

WTTW COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD

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

Tuesday, August 15, 2017

WTTW Studios, 5400 N. St Louis Ave, Chicago, Illinois

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 6:20 PM without a quorum present.

The following CAB members were present and introduced themselves: Chairman Joseph Morris (Chair); Vice Chairman Mary Lou Mockus (Vice Chair); Secretary Rita Tandoric; Denise Avant; Leatrice Campbell; Kimberly Frost; Susan Ivers; Linda Jackson; Lennette Meredith; Herbert Sohn; Bruce Sutchar; and Carlton Triolo-Sapp.

Note the following CAB members were absent: Nora Bonnin; Maryilene Blondell; Joe Bosco; Barbara Cragan; Dee Harrison; Derrick Kimbrough; Aaron Lawler; Sharon Meroni; Shweta Singh; Maggie Steinz; Eleanor Wolfe.

The following persons also were present: Dan Soles, WTTW's Senior Vice President and Chief Television Content Officer and CAB's management liaison; Anne Gleason, WTTW's Senior Vice President of Marketing and Digital Media; and Yvonne Davis, Administrative Assistant to Chicago Tonight and Staff Liaison.

And, the following members of the public were present: No members of the public were present.

The Chair opened the meeting explaining that a quorum was not present at the time (13 members being needed for a quorum; 10 were present when the meeting was called to order). As no quorum was present, roll call, revision and adoption of the agenda were deferred pending the establishment of a quorum. The Chair proceeded to Public Comment. There being no members of the public present at that time, the Chair called the meeting to order and proceeded to introduce Anne Gleason.

The Chair explained that Ms. Gleason was originally brought to WTTW to manage the marketing department. At that time, the station's website was viewed as an adjunct of marketing. In the intervening years the website has grown exponentially and now the website contains much more content than the television station. The website not only acts as an archive for broadcast content but also much original content. It has taken on a life of its own as an interactive medium. It has become extremely important medium. The Chair asked that Ms. Gleason start by giving a description of her background and what brought her to WTTW.

Ms. Gleason stated that background is primarily in marketing. She worked in the PR department at the Art Institute, and at a book publishing company. She also started a magazine and worked for the American Library Association where she was responsible for consumer products involving its literacy campaign and launched its first website. She then came to WTTW and is responsible for all direct response membership campaigns (except pledge drives), which involves direct marketing to potential members and all forms of communication with current and renewing and returning members over all platforms and through mailings, email blasts, and telemarketing. She also communicates via social media. The website and social media was originally a promotional tool. Now the website has parity with television and radio. Most

of the TV video can go online. There is much original content on the website as well. There are four original series that appear on the web first. Content is shared and it is pushed everywhere.

Ms. Mockus asked about the state of membership. Ms. Gleason explained that membership is increasing, but that there are many challenges across the not-for-profit landscape and the media landscape. System-wide, membership is flat to down over the last 10 years. WTTW, however, is slightly up. There are currently approximately 125,000 members, where 110,000 to 125,000 are typical.

Mr. Triolo-Sapp relayed his experience with renewal where he received a mailing and then tried to renew via the website and then via telephone but could not apply the discount offered in the mailing. Ms. Gleason explained that mail offers are exclusive to the mail and cannot be applied over the web or the telephone. The station tries to keep members within the domain in which they have come to be members.

Ms. Ivers asked about the areas that Ms. Gleason has responsibility and asked for an estimate of the division of Ms. Gleason's time across the areas of responsibility. Ms. Gleason explained that more than 50% of her time is spent on digital aspects. Anything not broadcast is digital, basically.

The Chair asked about membership and stated that membership is basically a donation and that there are no rights or interests conferred upon becoming a member – for instance, there are no voting rights. Ms. Gleason agreed, except to state that there are benefits, but without voting rights. Fundamentally, the station believes that members are the closest viewers – those that are the most loyal viewers. The station takes viewer feedback seriously and responds. Members support what the station does and there are some perks – tickets, dining offers, member only events. There are studio tours for Member Circle up to \$500. After \$500 the donors are handled by the major giving department.

Ms. Avant asked about what efforts are made by Ms. Gleason to ensure access with screen reader, Android and Appo, and to make sure that links are correct and that headings are correct. Ms. Gleason explained that great effort is put into making sure that the screen is labeled properly on every page. About a year ago the site was audited for accessibility and a number of suggestions made were put into effect. It's always changing and an ongoing and time-consuming process. With regard to the Apps, the WFMT App was built at the station. The PS App, onto which WTTW pushes a lot of content, was developed by PBS. Ms. Avant interjected that the PBS App is problematic. Ms. Gleason explained that WTTW does not control the PBS App. The accessibility is controlled by PBS and the keys are turned back to the stations. Ms. Gleason pledged to report the issue to PBS.

Ms. Avant then asked about descriptive video and wondered if it could be done on the web as it is done by Netflix (check spelling). Ms. Gleason said that such functionality would be under PBS' control, and that she would pass this along. She mentioned that the station is finally 100% compliant with the closed-captioning requirements, but the descriptive video is a different technology.

Mr. Triolo-Sapp returned to the subject of viewer feedback and asked what processes are in place to take feedback. Ms. Gleason explained that the station does a lot of surveying over focus groups. The surveys are done online, and notices will appear on the site and in the member guide, and such surveys are done at least once a year. Some are large surveys with 25-30 questions. A WTTW survey was just completed; another will be done soon for WFMT. Online surveys are done. There are telemarketing surveys done all the time.

As for what the station does with the data, Ms. Gleason stated that data must be complied. In the last survey the station asked about device penetration. How are people now watching video content? What devices do you have; how do you watch? What subscription services do you have? Genre preferences? Program preferences? Local versus national programming preferences are questioned.

The Chair asked about how surveys are done online. Ms. Gleason stated that surveys are announced via email blasts because the station has email addresses for approximately 80% of the members. The response rate was approximately 1.5%, which represented about 5,000 responses on 200,000 emails. Different segments of membership may be surveyed: for instance, active members, lapsed members, non-member viewers.

The Chair asked how the station tries to get to non-member viewers. Ms. Gleason responded that those individuals are best reached on air. This is where contests, the sweepstakes promotion and viewer appreciation month are important.

The Sweepstakes really runs all year but is heavily promoted in four months. This is both a name capture and a revenue generator.

The Chair stated that the station's viewers are primarily under age 6 and over age 35, and then asked what the station does to capture those in between. Ms. Gleason explained that it is difficult to get good email addresses for non-viewer adults. Lists can be purchased or rented, but the email addresses are not accurate. The station also exchanges lists with other not-for-profits. There are also events – for instance a large event is planned at the Auditorium Theatre to promote Ken Burns' "Vietnam".

The Chair asked about persons the above age 6. Ms. Gleason responded that PBS really does not program for ages 8-35, so it's not productive to go after that age group. The Chair suggested that the website might be a better avenue. Ms. Gleason stated that the website age is lower than on air: 25-45.

Mr. Triolo-Sapp asked how responder data stratifies by age, viewer behavior and polarizes on a love-hate type of scale. Ms. Gleason stated that, for better or worse, responders generally love the station and support the station. So, the data is a bit skewed.

Ms. Ivers explained that she worked with independent producers, and stated that one of her concerns centers on the evolution of Passport. Ms. Gleason will cover this in her formal presentation.

Mr. Sutchar asked about the station's relationship with NPR. Ms. Gleason stated that in Chicago the relationship is expanding in content partnerships. There is on-air sharing of personnel. Is membership information shared? Per Ms. Gleason, not really; it's very difficult.

Ms. Mockus asked about the WFMT Member Society. Ms. Gleason explained that it is partially under her domain. However, WTTW and WFMT are kept separate as each is separate brand, and the separate brands will be maintained.

Ms. Frost asked about any relationship WTTW might have with Luna Metrics and the Nielson organization.

Ms. Gleason explained that the station uses Google Analytics as do most stations in the system for everything on the digital side. PBS uses Nielson for all on-air data. Google Analytics is a powerful tool and free. It's apples-to apples because all PBS stations use it. A great deal of information is available from Google Analytics, except the name, due to

privacy laws. This is done by IP address. Everything the station does is by opt-in. The station only gets names that the persons actually provide.

Ms. Frost explained that her concern is the interface of the web because that interface can get to a minor audience.

Per Ms. Gleason, kids are being driven to PBS Kids not the individual stations, because PBS Kids has all the games and the things kids want. PBS Kids has the money. When accessing PBS Kids on the web or the App, there are strict rules on data capture. There are sign-in forms but they are for parents – not kids. PBS turns adult names over to the stations. There are no name captures except in parent areas where a child's scores can be viewed. They are never asking a child for information. The only thing IP addresses are used for is to get a general sense of where access is originating.

The Chair asked if PBS is better about sharing data. Ms. Gleason answered that PBS is much better at sharing data based on station ID and zip code.

Dr. Sohn asked if Steve Edwards at WBEZ will be doing more with PBS. Dan Soles answered he is looking forward to a dialog once Edwards is settled in at WBEZ.

Dr. Sohn also asked about WYCC and its relationship with WTTW. Ms. Gleason mentioned that it is not unusual for a city to have as primary station and a secondary station. WYCC receives its money from the city whereas WTTW receives its money from the community. WYCC has access to only about 25% of the PBS content. The Chair pointed out that WYCC does not have a CAB; the College Board is its CAB.

Ms. Mockus asked how audience response is captured. Ms. Gleason explained that the member services group is basically a call center. They keep a tally sheet of the nature of the calls and results are compiled on a monthly basis.

Ms. Gleason then moved to her prepared presentation. The PowerPoint was provided to the Board of Trustees. The presentation centers on the digital side and is premised on doing more and better stories. Device fragmentation is the name of the game now. Fragmentation of how and where people consume content. TV is still the biggest segment, radio is next. Other areas are blu ray/DVD, Games, internet on PC, and web and app. interestingly, people are adding more time, not splitting their time among the various devices. Source is Neilson data.

People watching TV/DVR – traditional TV – is still the largest segment and very strong, although down a bit.

The goal is to make sure that all content is made available on all devices. Keys are distribution and content. 50% of all persons accessing WTTW are doing it on mobile devices. Growing 5-10% annually. The PBS video app is very popular. PBS opened the technology but WTTW pushes everything it does to the app every day. Something is posted daily. WTTW is also on Facebook and Twitter, a little Instagram, and a little U-Tube, but the station would rather everyone come to the WTTW site.

There are 4 digital series - original for the web - for instance Foodphiles and Urban Nature. There are also digital exclusive videos that are stand alone extras, but spinoffs of TV shows or ideas for other content.

There are also micro sites for Chicago Tonight, Check Please, Playlist, and Weekend in Havana.

The App is free; the station is not collecting any data except your primary station. If a person has Roku, Roku will collect data and the licensing agreement between Roku and PBS will pass data to WTTW.

Ms. Gleason then discussed various digital series: Urban Nature.

PBS Kids was launched about 6 months ago 24/7 kids programming. This can also be streamed on the WTTW website. No data is collected. Strictly click and play. Approximately 90,000 viewers.

Broadcast shows also shown are online. Chicago Tonight is popular – about 50% of the viewers are watching Chicago Tonight.

Check Please, Geoffrey Baer, and Masterpiece are very popular.

Podcasts can be downloaded from the website.

Masterpiece brings new people, but Check Please brings WTTW people. Masterpiece was a bit of a surprise. “Check, Please” draws younger people, but there are only 13 new episodes each year.

Passport – relatively new members-only video service. It is another membership benefit – a pay wall of sorts. Masterpiece is fairly aggressive in placing content behind the wall. Producers of content decide what goes behind the pay wall. Programs go onto Passport after they are aired. Some shows (for instance Vietnam) the first episode will be available for free – subsequent will be available behind the Passport wall. National producers make decisions. Proceeds of pay wall subscriptions are retained by WTTW. All series will go onto Passport, but local content and public affairs programming will remain free for streaming.

Social media is a powerful way to drive people to content. It’s unlikely that content will be created for social media such as Facebook.

Ms. Ivers asked about the ability to produce more for the digital arena where in union issues would not be as problematic for over the air productions. Ms. Gleason commented that the rules are different for the digital arena. Ms. Ivers also asked if the station ever makes an open call for content. Ms. Gleason answered “no,” but commented that local producers know where to find WTTW, and know what kind of content the station might use. Producers know that they can go to Dan Soles for broadcast, and increasingly know to go to Anne Gleason for digital. Funding is always an issue, though. There are lots of great ideas, but few come in with funding.

Dr. Sohn commented that Chicago has exceptional theatre but would it be possible to put some of it on TV. Mr. Soles answered that many theatre companies are skittish about showing entire productions on television. There are also union considerations and rules as to how much can be shown. It’s very hard to clear the rights to televise theatre productions.

The Chair asked Ms. Gleason if she has seen station’s the July 2017 News Standards. She answered “yes” and commented that the rules will vary depending on the type of production. Documentaries are handled differently as documentaries have a point of view. PBS standards apply as well. Any news person falls under the News Standards, but not all content is “news.” PBS standards will apply when the content is not news content.

Ms. Frost asked about funding for web content. The station has to decide on a case by case basis as to providing funding for projects. TV has bigger budgets and more funding dollars available. Increasingly, the station is trying to put content everywhere. The station needs to balance the programming and the needs of the community as it wants content seen by as large a group as possible. It's not feasible to produce content for small groups – the broader appeal has to be considered. Where the CAB can be helpful is to continue to bring issues forward – what is important to the community.

Ms. Mockus asked about the ratio of costs of TV production v. web production. Hard to say – web content is not necessarily cheaper than TV content. Spending is much higher on the TV side, now. It's all merging though – one day, the platform will not matter.

Ms. Ivers commented that on the Pilsen project the station actually hired an assistant producer from the community.

The Chair thanked Ms. Gleason.

Approval of Minutes: With no quorum, no minutes were voted upon.

Revision and Adoption of Agenda: With no quorum, no agenda was adopted.

Trustees' Liaisons: No Trustee Liaison was present; therefore, no report was presented.

Management Liaison: Mr. Soles provided an update on a search for Dan Schmidt's replacement. There is no specific timetable, but a start date is unknown as a search committee of the Board has been formed and a search firm will be engaged. The application process has not yet started.

Mr. Soles also spoke about the station's promotion efforts on the Vietnam series. Various persons with connection to Vietnam have been interviewed. These stories will be used for promotion and will also be packaged for a half hour special shown in conjunction with the film.

Mr. Soles is viewing a rough cut of the 370th Regiment from WWI, an Illinois regiment. This is scheduled to be shown in November.

"My Neighborhood – Pilsen" will be offered for national broadcast on the PBS World Channel in October.

Filming is active on the "10 that Changed America" series which will air in the summer and fall of 2018.

A behind-the-scenes program on the Joffrey Ballet's new production of the Nutcracker will air in mid-November and then nationally in December.

The station is working with Mike Leonard for another "In Common" program to air before year-end and another one or two for 2018.

Governor Rauner was on "Chicago Tonight" last night, interviewed by Amanda _____. This was his first appearance on "Chicago Tonight."

Ms. Ivers asked about the 50th anniversary of the 1968 Democratic National Convention and whether the station would be doing anything. Mr. Soles commented that there is an old episode of "American Experience" regarding the convention and the 7th episode of "Vietnam" also covers the convention. It's probably not realistic to expect a new documentary.

2018 is also Illinois' Bicentennial. A State commission has been formed. The station has met with the commission. Expect an update in October.

Membership Committee: Ms. Meredith reported that there is no one to introduce at this meeting. One application was received on Aug 7th. There are 4 vacancies. A few of the newer members have attendance issues. Warnings regarding violation of the attendance requirements will be sent by the committee.

Program Committee: No report.

Technology and Digital: No report.

Cultural Research and Development Committee: No report.

Education Committee: No report.

Station Administration and Finance Committee: No reports.

Journalistic Standards and Ethics Committee: The Chair asked that members keep Tuesday, September 26th open to discuss the new standards. The Chair will check with Ms. Davis on scheduling.

Secretary: No report.

Vice Chairman: No report.

Chairman's Report: Dan Schmidt will not meet with the CAB in October. However, Board of Trustee Chairman James Mabie will meet with the CAB in October. The next plenary meeting is October 17. It is possible that Dan Schmidt may meet with the CAB in December. The Chair reminded committees to work on submissions for the annual report.

The CAB photo on the website may not be the current photo. Ms. Soles will look into it.

Unfinished Business: None

New Business: Ms. Ivers brought freebies from the annual PBS meeting which she attended in Chicago.

Good and Welfare:

Sad news: Ms. Meredith's mother and Mr. Bosco's wife have recently passed away.

Ms. Jackson's brother recently had by-pass surgery and is doing very well.

Ms. Campbell's daughter was inspired by "Check, Please" and has since graduated from culinary school and is planning a cookbook for entertaining which should be completed next fall.

Ms. Frost recognized the following organizations for their relevant work: My Block My Hood My City. At risk and underserved kids are taken through the city and they record their on their smart phones which are then posted online.

Another group, MASK: Mothers against Senseless Killings, encourages people to be outside in their neighborhoods, and the result has been a reduction in violence in the area.

Adjournment: The Meeting was adjourned at 8:49 PM.

Next Public CAB Meeting: October 17, 2017 at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Rita E. Tandaric, Secretary

Attachments: