

WTTW COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD

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

Tuesday, October 19, 2021

Electronic Meeting via Zoom

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM with a quorum present.

The following CAB members were present: Chairman Joseph Morris (Chair); Vice Chairman Susan Ivers (Vice Chair); Secretary Rita Tandaric; Charles Beavers; Maryilene Blondell; Leatrice Campbell; Barbara Cragan; Dr. Simuel Hampton; Carol Howe; Aaron Lawler; Sinhue Mendoza; Lennette Meredith; Sharon Meroni; Mary Lou Mockus; Kristin Mount; Janice Phillips; Frederic Rizzo; Nancy Simon; and Chester Szerlag.

Note the following CAB members were absent: Thomas Herzberg; Linda Jackson; Douglas Johnson; Peter Kraus; Iqbal Shariff; and Dr. Sheila Wicks.

The following persons also were present: Jitan Garg, Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of WWCI; Graham C. Grady, Board of Trustees Liaison to CAB; Timothy Russell, Vice President of Community Engagement and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; and Lisa Tipton, Head of Programming and Pledge.

The following members of the public were present: None.

The Chair noted that no members of the public were present therefore no comments were heard.

The Chair introduced Jitan (“Jay”) Garg, Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of WWCI. Mr. Garg was in attendance to discuss WTTW’s administration and finance. The Chair expressed hope that the CAB members had reviewed the materials assembled by the CAB’s committee on Station Administration and Finance.

The Chair asked Mr. Garg to tell the CAB a bit about himself and his job and what he sees ahead for WTTW. The Chair hoped that Mr. Garg would take questions from the CAB.

Mr. Garg explained that he is lifelong Chicagoan; he grew up about a mile from the station in Rogers Park. He went to Lane Tech High School; his wife also grew up in Chicago and attended Bogan High School on the South side. Both are products of the Chicago Public Schools. He attended the University of Illinois in Champaign where he earned a double degree in finance and accounting. He joined one of the Big Four accounting firms and did forensic accounting for a few years and then did FP&A (financial planning and analysis) for a large bank. He migrated to the investments industry where he served in a variety of operations roles. He served as a consultant after the investment industry, and consulted at WTTW. He has been with WWCI since May 2019. He loves what he does, the organization, and the people, and feels very lucky to be part of the organization. In his current role as CFO of the organization, his main responsibility is for the sustainability of the organization, particularly the financial sustainability. There are day-to-day operations that come under Mr. Garg’s purview, but overall, the main concerns align with the strategic plan adopted in 2019, and center on financial sustainability.

Mr. Garg stated that, based on financial information that is available, the organization is doing “OK”. The station was able to get through the pandemic, thanks to the wonderful members and supporters, indeed, the organization was able to get through the pandemic better than other non-profits. At the end of the day, the diverse revenue streams helped. Where some parts of the business didn’t do so well, others did well, and “we’re OK”. There is a very good management team in place that can adapt and flex to the changing times. The station continues to follow and achieve the strategic plan’s goals. Mr. Garg welcomed any questions.

The Chair thanked Mr. Garg and said that he would turn to Mr. Szerlag shortly. The Chair noted that the CAB’s Station Administration and Finance committee came about after a financial downturn that resulted in an abrupt downsizing of staff, including talent, and the head of production, V.J. McAleer. That event was abrupt and surprising, and, despite the seemingly extensive consequences, it was described to the CAB as a fairly small shortfall, in the single millions of dollars, and that the shortfall had been made up in the following year. The Chair stated the obvious inference that if the station is not financially healthy it cannot meet the educational and cultural needs of the community it serves. Inasmuch as the CAB’s mandate is to study whether or not the station’s policies meet those needs, the CAB concluded that among the station policies it needed to study were those pertaining to the station’s administration and finance. If the station is not generating revenue and not watching its expenses, it cannot meet any needs. The Chair asked Mr. Garg if the station is healthy, if the budget is balanced, and, looking ahead several fiscal years, are there systemic problems on the horizon?

Mr. Garg thanked the Chair for the question. He reminded everyone that financial sustainability is a primary pillar of the strategic plan. He could not comment on events prior to his joining the organization, but today, every decision that is made is for financial sustainability. The organization is financially sustainable right now, and has great fundraisers, such as Lisa Tipton, who help the station stay financially solvent. The plan is to take things as they come. Mr. Garg commented that no one could have predicted a worldwide pandemic that would rattle the markets and daily lives. Things come up that cannot be predicted. He believes that they have the right people and a great organization in place and a mission to stay financially sustainable in the future.

The Chair turned to Mr. Szerlag, chair of the CAB’s Station Finance and Administration committee. Mr. Szerlag stated that he has been trying to pull together information for the CAB to educate and present a context for discussions. Mr. Szerlag asked Mr. Garg to explain which 3-5 key metrics he watches. Mr. Garg answered that he watches revenue and expenses, trying to keep those in line. There are levers to pull to monitor expenses. They are always looking to create an environment that is not destructive. Like all organizations, he monitors the balance sheet and the income statement, the cash they have, upcoming expenses, expected revenue and expected expenses.

Mr. Szerlag asked if the current 990 form was posted on the website as the last reports he saw were from 2019 and 2020. Mr. Garg was not sure. Mr. Szerlag then commented that the Corporation for Public Broadcasting support for the station was almost a \$1 million in support for the station in 2019 and 2020 combined. How were those funds deployed and used, and if those funds are no longer available, how will the station react to having \$1 million less in the balance sheet?

Mr. Garg answered that the station always has levers to pull. There might be a production that is delayed, but there are always financial levers at their disposal that they believe will not be disruptive. At the same time, those levers help align revenue and expenses. Finances are reviewed daily. Mr. Garg stated that they have a management committee that looks at financial issues. There are multiple eyes measuring how they are doing, what they could change, and what could be done better.

Mr. Szerlag agreed that the team approach is important given the complexity of the business. Referencing Mr. Garg's mention of the strategic plan, Mr. Szerlag asked Mr. Garg what are the one, two or three goals, and how would the financial underpinnings help achieve those goals?

Mr. Garg noted that there are four pillars to the strategic plan, but only one is within Mr. Garg's purview: sustainability, which certainly affects the other pillars. The financial underpinnings are constant monitoring of the station's financial position, looking at how to improve the financial position, and always planning to make sure, in good times and bad times, that the show goes on.

Mr. Szerlag then commented that one thing he looks at is the other markets. Viewer habits are changing, and how they access the market is changing, especially in the last two years. As Ms. Tipton has previously explained, the programming must be purchased, not made. Other stations are not the same. WGBH, for example, seems to produce a lot of programming, and presumably that programming generates revenue as other stations purchase that programming. Mr. Szerlag asked if WTTW leadership is thinking about how that dynamic works and considering whether there are opportunities to produce more original content.

Ms. Tipton interjected that Mr. Szerlag is correct; WGBH does produce a lot of national content. It is part of WTTW's strategic plan to develop something, along the lines of a "Nova" or an "American Experience" in the coming years which can be marketed nationally. The producing station does not get money from the purchasing stations, though; money comes from PBS, and it is not usually the entire production cost.

Mr. Szerlag then asked about the audience trends: is it stable, growing, declining? Are we attracting younger Millennial viewers? What is the dynamic with the market share?

Ms. Tipton answered that the audience is pretty stable, primarily because the over-the-air audience prefers to watch broadcast television. The station is bringing in younger viewers, but they are streaming or watching over the website. Ms. Tipton explained that her domain is the broadcast space. Anne Gleason attended the last meeting, and her area is the digital space. The Chair asked Ms. Tipton to clarify her statement to the effect that funding for a national production such as "Nova" would come from PBS and not from "the stations"; was that the stations as in other PBS stations, or the station, being the producing station? Ms. Tipton explained that every station pays dues to PBS, and it is from those dues that national productions are funded. She is sure that WGBH must raise funds for their productions. The Chair then asked if a production such as "Nova" is a net moneymaker for the producing station. Ms. Tipton answered that she would assume that it is a moneymaker as it is now in its 40-something season, so there must be sustainability. She continued by reminding everyone of Mr. Garg's comment that WTTW is looking for that kind of sustainability. The Chair then asked if that sustainability is coming from donors to WGBH, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting ("CPB"), or PBS? Ms. Tipton answered that she would liken it more to a pie – where funding comes from each source, but a lot of the funding may come from their own fundraising from foundations and grants. The Chair asked for confirmation that there is no movement of funds from station to station. Ms. Tipton so confirmed.

The Chair then asked if it is still true that the pledge drive funds about cover the annual dues to PBS. Before answering the Chair, Mr. Garg pointed out that WGBH's strategic plan is quite different from WTTW's strategic plan. One of the pillars of WTTW's plan is "local". WTTW has a lot of production, but it is local. Ms. Tipton commented that there is no "Boston Tonight", and no "Boston Stories". Mr. Garg noted that WTTW does very well in what it aims to do – local programming. It intends to be hyper-local in its programming because WTTW thinks of itself as being part of the community. The WGBH model is very different than WTTW's model. Mr. Garg is proud to say that anytime he mentions Geoffrey Baer, people

know who he is. People know “Chicago Tonight”. WGBH operates under a much different set of strategic operations than WTTW. That is fine because WTTW does not want to be a WGBH. The Chair commented that WGBH’s large donor base and fundraising efforts are probably national where WTTW’s are local. Mr. Garg agreed, and stated that it goes along with the programming. Mr. Garg further stated that WTTW might do something for a national audience on occasion (for instance “10 That Changed America” and “Prehistoric Road Trip”), but each had a local tinge to them. The programs make forays into the national market, but with the local element.

Ms. Blondell thanked Mr. Garg for the explanation of WTTW’s local concentration. Calling upon Mr. Garg’s comments that during the pandemic some parts of the business did OK and other did not, Ms. Blondell asked Mr. Garg if he could name those that did well and those that did not. She also commented that PBS has the online “Shop”. She finds it very bizarre and confusing. What kind of revenue does the shop generate? Thirdly, Ms. Blondell asked, in the financials, if WTTW revenue is separated from WYCC, or is it shown together? Mr. Garg answered in reverse order. WTTW and WYCC are both under the WWCI umbrella, everything is combined, including WFMT. As to the Shop, it’s something outside WTTW’s scope. Maybe it is not being marketed properly. Ms. Blondell followed up by asking if a WTTW viewer makes a purchase, where does the revenue go? Does WTTW share in that? Mr. Garg answered that he does not know enough about it but if there is revenue to WTTW, it must be very small. Ms. Tipton added that even if a person is making the purchase through WTTW, the revenue from the PBS Shop goes entirely to PBS.

Mr. Garg returned to Ms. Blondell’s first question. He reiterated that the organization has multiple revenue sources. The main revenue source is memberships. Others are high net worth donors, advertising and sales, and pledge. The parts that did well offset the ones that did not. There are cultural partners who partner with WTTW and do different types of sponsorship and activities with WTTW. If such partners were closed during the pandemic, the decline was weathered by WTTW’s very strong membership base.

The Vice Chair thanked Mr. Garg for meeting with the CAB. Several of her questions had been answered, but she commented that a better comparison to WTTW might be WETA in Washington DC. While it has national exposure with Ken Burns and “Newshour”. A lot of the national programming it does is local, such as “Washington Week in Review” and to a large extent, “Newshour” which are national in focus. They are producing for a national audience and a local presence, but they also have a program called “Boundary Stories” that covers the tri-state, Maryland, Virginia, and D.C. area. The Vice Chair suggested that Mr. Szerlag might want to look at this as a basis for comparison.

The Vice Chair then asked about the CARES Act. She understands that funds came to the organization, which she understands to be a one-time allocation. Where did that money go? There was money in 2020 and more in 2021. How has that money been used?’

Mr. Garg answered that the funds were used as prescribed by CPB. Mr. Garg cannot explain dollar-for-dollar, but the funds were used in line with what CPB allowed. The CARES Act funds were not as large as it would seem. While it started as a large amount, it was distributed across the country. The formula used to distribute funds favored smaller markets. The Vice Chair agreed and noted that Mr. Szerlag had informed the CAB that \$770,000 had been allocated to the State of Illinois. Mr. Garg added that the funds were also allocated to public radio. Mr. Garg further stated that the amount received by the organization was a small percentage of what is normally received from CPB on an annual basis. It was not a game-changer. The Vice Chair asked if there were any areas specified by CPB where WTTW did not need the funds. Mr. Garg noted that CPB stated that funds could be used for “broadcasting”. WTTW has an antenna on Willis Tower, which is not cheap. The money that CPB provides will not fully fund the stations expenses.

The Chair noted that Ms. Meredith and Mr. Lawler joined the meeting.

The Chair asked if there is any discussion between the station and CPB on the issue of the annual amount the station will receive from CPB. What is the method by which CPB decides on the amount to be released? Are there any restrictions?

Mr. Garg answered that it is a complicated formula. CPB receives an appropriation from the Federal government, i.e., the taxpayers. There is a complex formula, which changes annually, to distribute that money across the country. PBS depends on that CPB money. For smaller stations, the bulk of their CPB money goes to pay PBS dues. The PBS dues for larger stations are quite large. The CPB funding helps WTTW pay its PBS dues. The formula, the behind-the-scenes conversations are beyond Mr. Garg's purview. There are conversations and WTTW does lobby for funds. The formula considers the financials and certain revenues. The Chair asked if there are any restrictions as to how the funds are used. Mr. Garg answered that the funds come with a broad set of restrictions; the funds must be used "for the purposes of broadcasting", which could be engineering or programming. The funds received from CPB are a small percentage of WTTW's expenses, so it is easy to ensure that the funds are used for the purposes permitted by CPB.

The Chair asked what the single most important source of revenue is for WTTW. Mr. Garg answered that when they say "Viewers Like You" they mean it. The grassroots fundraising is always there. The Chair asked for clarification of his understanding that Ms. Tipton's pledge drives and Ms. Gleason's digital platform-generated donations make up most of the revenue for WTTW. Mr. Garg answered that this is correct and that it is "way more" than CPB money. He would have to check as to how it compares to major grant money, but it is important to remember that major grant money is not a given. Some years are better than others. What keeps WTTW going and what it depends on, and hopes to depend on, is that viewers like what the station is doing. People like what the station is doing, and want what the station is providing. With the wonderful team that does the content and the fundraising, that has been the case, and he hopes that it remains the case.

The Chair asked if WTTW, WFMT, and WYCC all form one company. Mr. Garg answered that Window to the World Communications Inc. (WWCI) is the parent company. WTTW and WFMT are subsidiaries of WWCI. The WYCC license is part of WTTW. The Chair asked if there are funds transfers between the companies, and if one company will subsidize the other when one is doing better than the other. Mr. Garg answered that it is considered one company – if one does well, they both do well. Each helps the other. George Preston, the General Manager of WFMT would say the same.

The Chair asked if Mr. Preston has a counterpart on the WTTW side or is it President Micek herself? Ms. Tipton interjected, "Me!" with agreement from Mr. Garg. Mr. Garg stated that Ms. Tipton is the main decision-maker about what is seen on television. Kudos to her and her ability to put on the programming.

The Chair then noted that WTTW holds a public television license and WFMT holds a commercial radio license. WBEZ is the public radio station in Chicago. There has been some news in town that [The Chicago Sun Times](#), a for-profit company, is considering reorganizing as a not-for-profit publishing organization, and is looking to merge with another not-for-profit, specifically WBEZ. The Chair asked Mr. Garg if he sees strategic implications with the formation of another major public media partnership in the city. Will it affect, for the positive or for the negative, how WWCI does business or how it raises funds from the public and major donors? Mr. Garg answered that he does not know, and he does not have enough information about the merger. He did say that WWCI will continue to do what it does best, which is provide hyper-local content. It will be a wait and see situation. He likes to think that WTTW provides a very different product with "Chicago Tonight", and that the market appreciates it.

The Chair asked Ms. Tipton if she has any reaction to the possibility of a Sun Times-WBEZ merger. Ms. Tipton commented that a number of public television stations partner with the local National Public Radio outlet, just not in Chicago.

The Chair turned to Mr. Szerlag and asked if he had additional questions. Mr. Szerlag did not have additional questions, but added that this had been a good discussion. He may have additional questions once the current 990 is completed and published.

The Chair asked Mr. Garg to clarify whether the funds raised through pledge drives still nearly equals the dues WTTW pays to PBS. Mr. Garg answered that he did not think so. There are a lot of factors that go into the situation. PBS dues continue to go up. Systemically, the pledge stream model is not as effective as it used to be. Ms. Blondell commented that such is no surprise. The Chair asked if the reduction is a reduction in absolute funds or a reduction in the percentage of revenue. Mr. Garg answered that it is both. Pledge, long-term, is not going to be sustainable in its current form. However, he thinks that the organization does it better than most. Mr. Garg also thinks this goes back to the diversified revenue stream. They like pledge, but they do not rely solely on pledge to provide the numbers that were once produced. He thinks that despite the substantial material decline in pledge revenue year after year, WTTW still does it better than most.

Ms. Tandaric noted the introduction of the Sustainer membership, where the subscriber chooses an amount that is automatically deducted from the subscriber's account each month. Has this development changed the landscape substantially or not at all? Mr. Garg answered that it has changed the landscape and that it is a great thing. People like to donate every year. The sustainer model allows the member to take the administration out of the picture. It also allows the station to have a predictable revenue stream. It is a win-win.

Ms. Mockus commented that the CAB spent the last meeting hearing about the new REDI program (Racial Equity Diversity and Inclusion) and asked if the initiative represents a significant and ongoing budgetary item. Mr. Garg answered that it is an ongoing budgetary item, and an important one for the organization. Mr. Russell is the internal manager in charge of the program. Mr. Garg stated that they don't have millions of dollars to invest in the program, but if they did have the money, they would invest it in the program. They allocate as much as they can to the initiative. They are allocating funds on several fronts: internal employee training and allocation of expenses. Mr. Russell interjected that it extends to Ms. Tipton and programming decisions, and to WFMT and the introduction of new composers and music selections. In original programming, DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) is considered in every aspect of a project.

The Chair added that the Board of Trustees, when presenting the REDI program to the CAB, explained that it had hired the Cabral Organization to conduct training for the employees, management, and the Board of Trustees members. The Chair asked if the station is funding those expenses. Mr. Garg answered yes, but that much of the funding was provided by members of the Board of Trustees. The training was well-received. A book club was formed, and they are now on their third book. Book 2 was Caste. Book 3 is Amber Cabral's, Allies and Advocates. Anyone who wanted a book was given Caste, and everyone received the Cabral book. Book 1 was So You Want to Talk About Race.

The Chair asked Mr. Garg about "the management committee that looks at financial issues" to which Mr. Garg referred earlier in the meeting. The Chair asked if the committee is from Mr. Garg's department. Mr. Garg answered that he meets with the leadership team. The budgeting process is discussed among the leadership team, which includes Mr. Russell and Ms. Tipton, which meets and discusses the budget to make sure that assets are being allocated appropriately and that the financial sustainability is there. The budget then goes to the Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees, which is made up of individuals with a deep knowledge of the issues. Before it is finalized, the budget is approved by the entire Board of Trustees. Many eyes are on the matter. The Chair asked if the leadership team is chaired by President Micek. Mr. Garg

answered yes. The Chair also asked who chairs the Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees. Mr. Garg answered that he was not sure such information is publicly available and did not answer.

The Chair thanked Mr. Garg. Mr. Garg thanked the Chair and the CAB for their efforts.

The Chair asked for a motion to adopt the agenda for the meeting. Ms. Mockus so moved, seconded by the Vice Chair. The agenda was unanimously adopted.

The Chair commented on the extensive minutes of the meeting of August 17, 2021, during which the CAB learned of the Board of Trustees REDI initiative. The Chair asked if there were any corrections or additions to the minutes. There being none, the Chair asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Cragan so moved, seconded by Ms. Meredith. The minutes of the meeting of August 17, 2021, were unanimously approved.

Chairman's Report: Consistent with what the Board of Trustees and Management have done in forming their REDI and DEI committees, respectively, it seems appropriate for the CAB to also form a committee to consider the issues of race, equity, and diversity. Given that the CAB represents the community that WTTW service, the Chair believes that it is incumbent on the CAB to also establish a committee on race, equity, and inclusion. The Chair is asking the CAB members to read the books that the staff is reading in its book group. The Chair hopes to be able to respond to the request of the Board of Trustees to meet and begin a dialog on the issues. The Board has asked for the CAB's comments, which, with one notable exception, has not happened in the past. The one exception was President Micek's request that the CAB comment on the strategic plan and then surveyed the CAB members about the strategic plan. The Board of Trustees sent its REDI committee leadership to the CAB and has asked for the CAB's input. The Chair of the REDI committee told the CAB that no one was drafted onto that committee – that everyone who is participating volunteered to do so. The Chair will approach the CAB's committee in the same manner by asking for volunteers. The Chair will chair the new committee. The Vice Chair and Secretary volunteered, and various CAB members started indicating a desire to participate by raising hands. The Chair asked that volunteers send an email to indicate a desire to participate. The Chair hoped to convene a meeting before the end of the year.

The Chair raised the issue of an annual report. The Chair suggested that any annual report should center on the work of the news committee and proposed a meeting of the news committee on Tuesday, November 16, 2021, at 6:00 PM. All members of the CAB are welcome to participate in any committee meetings. The Chair invited any CAB members to contact him if they wish to join the news committee.

If any other chairs wish to convene meetings of their committees in November, the Chair offered to assist in facilitating those meetings. In past years, November 11 was a good meeting date, as many may have had that day off. This may no longer be the case, but it is still a holiday when people may find a meeting more convenient.

The Chair noted that the CAB typically meets on the third Tuesday of the months in which it meets, but it sometimes becomes a little more complicated as we approach the December holidays. This year, the third Tuesday is as late as it can be - December 21. The Chair suggested moving the December meeting to the second Tuesday, that is, December 14. The By-Laws permit for the rescheduling of meetings. The Chair asked for any objections; there being none, then by unanimous consent the December meeting will be moved to December 14.

The Chair then called upon Mr. Grady for the Trustee Liaison report.

Trustee Liaison Report: Mr. Grady greeted the Chair and the CAB and thanked everyone for their work on the CAB. Mr. Grady commended the Chair for his leadership in establishing a REDI committee of the CAB, and commented that it is very forward-thinking of the Chair to do so. Mr. Grady had no official message or information from the Board, but commented that he enjoyed the Muhammad Ali film by Ken Burns recently aired by WTTW. Mr. Grady again thanked everyone for their participation on the CAB.

The Chair thanked Mr. Grady and agreed that the Ali film was very well done.

Management Liaisons: The Chair commented to Ms. Tipton about pledge drives, which people either love or hate. The Chair asked if there are any plans for changes to the pledge drives in the near future. Ms. Tipton responded that an experiment was just concluded where the August pledge drive was not as disruptive as in the past, but pledge programming was interspersed throughout the regular schedule. There was a marathon of “Midsomer Murders” episodes and cooking show marathons. They are trying to lean into areas where viewers are watching, and with what they are watching. It was a successful experiment which will continue. December will be a regular pledge drive as there is a greater need for funds. The pandemic has been hard because no one can be in the studios, there can be no phone banks, and resources are limited. The Director of On-air Fundraising has been going into the field and taping, editing, and trying to make the breaks more watchable.

The Chair commented that the breaks in the Ali film were very well-done, but Ms. Tipton said that those pieces were just lead-ins for the program, and not actual pledge pitches.

Ms. Blondell commented that people have attended the rally for the Chicago Sky championship and people are attending Bears’ games, where everyone is nose-to-nose, and she asked why 30 people cannot go into the studio and conduct a pledge drive, particularly when the need for funds is great. Ms. Tipton replied that it is station policy, intended to keep employees safe. Ms. Blondell noted that other buildings are open and asked when WTTW would again be open. Mr. Russell interjected that the current estimate is that the building would be reopened early in 2022. He added that the pledge studio is a small studio and with concerns about Covid and vaccination status, and with the winter months and the flu season coming, it is important to keep the employees safe. Mr. Russell further commented that the pledge team has been very creative in their recent pledge efforts. In the current WFMT pledge drive, only three employees are permitted to participate, and they are in separate studios. The next trustee meeting was scheduled to be in-person, but it will now be conducted virtually.

The Chair asked who makes the decision about access to the building. Mr. Russell responded that it is made by the leadership team in consultation with the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees. Everyone agrees that it is best to err on the side of caution.

Ms. Tipton further commented that if anyone contracts Covid, anyone who works with them would not be permitted in the building. Such could decimate a crew and there is the possibility that “Chicago Tonight” could not be produced. No one wants to take that chance.

The Chair asked Ms. Blondell if she had anything to add. Ms. Blondell stated, for the record, that she in no way intended her questions to be antagonistic, or to imply that Ms. Tipton was in any way responsible for the WTTW Covid protocols.

Ms. Tipton answered that she was ready to go back to the office in September, but the Delta variant changed things again. She said that they are all waiting. The Chair noted that the whole world is on hold. Back at the beginning of the pandemic,

Dr. Fauci was thinking it would be a two-week shutdown to flatten the curve. The CAB had postponed its meeting, but it was three missed meetings before the CAB resumed meetings via Zoom. The Chair believes that everyone can appreciate the problems if a crew member comes in contact with Covid and forces the entire crew to go into quarantine. It could have a devastating effect. Those people must be kept safe.

The Chair asked if Mr. Russell or Ms. Tipton had anything more to report.

Mr. Russell explained that the station is beginning preparation of the next three years' strategic plan within the next few months. Ms. Micek will be coming to the CAB for its input.

Earlier in the day Mr. Russell shared with the CAB information about the third "Chicago Stories" program entitled "Inventing Improv". This is a story about another Chicago export. There will be an event on Thursday, October 21, where Alan Alda will participate.

Regarding DEI, within the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2021, the station had 46,000 people who attended or participated in 36 community engagement events. The station has established a new relationship with PBS Books, which allowed the station to extend its reach. Importantly, 76% of the panelist were people of color and 65% were women. The station is very excited about these statistics and has the goal of exceeding them in the new fiscal year. These numbers do not include the fantastic response to events connected with the Muhammad Ali film as well as an event over the past three days (October 17-19) in which WTTW partnered with WNET on a national conference entitled America City Rebuilding, where the issues facing American cities are being discussed. Phil Ponce hosted a conversation with the mayor of Seattle (Bruce Harrell) and Chicago's Mayor Lori Lightfoot. Today Brandis Friedman moderated a panel with former Chicago Public School CEO, Janice Jackson, and several other educational leaders centering on education, teachers' unions, and Covid. Tomorrow Amanda Vinicky will host a discussion with Chicago's Commissioner of Public Health, Dr. Allison Arwady, and Dr. Helene Gayle (President and CEO of the Chicago Community Trust) where the main topic will be health equity during Covid. The station is going beyond partnering with local community organizations by partnering with others on a national level and leveraging internal talent. The events are available on the WTTW website.

There will be an event on Saturday, October 23, in Rockford, featuring Daniel Tiger. It will be an in-person event, but outdoors. The Chair asked if Rockford is within WTTW's viewing area. Ms. Tipton was not sure; she believes that WTTW is not available over-the-air in Rockford, but is available via Comcast. Mr. Russell explained that WTTW is going to Rockford because a local organization approached WTTW and requested an event with Daniel Tiger.

On October 27, WTTW is partnering with Kartemquin Films on an event for a film entitled "The Left Hand". Norman Malone, an African American in his 70s, was paralyzed as a child after a beating he received from his father. He is an accomplished musician, a pianist, and he plays with only his left hand.

Mr. Grady commented that Mr. Malone was his music teacher in 7th and 8th grades at Gillespie Elementary School at 9301 S. State Street. Mr. Malone has overcome a lot. He suffered the injury to his right arm at the hands of his father. He overcame the stressful family situation and became proficient at the piano with only one hand. Mr. Grady recently saw Mr. Malone perform at Symphony Center. Mr. Grady believes this film will be quite inspiring to persons with disabilities or challenges in their lives. Mr. Grady described Mr. Malone as "an amazing person".

The film will be aired on Friday, November 5, and repeated on the Sunday, November 7.

The Chair asked if WTTW had to purchase the rights to air the film. Ms. Tipton responded that the film is available through PBS. There is no national air date yet. The Chair then asked if the upcoming “Chicago Stories – Inventing Improv” program was an in-house project produced under the supervision of Geoffrey Baer. Ms. Tipton answered yes. Ms. Tipton also noted that WTTW is trying to get the episode into the PBS pipeline for national airing, either through PBS or American Public Television, as well as the Ida B. Wells and Chicago Fire installments.

Ms. Tipton noted that WTTW would be airing the Charlie Brown holiday specials – Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas this year. PBS has acquired the rights for one airing each.

Vice Chairman’s Report: The Vice Chair noted that a friend of hers was formerly on the PBS board, but is now on the newly reconstituted board of The Second City. Mr. Russell interjected that there will be an interactive website on improvisation.

“Frontline” is doing an incredible program and special initiative entitled “Unresolved”. It has an interactive museum component that is amazing. It is scheduled to premiere at the DuSable Museum in November. The Vice Chair will email a link with information. “Unresolved” chronicles the stories of 150 unsolved civil rights murder cases.

The Vice Chair stated that she is 1000% behind the Chair’s creation of a CAB DEI committee. The most important component of this is to allow everyone to feel that they are being heard by those who are making the programming decisions. The Vice Chair encourages everyone to consider joining the committee.

In advance of the Programming Committee report, the Chair encouraged CAB members to not wait until just before the CAB meeting to submit program comments. Comments can be sent at any time and are greatly appreciated by Ms. Tipton. Also, ask your friends, co-workers, neighbors, fellow churchgoers, and so forth, for their comments. Make it known that you are on the CAB and collect those community comments.

Program Committee: Ms. Mount stated that the committee is working on a program proposal submitted by Dr. Hampton. It should be ready for discussion at the next CAB meeting.

Station Finance and Administration Committee: The Chair thanked Mr. Szerlag for his preparation and participation in discussing issues with Mr. Garg earlier in the meeting. Mr. Szerlag appreciated Mr. Garg’s attendance at this meeting and hopes that the CAB will be able to have regular dialog with him in the future. Mr. Szerlag did not prepare a report for this meeting, but would like to schedule a committee meeting for November 11. He hopes to have more information on the IRS filing in the next few weeks. He would also like to prepare something for the annual report.

New Business: Ms. Cragan is active in conservation, specifically in restoring prairies. She was picking seeds with the restoration director, a young man, probably in his late 20’s, and he explained that he recently acquired a television and had discovered WTTW. He is really enjoying the programming, particularly “Nova”, “Nature”, and “Antiques Roadshow”. Ms. Cragan was encouraged that WTTW gained a new viewer in that demographic.

Ms. Tipton asked that when CAB members talk to people about programming, please ask **how** they watch WTTW – whether it is over-the-air, over cable, live stream, or over some other service.

Good and Welfare: The Chair called upon Ms. Meredith and inquired as to her health. She said that she was doing very well. She went on to give a shout out to Dr. Hampton who made a house call to see to her cat. He performed a physical,

administered two shots and (without breaching the cat's confidentiality) he said that the cat is overweight and that she is feeding him too much. The cat is on diet cat food, but she is still giving him a couple treats.

Ms. Meroni is excited because she just purchased her first franchise – a bitcoin machine located in Ft. Collins, Colorado. She is learning about the new currency. The Chair interjected that Ms. Tipton should pass this information up the chain as people need to know about cryptocurrencies.

Ms. Mount sent regrets from Mr. Herzberg who could not attend the meeting tonight as he is recovering from surgery to repair a detached retina. He must lie face down for seven days, and he is on day 4. He plans to attend in December. The Chair extended the CAB's best wishes for a speedy recovery.

Ms. Blondell recently gave a speech at Columbia College. She mentioned that she was connected to the CAB, and she met a young man who was previously an intern at PBS. Ms. Blondell stated that she is always looking to recruit new, younger people to PBS and the CAB. Ms. Blondell asked if there is an age requirement for participation. The Chair answered that there is no age requirement in the By-Laws.

Ms. Meroni wished everyone a good week and month. The Chair wished everyone a Happy Halloween and a Happy Thanksgiving.

Ms. Meredith asked about Newton Minow. The Chair said that Mr. Minow is like the Energizer Bunny – he just keeps going. He is a partner at Sidley and Austin in Chicago. He served as the Chairman of the FCC under President Kennedy and was the second Chairman of the Board of Trustees of WTTW. He remains on the Board of Trustees. He is in his 90s now, and he is amenable to meeting with the CAB, but Covid has interfered with that plan. The Chair plans to talk to him after the first of the year.

Next meeting: Tuesday, December 14, 2021, at 6:00 PM via Zoom

The meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 8:21 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Rita E. Tandaric
Secretary

Approved and Adopted by the Community Advisory Board

/s/ JOSEPH A. MORRIS
Chairman
February 15, 2022

Attachments:

