 2021, entitled "The Great Chicago Quiz Show" which will air on Friday nights. He will be a quiz show host and is currently "madly preparing" quiz show questions. There will be a preview of the content after he completes his introduction.

Mr. Baer has been with WTTW for 31 years (since July 1989). He did not enter the business with the intent of being on television. He intended to be a writer and producer. He was born in Highland Park, IL, raised in Deerfield, IL, and was a “theatre kid” in high school, directing the senior variety show. In college he discovered that he was more interested in producing, directing, and writing, and was a radio-TV-film major at Miami University in Ohio. He worked at a local radio station in Oxford, OH, and then an ABC station, WKRC in Cincinnati. He made local TV commercials (300 commercials in one year), then moved to WNEM in Saginaw, MI, where he worked on a PM Magazine-type program. He produced the show with a small staff. Some of their work appeared on larger stations’ PM Magazine-type shows. He then moved to a large commercial station, WKYW in Philadelphia, for a couple years where he was a story producer. At the same time, Mr. Baer was reconsidering theatre and performing and what he had left behind to pursue producing. He left WKYW and returned to Deerfield, IL, and obtained a masters’ degree in Theater from Northwestern University. That led to a teaching job at the Chicago Academy of Arts (a private high school for the Arts), where he taught high school theatre for five years, and which he described as “an amazing experience”, but not a career for life. At the same time, he also trained at Second City and taught at Player’s Workshop of Second City, teaching adult acting and improv. He then decided to get back into television. Through Glenn DuBose at WTTW, Mr. Baer was hired as an Arts Associate Producer, where he produced Chicago Symphony productions, two operas, a gospel program featuring Patti LaBelle, and several documentaries, including one about Senator Paul Douglas, and another about Latino theatre, and then the WTTW series, “Artbeat Chicago”. Mr. Baer’s work was always behind-the-scenes.

Concurrently with his production work at WTTW, Mr. Baer completed docent training and then volunteered as a docent for the Chicago Architectural Foundation river tours of Chicago. He remains a docent with the re-named Chicago Architecture Center and has been at it two years longer than his time at WTTW.

In 1995, on an architecture river tour, Mr. Baer was approached by one of the tour attendees who had many questions about the tour, and who then asked if Mr. Baer was an architect. Mr. Baer responded that he was employed by the local public television station. The man’s wife suggested that the man identify himself to Mr. Baer. The man with the questions was the newly appointed WTTW Board of Trustees Chairman John McCarter. By the next morning Mr. McCarter had made calls to station management suggesting that the tour should be made into a television show. At that point, Mr. Baer’s on-screen experience was limited to pledge breaks. The first river tour was produced in 1995. Since then, there have been over 30 local and national programs, including the numerous local tours, “Weekend in Havana”, the “10 That Changed America” series, profiles of various architects, and the “Ask Geoffrey” segments on “Chicago Tonight”. He feels very lucky.

About a year and a half ago Mr. Baer was approached by WWCI President and CEO, Sandra Cordova Micek, about heading up production after the departure of Dan Soles. Mr. Baer now heads the small production department and is taking on some ambitious projects, such as a new version of the old WTTW series, “Chicago Stories”. Projects have been stalled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Eight documentaries are planned, but only one has been completed thus far, “The Great Chicago Fire”, on which Dan Protes was executive producer and Peter Marks was producer. Mr. Protes is now in production on a new documentary about Ida B. Wells, which resonates in today’s climate. It is being produced by an independent producer, Stacy Robinson.

Mr. Baer has continued with his tour shows – last year the ‘L tour, and this year, “Chicago from the Air” which was adapted for Covid by being filmed by a drone. Dan Andries recently produced a 2020 retrospective entitled “Making Sense of 2020”. Dan Protes is also working on the digital series, “FIRSTHAND”, which in its third season will cover the issue of living in poverty in Chicago (after having done Gun Violence in season one and Coronavirus in season two).

These digital programs are under Anne Gleason's supervision even though executive producer Dan Protesch technically reports to Mr. Baer.

Mr. Baer's new project is "The Great Chicago Quiz Show" which is reminiscent of a previous Baer program 6-8 years ago where Chicagoans were quizzed in the streets. It was funny and a lot of fun to do, and Lisa Tipton was a huge part of that project. The new incarnation will be a series done from the studio in front of a green screen and the contestants will be connected by Skype or Zoom so that everyone is safely distanced. Another focus is on diversity, equity, and inclusion in the development of questions for the contestants.

Mr. Baer then shared 10 quiz questions with the CAB. Screens were shared via the Zoom feed and the CAB answered the quiz questions.

After the quiz, the Chair opened the floor to questions for Mr. Baer.

Ms. Blondell asked about an item mentioned in a previous meeting that described a show involving orchestra and classical music scores and wondered if Mr. Baer is involved in that project. Mr. Baer responded that Ms. Blondell was referring to a program on WFMT.

Ms. Ivers asked about production and the Ida B. Wells project and the producer Stacy Robinson. Ms. Ivers specifically asked if Ms. Robinson is an independent producer. Mr. Baer confirmed that Ms. Robinson is a freelance producer. The WTTW staff under Mr. Baer is very small: Baer, Dan Andries, Eddie Griffin, and Dan Protesch, and a fantastic production coordinator Yasmin Rammohan.

Ms. Ivers then asked how Mr. Baer differentiates between a freelance producer and an independent producer. An independent producer is a person with whom WTTW would partner, but that person comes to WTTW from a production company. The production is more an acquisition that falls under Lisa Tipton's area of responsibility. A freelance producer is hired by WTTW as an independent contractor.

The Chair then asked Mr. Baer how far over the horizon he looks in terms of planning as such projects certainly require substantial planning. Mr. Baer answered that it depends on the project, but right now, with Covid, it is very difficult to look ahead due to various uncertainties. It is hard to predict when it will be safe to resume full-on production. There are many challenges at this time.

Production times will vary in normal times. In the past, Mr. Baer has known his production schedule up to three years in advance. Once there is a green light on a project, there is about nine months of production. Often, the green light is contingent on funding, which will increase the lead time needed to get started. On the other hand, "Chicago from the Air" was completed in 4 to 5 months, start to finish. The program did very well in the pledge drive, although it initially aired in advance of the pledge drive. It was an important revenue stream for the station.

"Making Sense of 2020" was completed more quickly – maybe 2 to 2 1/2 months. It needed to be timely and in place to promote the news operation. On the "10 That Changed America" series it was two years between the two series (that is, two series of three programs each). It was an enormous fundraising challenge due to the vast research that was required, and the travel involved in filming. Mr. Baer commented that WTTW will get back into production eventually and planning is being done now.

Ms. Blondell asked about budgets and on-air time blocks. Does WTTW ever do “time buys” from production houses? What is the hour breakdown between local programming and PBS-provided national and international programming? What is the production budget?

Mr. Baer replied that he could answer the budget question but that the other two questions are in Lisa Tipton’s area. Mr. Baer’s area is non-news production while Ms. Tipton’s area is acquisition. Within non-news production, the program “Making Sense of 2020” had almost no budget as internal resources were used, and material that had already been shot. The tour shows are generally in the several hundred-thousand-dollar range, depending on the subject matter and whether travel is involved. A series like “Chicago Stories” will be in the million-dollar range. The national series “10 That Changed America” cost well over a million dollars for the three-show series as substantial travel was required. So, costs can vary widely.

Ms. Tipton responded to Ms. Blondell’s other questions. She could not comment on the ratio of local to national production, but she noted that WTTW follows the PBS network programming schedule for Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday nights. On Thursday nights the station will schedule an acquisition or local programming. Saturday nights are generally mystery acquisitions. Both Ms. Tipton and Mr. Baer noted that WTTW does not do time buys. Both noted that it is not WTTW’s mission to allow a producer to buy a block of time. However, if a producer approaches the station with a completed film, Ms. Tipton will consider it for a possible acquisition.

Mr. Shariff thanked Mr. Baer for his work. He asked if a funder approached the station with funds but wanted a particular type of product produced, would the station consider such an offer? Mr. Baer responded that it would depend on the terms. For instance, if a producer came to WTTW with a film about the Chicago sewer system, Ms. Tipton might look at it and consider it for airing. Likewise, if a funder came to the station with funds and a request for a particular subject for a documentary, the station might consider it, but the funder would be told that he would have no editorial control over the final product. Funders do not have editorial input over content. It is very rare that someone with money comes to the station with money and an idea.

The Chair thanked Mr. Baer for his time and the opportunity to get to know about his background and his role at the station. Mr. Baer thanked the CAB for its questions and comments and excused himself from the meeting. Mr. Russell interjected that Mr. Baer had mentioned a link for potential contestants for the quiz show. Mr. Baer noted that they are looking for contestants who need not be Chicago trivia experts, but are willing to have fun, and noted that diversity, equity, and inclusion are strong elements of the selection process. Mr. Russell agreed to share that link with the CAB.

**Chairman’s Report:** The Chair began with sad news; Yvonne Davis, the CAB’s longtime administrative liaison, has announced that she will retire at the end of the year. Ms. Davis schedules the conference rooms, feeds the CAB (in the days of in-person meetings), distributes paperwork and generally takes care of the CAB. The Chair expressed the CAB’s thanks for her assistance over the years and wished the best to her in her retirement. Ms. Davis thanked the Chair and the CAB for the good will and good times, and told the CAB members to behave themselves and not give the Chair any trouble.

The Chair continued by stating that since there were no CAB meetings between February and August 2020 due to Covid, there is no CAB annual report yet. The Chair reminded everyone that the CAB has had much success with management due in large part to the annual reports. However, since joining WWCI, President Micek has attended many CAB meetings, and, in fact, this present meeting is the only one this year that Ms. Micek has not attended. An annual report

may not be required as Ms. Micek has participated in the meetings. Senior management has been present, and this is the first year in recent years that a Trustee's liaison has been present at all meetings.

The Chair turned to the approval of minutes. Two sets of minutes (August and October 2020) will be presented for approval at the next meeting in February 2021.

**Membership Committee:** The Chair then turned to Ms. Meredith, Chair of the Membership Committee. The Membership Committee had no formal report, but Ms. Meredith noted that she sent emails to the newest three members of the CAB with a list of CAB committees and the Chairs of those committees, and she encouraged the new members to join committees that appeal to their interests.

**Program Committee:** The Chair then turned to Ms. Cragan, Chair of the Program Committee. Ms. Cragan commented that through the wonders of technology she was participating in the meeting from an Airbnb rental in Golden, Colorado. She also thanked the station for the fleece jackets distributed to CAB members. Ms. Cragan further commented on Ms. Meredith's committee invitation and noted that the Program Committee would welcome new members. Most committee work is done remotely. She reminded everyone that aside from program comments, any other program proposal should be placed into the established program rubric for evaluation and presentation to the entire CAB. Submitted proposals are distributed to the Program Committee members for comments. The comments are then consolidated and returned to the person who submitted the proposal for review, comment, possible revision, and re-submission before the proposal is presented to the entire CAB. Ms. Cragan noted that it takes time for a rubric to make it through the committee. It is virtually impossible for a rubric to make it through the committee if submitted within days of a full CAB meeting. Everyone needs to understand this.

Mr. Kraus asked about proposals that he had submitted in advance of the current meeting. He asked if the proposals might be too controversial and should not be resubmitted, or if he should resubmit them for consideration before the next CAB meeting.

Ms. Cragan responded that the proposals came in very late. She further noted that she researched the subject matter of one of Mr. Kraus' proposals and discovered that the subject had been covered in a "Chicago Tonight" segment, and offered to send Mr. Kraus a link so that he could see what was presented in that segment. Ms. Ivers asked if Mr. Kraus had followed the rubric; she thought that he did not. Mr. Kraus responded that he thought that he had followed the rubric. Ms. Ivers suggested that Mr. Kraus should request the current copy of the rubric format. The Chair will also respond to such requests. The subject matter is the use of Vitamin D in the prevention of disease, specifically coronavirus. Ms. Ivers asked Mr. Kraus if he thought the previous coverage should be expanded. Mr. Kraus commented that he had spoken to the doctor from Boston University and determined that the doctor would be available for an interview by WTTW. Ms. Ivers further commented that she is concerned about Mr. Kraus contacting people about being availability for interviews by WTTW. Ms. Ivers feels that the CAB's responsibility is limited to recommendations to WTTW staff and suggested that a broader discussion could be undertaken at a future CAB meeting.

The Chair interjected that if a CAB member is proposing that a particular topic is of importance to the WTTW viewing audience and the subject has not been covered previously by "Chicago Tonight" or other WTTW/PBS programming, then the subject matter should be submitted for consideration as a new issue. If the subject has been covered in some manner, but the submitter considers such coverage to be inadequate, or not balanced, or believes that there is more to be said, such should be submitted and the reasoning for revisiting or expanding the coverage should be explained in detail. The Chair pointed out that the rubric does ask for possible sources of information or what persons might be

available for an interview, and for sources of information that can inform the producers on the subject. The Chair restated Ms. Ivers' concern that there is a fine line between finding out who has information and saying that "I am trying to find this out for WTTW." The Chair reminded everyone that the CAB is an advisory board; it is not the station. It is not the CAB's job to produce news or produce information or programs, and certainly not to make commitments on behalf of WTTW.

The Chair asked Ms. Cragan if this is the time to turn to Dr. Hampton's proposals. Ms. Cragan answered, "Yes", and stated that one proposal is about music mentorship, which was discussed at a previous meeting and which has been fleshed out in the rubric format. The proposal has been vetted and is recommended by the Program Committee.

The Chair summarized by stating that the Program Committee is recommending Dr. Hampton's proposal about music mentorship, which was circulated to everyone and asked Dr. Hampton if he would like to say anything about the proposal. Dr. Hampton proceeded to explain that he resubmitted due to the management changes at WTTW. The mentorship program has new scholarship money and has adapted itself to the Covid environment.

The Chair thanked Dr. Hampton and asked for a vote on the proposal by Dr. Hampton and as recommended by the Program Committee. The vote was unanimous in favor of submitting the proposal to WTTW for consideration.

Dr. Hampton also made a program proposal regarding the Chicago Children's Choir and its Gospel Essentials program. The Chair explained his granddaughter's membership in the Choir and her introduction to gospel music through the Choir and her school's history fair. The Choir is doing powerful work introducing members to different types of music. It is a great public interest story, especially in these Covid days when access is challenged. Ms. Cragan commented that persons who are thinking about submitting a proposal can first search the WTTW website for references to the subject matter. The search will yield information about when topics were covered by WTTW through "Chicago Tonight".

The Chair thanked Dr. Hampton and asked for a vote on the Chicago Children's Choir proposal by Dr. Hampton and as recommended by the Program Committee. The vote was unanimous in favor of submitting the proposal to WTTW for consideration.

Both proposals will be forwarded to station management.

Ms. Cragan then asked if Ms. Tipton wanted to comment on the program comments submitted by CAB members to the Program Committee. Ms. Tipton thanked the committee for forwarding the comments and noted that she loves reading them. There were many comments about the music in "Chicago from the Air". Ms. Tipton specifically addressed Mr. Kraus' comment about "Overheard with Evan Smith". Ms. Tipton had to take it off the schedule because it is re-running Season 10, which has already been shown on WTTW. The program has experienced Covid issues. The program is now on hiatus.

Ms. Tipton noted that she has received an email informing that "The McLaughlin Group" may not have another season. In answer to why, Ms. Tipton stated that the program is produced out of Maryland, and the why is not clear. It could be funding, Covid or guest issues. Maryland Public Television may have the answer. Ms. Tipton made it clear that it is not a WTTW program any longer and it was not a WTTW decision that it ceased production.

Ms. Ivers commented that she wants more mysteries. Ms. Tipton commented that there is a new mystery coming: “The Mallorca Files” on Jan 9<sup>th</sup>. It is from the BBC. In general, things are delayed due to Covid. “Father Brown” is delayed, but “Death in Paradise” is not.

Ms. Blondell asked Mr. Bosco to elaborate on his comments regarding the WTTW subchannels. Mr. Bosco thinks there is a need to add the subchannels and what could be done with them to be educational, informative and community minded. To that end, Mr. Bosco thinks there is a need for more feedback from the community. There should be additional polling that is anonymous. There should be better ways to get the community involved in issues like local politics. He suggested that the new Geoffrey Baer quiz show could be set up to allow voting on answers by members of the community.

Ms. Ivers reminded Mr. Bosco that he had also suggested that channels 11.2 , 11.3 and 20 should be listed on the website. Mr. Bosco’s comments also included what programs or types of programs should be shown on those channels. The Chair suggested that this topic be introduced under New Business.

Ms. Tipton encouraged the CAB to keep the comments coming. Ms. Cragan reminded everyone to talk to friends and family for comments.

**Trustee Liaison:** The Chair called upon the Trustees’ Liaison for his comments and report. Mr. Grady wished everyone Happy Holidays. He commented that the Board appreciates the collaboration between the CAB and station management. The time and effort committed is appreciated. Mr. Grady thanked the Chair and the committee Chairs and committee participants for their efforts. He also thanked Mr. Russell and Ms. Tipton for their participation as it makes the relationship strong day in and day out.

Mr. Grady reminded the CAB that the Board has established a new diversity initiative and that the work of the CAB is included in this initiative. The Board defines diversity broadly and the CAB is quite diverse in what each member brings to the CAB.

Mr. Grady noted that President Micek was elected to the Board of the National PBS. It is a wonderful two-way relationship. She can share what WTTW is doing and bring back information on what happened nationally. It expands the umbrella, and it expands WTTW’s presence and portfolio to have Ms. Micek in such an important position.

The Chair thanked Mr. Grady and asked if any other WTTW Presidents have been appointed to the National PBS Board. Mr. Grady did not know and will find out.

Ms. Blondell asked Mr. Grady about the overall morale on the Board and with the organization in general as it has been a such an unbelievably stressful nine months. Mr. Grady responded that while he wants to be as upbeat as possible in his own comments, the Board is very much aware that many people are suffering due to illness, death and loss of jobs and the disconnection that follows. Things are not rosy in Chicago. At the Board level, the Board is trying to make sure that things go as smoothly as possible within the organization, despite financial difficulties and workforce reduction. “Chicago Tonight” has done everything it can to tell the story of how Covid is affecting Chicagoans across the Board and they are hoping that the next year will be more positive.

Mr. Grady thinks the Board is very resilient. They have members of many different backgrounds – entrepreneurs, large corporations, and people with a variety of personal, professional, and civic involvement. He thinks that morale is as

positive as it can be in these difficult times. The Board is doing everything it can to tell the story and do what it can to make it better, and not just through “Chicago Tonight”.

Ms. Jackson and Ms. Mockus joined the meeting at approximately 8:00 PM.

Ms. Tipton addressed a comment to Ms. Mockus explaining that she was not the only one to complain about the music used in “Chicago from the Air.” Ms. Mockus responded that the only problem with that statement is that Ms. Tipton called it “music”. Ms. Mockus called it “irritating noise”.

The Chair noted that Mr. Russell sent the link for becoming a contestant in Geoffrey Baer’s Chicago quiz program.

Ms. Meroni asked if WTTW applied for and/or received a PPP loan. Mr. Russell could not answer and promised to investigate it.

The Chair commented to the Management Liaisons that the CAB would like to meet with CFO Jitin Garg. If anyone can answer the PPP question it would be Mr. Garg. The CAB would like to meet with Mr. Garg in either February or April of 2021.

The Chair then called up the Management Liaisons, Lisa Tipton, and Tim Russell, for their reports.

**Management Liaison:** Mr. Russell shared his screen to show a new website dedicated to the station’s new diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. He will also provide an update on community engagement events and new programs for January 2021.

The CAB looked at the new website and noted the resources and commitments the station has made to further diversity, equity, and inclusion in its operations.

For instance, the following are manifestations of the commitments to diversity issues:

- The creation of “Chicago Tonight: Black Voices”
- The creation of “Chicago Tonight : Latino Voices”
- Screenings and news
- Hosted community conversations
- Links to relevant panel discussions related to diversity, equity, and inclusion issues
- PBS Kids’ programming

Trustee Janice Feinberg has been a driving force in these initiatives.

Community Engagement is focusing on early childhood access to the arts and society and culture, by taking information from the screen and putting it into the community.

In the first quarter, there were 16 events , reaching 53,000 people virtually. There were four children’s events, six screenings, two arts programs and four community conversations.



On December 17th there will be a Nature Cat Storytime with Santa Claus. On December 28<sup>th</sup>, Brandis Friedman will moderate a community conversation about Watch Night and New Year's Days celebrations in the Black Community.

On January 26<sup>th</sup>, there will be a screening of "9 to 5 – The Story of a Movement", which chronicles workplace equality struggles for women. It will be followed by a panel discussion lead by Tina Tchen, former Chief of Staff to former First Lady, Michelle Obama.

In January, the station will launch "Learn and Play" as a community engagement event for early childhood children ready for kindergarten, particularly African American and Hispanic/Latino children. The program will focus on math, social and emotional development, and language and will be conducted in bilingually in English and Spanish. The program will connect content back to WTTW programs for kids. These will be live shows, initially virtual and then moving to community-based organizations around the city. The programs will include music and will have its own website. The goal is to get children and families ready for kindergarten.

On January 18<sup>th</sup> (Martin Luther King Day) there will be a screening of "FIRSTHAND: Living in Poverty". It will be very similar to other FIRSTHAND installments in which there will a multi-platform initiative, with talks headed by Audra Wilson of the Shriver Center on Poverty Law and Juan Delgado of the City Colleges of Chicago. There will be five profiles in 5 episodes, which all go live, digitally, at the same time. There will be community screenings, and a discussion guide prepared by Young Hong of Loyola University. This series is produced by WTTW Digital, with Anne Gleason as the Executive Producer.

Mr. Russell shared a trailer of the program with the CAB.

Ms. Blondell commented that the diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives seem to be limited to the Black and Hispanic communities. She questioned where there is programming for the Asian and Muslim communities.

Mr. Russell responded that in May the station aired a three-part program the concentrated on the migration of Jews to Shanghai.

Initially the focus has been on the Black and Hispanic communities because of the make-up of the Chicagoland area and issues common to those communities, such as police brutality. Statistics show that in Chicago, only 23% of Black children and 17% of Hispanic children are kindergarten ready. Further, WTTW is not a social organization, but it tries to be a holistic as possible.

The Chair commented that the CAB became aware of communication handicaps through former CAB member Denise Avant, who is visually impaired. Ms. Avant brought to the CAB's attention the gaps in communication for the blind. It is easy to note the improvements in the electronic media. The Chair asked if when conducting programs in the field, does WTTW take handicaps and impairments into account?

Mr. Russell answered that the issue came up at a recent community engagement team meeting. When meetings go live again, the goal is to make every event as accessible as possible, including sign language for the hearing-impaired.

The Chair was glad to hear that the initiatives include diversity of all types. It is not just about race and ethnicity.

The Board of Trustees' REDI Committee (Race, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion) is now a standing committee of the Board of Trustees. Mr. Grady asked that time be set aside in an upcoming agenda for a discussion of the Board's diversity initiatives. The Board would like to describe it to the CAB maybe in the Q2 or Q3 when it is a little more mature. The Chair readily agreed. It would be nice to know what problems such a committee is intending to solve.

Ms. Meroni asked about the "FIRSTHAND: Living in Poverty" and whether there are multiple episodes. Ms. Meroni commented that there is also a mass exodus from the city to the suburbs, and this migration has consequences too. It might be nice to cover some of these issues as well. Ms. Blondell commented that WTTW is more than just the City of Chicago.

Mr. Grady spoke about the summer series "Chicago Tonight in Your Neighborhood". The reach of the station is greater than the city limits. WTTW is taking Daniel Tiger to Rockford.

Mr. Russell explained that when he started in the Fall of 2018, the initiative began within the borders of Chicago and has been moving out since then. Mr. Grady showed a map of locations where events have been conducted and there is a lot of coverage outside the city limits.

The Chair suggested to Ms. Meredith to keep her eyes open for potential CAB members outside the Chicago borders and beyond the suburbs. Diversity includes geographic diversity as well.

Ms. Meredith commented that CAB members must also bring their communities to the CAB.

**Vice Chairman's Report:** There was no report from the Vice Chair.

**Unfinished Business:** The Chair explained that there is a report among this meeting's handouts about the work of the By-Laws Committee. The Committee met in November and went through each By-Law in detail. The By-Laws require a two-meeting review period. The proposed changes are presented in one meeting and will be voted upon at the next meeting. Therefore, the proposals have been formally presented at this meeting will be discussed and debated at the February 2021 meeting.

Mr. Bosco thinks the changes are comprehensive. The Chair said that the proposed changes are easy to follow. The issue will be considered as Unfinished Business at the next meeting.

**New Business:** The Chair turned to Mr. Bosco, who has prepared a report of what other PBS stations are doing. Mr. Bosco commented that he is a member of what used to be WGBH in Boston. WGBH has removed the "W" from its name as it is now expanding beyond the Boston area. The behemoths of PBS, the WGBHs (or, GBH) and the WNETs can now broadcast their content anywhere and bring it into another PBS station's viewing area. The idea of expanding a market is great but it should be broader and bigger and further out. What would WTTW do if WGBH appeared on the local Comcast system. The Chair pointed out that each of these stations has a website too. The Chair posed the question as to whether there are ground rules at PBS that would prevent poaching from another viewing area. It may be interesting to pose this question now that President Micek is a member of the national PBS Board. The Chair also commented that if WTTW does not cover the Chicago area, who will?

Mr. Bosco again raised the issue of the subchannels and what can be programmed on them. The Chair invited Ms. Tipton to comment particularly since the WYCC channel is moving further away from what it once was as a station operated by

the City Colleges of Chicago. Ms. Tipton commented that there is very little WTTW can air on the WYCC channel because PBS content, breaks, and promos cannot be aired there. WTTW must find a fully programmed channel to air there.

The Chair noted that there should be a future agenda item - the future of the WYCC channel.

Ms. Ivers asked what the next step might be. Mr. Bosco said the next step should be to pass it on to station management. Ms. Ivers objected to this approach until there is further discussion. The Chair appointed Mr. Szerlag as Chair of the newly reconstituted Station Administration and Finance Committee, along with Ms. Ivers and Mr. Bosco. This was previously an ad hoc committee, but the By-Laws changes propose to make it a standing committee.

Ms. Campbell circulated a proposal for the possible need to a Community Health Initiatives Committee. The Chair noted that Ms. Campbell appears to have left the meeting. The Chair determined that this issue can again come up in the New Business at the next meeting.

Ms. Blondell encouraged CAB members to consider the Cultural committee when making committee selections.

Good and Welfare: Dr. Hampton and his wife are expecting their first child, a girl, in February.

The Chair commented that the Holiday season is upon us and with Covid the holidays may not be the same as other years. The Chair wished everyone a happy holiday season.

The next meeting will be the third Tuesday in February.

The Chair called upon Ms. Mount who had been silent during the meeting. Ms. Mount commented that she has been ill and is awaiting Covid test results. She mentioned that it is her birthday. The CAB then sang "Happy Birthday". Mr. Grady commented that jobs at the Mormon Tabernacle are safe.

The Chair asked Mr. Beavers if he had any comments. Mr. Beavers wished everyone Happy Holidays.

With no objection, the Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 9:04 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rita E. Tandaric,  
Secretary

Attachments: