

# WTTW COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD

MINUTES  
Of  
The Public Meeting  
Of the  
WTTW Community Advisory Board  
Of  
Tuesday, June 19, 2012

WTTW Studios  
5400 North St. Louis Avenue  
Conference Room B, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Chicago, Illinois

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Morris at 6:15 p.m.

The roll was called. Present were the following members of the Community Advisory Board (CAB)

Joseph A. Morris, Chairman  
Jeff Berkowitz  
Yvette Brown  
Keisha Dyson  
Janice Goldstein  
Redd Griffin, Vice Chairman  
Jim McClure  
Mary Lou Mockus  
Heather Penn  
Donna Rook, Secretary  
Maggie Steinz  
Renee Summers  
Doreen Wiese  
Charles White  
Dr. Deborah Williams

Additional persons present included:

V. J. McAleer, Senior Vice President of WWCI for Production and Community Partnerships, Yvonne Davis, administrative assistant to Chicago Tonight and staff liaison

The following members of the general public were present:

- Karla Mina, parent and candidate for CAB membership

The Chair noted presence of a quorum, called the meeting to order at 6:25, and asked for leave, without objection, to proceed directly to Good and Welfare. The Chair introduced Mary Lou Mockus, who will be circulating a card for Margot Bass, long-term CAB member, who is ill. The Chair also reported that Lennette Meredith, Chair of the Membership Committee, would be absent because of a health problem in her family, and that Barbara Cragan, Chair of the Program Committee, had advised him that circumstances also compelled her to be absent. Ms. Rook reported that Leatrice Campbell will not be able to attend.

The Chair asked for consideration of the April minutes and requested additions or corrections, none were offered. Mr. Griffin moved the minutes be approved and Ms. Summers seconded the motion, which was adopted unanimously.

The chair requested approval of the proposed Agenda for the meeting. Without objection the Agenda was adopted; a copy is attached.

The chair asked for reports.

V.J. McAleer, Senior Vice President of WWCI for Production and Community Partnerships, provided an update behalf of Station Management:

1. PBS Learning Media – the Illinois edition will eventually offer curriculum for teachers.
2. Work continues on “American Graduate - Let’s Make it Happen.” The station recently hosted 25 nonprofit organizations dealing with at risk youth, and plan to continue the dialog. The web site is growing, adding resources for parents and interested adults. National programming is planned for fall, and will be augmented by local programs.
3. “Check Please” is serving as curator for pop-up restaurants at Taste of Chicago this year
4. Geoffrey Baer is winding up shooting for “10 Buildings that Changed America.” Debate over which buildings were chosen has generated a great deal of buzz.

In the absence of Ms. Meredith, Ms. Mockus introduced Ms. Mina who summarized her interest in and qualifications for CAB membership. Ms. Goldstein moved to nominate Ms. Mina for CAB membership, Ms. Steinz seconded the motion and the nomination was approved unanimously.

The chair noted the arrival of Mr. Berkowitz.

Ms. Cragan was unavailable to report for the Program committee

Dr. Williams reported for the Outreach committee. She demonstrated the power-point presentation highlighting a wealth of resources available on the WTTW and PBS web sites for teachers and parents, developed with assistance from the Communications and Technology Committee. Plans are to post the presentation on the CAB web site and also possibly the WTTW web site. Mr. McAleer said he would attend to posting the presentation on the CAB page of the WTTW website. Yvette Brown, Chair of the Communications and Technology Committee, said her Committee would assist in posting on the WTTW CAB Facebook page and elsewhere in social media. Ms. Steinz suggested labeling the presentation K-12+ due to the interest in post-high school programs; also informing the Illinois State Board of Education. Discussion included publicizing the system on YouTube.

The chair noted the arrival of Mr. McClure.

Ms. Brown reviewed the Communications and Technology committee progress with the Outreach Committee. She reminded CAB members of the role supporting the CAB in efforts underway. Ms. Penn presented Mr. Morris’ copy of Mr. Minow’s speech from a credit-card-size thumb drive.

Mr. Griffin reported as Chair of the Cultural Research and Development Committee and as WTTW CAB Vice Chair. The challenge this election year is to keep in mind Mr. Minow’s guidance to consider what’s in the public interest. He invited additional responses to the questionnaire that was distributed following the April meeting. Some members did not receive the electronic version of the survey; Mr. Griffin promised to re-send it. He also committed to schedule a committee meeting in July. Mary Lou Mockus also offered to join the group.

Ms. Rook recommended the program committee be asked to clarify its mission, in light of its interface to the Cultural Research and Development Committee. Discussion centered on views that the CAB was primarily a conduit for programming recommendations. Mr. Berkowitz offered to join the program committee.

The Chair then requested officer reports.

Ms. Rook offered the Secretary's report, including her position that draft minutes continue to be circulated to only CAB members, as soon as feasible following the meeting, for review and correction. Only final minutes, after approval at the ensuing meeting, would be posted on the web site and made available to the public.

The Chair noted we are 6 months away from producing our next annual report, and urged members of the CAB to submit items relating to the identification of cultural and educational needs of the communities served by WTTW and to the question of whether or not the programs and policies of the station are meeting those needs – for study, discussion and eventual inclusion in the annual report.

The Chair called for Unfinished Business. Discussion continued from the last meeting on the subject of whether or not WTTW should broadcast paid political advertising. Mr. MacAleer said WTTW management has not taken any official position. Mr. Morris noted that based on discussions with others involved in political advertising, every public TV station is similarly positioned, with the possible exception of the public broadcast station in San Francisco that won its lawsuit on this question against the FCC in the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. He presented a series of public comments that had been sent to him on the issue, which are attached.

Ms. Summers moved to recommend the station make no changes in its policies under which it currently does not broadcast paid political commercials, and Ms. Goldstein seconded the motion. Discussion addressed the concern that money might dominate station time – yet both major parties this round have ample funding. Guidelines could require content neutrality and stimulate free speech and political discussion. The CAB is responsible for suggesting ideas. Viewers prefer watching PBS without worrying about varying viewpoints. The station needs to raise interesting questions, and focus on civic education, trusting viewers to figure out their positions. The station could find other issues of value to cover, such as an expose on government accounting practices underneath the significant public pension problems across the country. Concern was raised about how fair WTTW has been and continues to be, and it was argued that the appearance on WTTW of paid political commercials might stimulate the staff of WTTW to improve the breadth, depth and fairness of the station's coverage of campaigns and elections.

Mr. Berkowitz asked for a roll call vote. As the CAB is an unelected body, that would require agreement of 30% of members present. A vote was called and received one aye and 12 nays. Then a vote was called on Ms. Summers' motion calling for the station to make no changes in its current practice. The vote passed with 12 ayes and 1 nay.

There was no New Business. Good and Welfare had been covered at the beginning of the meeting.

Dr. Williams moved to adjourn and Ms. Steinz seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously. The Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 8:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna L. Rook  
Secretary

**WTTW COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD (CAB)**  
2012 Annual Meeting and Regular Bi-Monthly Board Meeting

Date: Tuesday, June 19, 2012

Time: 6:00 PM CDT

Location: WTTW – Window To The World Communications, Inc.  
5400 North St. Louis Avenue, Chicago, Illinois

**Order of Business — Proposed**

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|---|-------------------------------|
| 1) <b>Call to Order</b>   | Joseph A. Morris              |
| 2) <b>Roll Call and Self-Introductions</b>                        | Donna Rook and All            |
| 3) <b>Approval of Minutes</b> – for April 17, 2012                | Donna Rook                    |
| 4) <b>Revision and Adoption of Agenda</b>                         | Joseph A. Morris              |
| 5) <b>Trustees’ Liaison</b>                                       | Barbara A. Proctor            |
| 6) <b>Management Liaison</b>                                      | V. J. McAleer                 |
| 7) <b>Reports of Officers and Committees:</b>                     |                               |
| a) <b>Membership Committee</b>                                    | Lennette Meredith             |
| b) <b>Program Committee</b>                                       | Barbara Cragan and Donna Rook |
| c) <b>Outreach Committee</b>                                      | Deborah Williams, Ph.D.       |
| d) <b>Communications and Technology Committee</b>                 | Deborah Williams, Ph.D.       |
| e) <b>Cultural Research and Development Committee</b>             | Redd Griffin                  |
| f) <b>Secretary</b>   | Donna Rook                    |
| g) <b>Vice Chairman</b>   | Redd Griffin                  |
| h) <b>Chairman</b>  | Joseph A. Morris              |
| 8) <b>Unfinished Business</b>                                     |                               |
| a) Should WTTW Sell and Broadcast Partisan Political Commercials? |                               |
| i) Public Comment.  |                               |
| ii) CAB discussion.   |                               |
| 9) <b>New Business</b>  |                               |
| 10) <b>Public Comment</b>   | All                           |
| 11) <b>Good and Welfare</b>                                       | All                           |
| 12) <b>Adjournment</b>  |                               |

Written Public Comments Received by WTTW Community Advisory Board  
on Question:  
Should WTTW-TV Broadcast Paid Political Commercials?

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Chicago, Illinois  
June 18, 2012

WTTW-TV should accept and broadcast paid political advertising as a source of revenue. Clearly, with the federal budget problems there is little, to no, room for growth in public sector funding for public television. What is more, with the U.S. economy in the sorry state it is in, due to misguided public policy, and poor leadership, from the radical wolf-pack of progressives at the White House, it is unlikely that sensible individuals will return to pre-recession levels of charitable donations any time soon. A recent article I read in the University of Chicago Booth School of Business magazine indicated that consumers are now in a self-protective mode and have reduced discretionary spending and charitable donations, out of fear of loss of employment and the need to accumulate a protective cushion of cash.

Funding from political campaigns may be a source of new revenues for the station, as donors do still give to campaigns when they are desperate to see real "hope and change" in their country.

Sincerely,  
Eugene J. Koprowski  
Writer/Producer

A 2008 National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences/Chicago Chapter  
Emmy Award Nominee + 1988 AP Investigative Reporting Award Winner

Lake Forest, Illinois  
June 18, 2012

As long as the channel takes Federal money I don't think it should take paid advertising. But guess it does now.

It is nice to have one place where one is not inundated with the election, so for personal reasons I vote no.

What has happened to the Saturday and Sunday night movies?

Elizabeth Clarke

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Valparaiso, Indiana  
June 18, 2012

While I would not like to have my life interrupted by the same kind of ads we endure on commercial television, I would consider watching one hour "info" programs prepared by each of the major political parties. For example, the Republican, Democratic, Libertarian and Tea Parties could pay Channel 11 one million dollars each to highlight their respective histories, philosophies, and agendas for the future and promote their candidates. If done right, this experiment might dampen the effectiveness of the negative ads on commercial tv, and encourage a trend by the parties to educate rather than scare.

Martin Henrichs  
Retired Teacher, Gary Public Schools

Wilmette, Illinois  
June 18, 2012

Although I would love public broadcasting to be more politically neutral, I do not think that opening it up to political ads is the way to go. I look on Channel 11 as a refuge from advertising, and contribute as I am able, so my vote is "no".

Tanya Dietrich



Ottawa, Illinois  
June 18, 2012

Provided the station — like all other tax-exempt nonprofits — pays income taxes on unrelated business income, I see no major problem.

Jameson Campaigne  
Publisher

Chicago, Illinois  
June 18, 2012

I have no objection to WTTW-TV running paid commercials, but if they are permitted to do so and plan to do so, then they should not receive public money.

Mary Anne Hackett

Riverside, Illinois  
June 18, 2012

NO POLITICAL ADS! PERIOD!

Sharon Rae Bender  
Retired Principal  
Chicago Board of Education

Chicago, Illinois  
June 19, 2012

I believe the benefits outweigh the risks of allowing paid political commercials on public television stations.

-- It could help balance political viewpoints expressed on public television: This would give a voice to the conservative viewpoint that is rarely heard on public broadcasting in general.

-- It could help elevate the level of political discourse carried out through political advertising: hopefully.

Arguments against selling political advertising include:

-- It could intrude upon public television some of the coarseness and lack of civility that currently attends much political discourse: this could be managed to some degree by the selection of ads; establishing standards will be critical.

-- It could contribute to the perception that the content of public broadcasting is already excessively politicized: already a perception within conservative circles.

-- It could disturb the largely commercial-free atmosphere of public television broadcasting: public broadcasting (WTTW in particular) moved way beyond a commercial-free atmosphere when they accepted 30-second spots and liberalized the rules for corporate sponsorships/underwriting.

-- It could eliminate public television as a refuge for people who are fatigued by campaign advertising: there is no such refuge, apart from turning off the television set (an option that is always available).

It would be absolutely critical to establish standards for the content of the ads; plus a credible accounting that confirms equal time for opposing political viewpoints; with regular reports made available to the public.

I would hope this new opportunity would apply to public broadcasting in general – including radio.

On balance, I would say – *carpe diem!*

Susan Jordan  
Former Member, WTTW Community Advisory Board