



**Minutes of Combined Board Meeting**

**December 11, 2013**

**Attending:**

Chairman Martin Walzer  
Dr. Harmar Brereton  
Thomas M. Currá  
Ramona Alley  
Jeanne Bovard  
Jeanne Genzlinger  
Kristopher Jones  
Dr. L. Jay Lemons  
Cliff Melberger  
Nicholas Niles  
Lisa Steele  
Attorney Murray Ufberg  
H. W. Wieder

**Absent:**

Rick Cohen  
Attorney Bart Ecker, Jr.  
Alex Fried  
Barbara Hudock  
Virginia Hunt  
Ron Knoebel  
Attorney Murray Ufberg  
Jennifer Wilson  
Andrew J. Sordoni, Dir. Emeritus

**WVIA Staff Attending:**

Tom Currá  
Lynn Volk  
Joe Glynn  
Chris Norton  
Doug Cook  
Ron Prislupski  
George Thomas  
Ben Payavis  
Kathryn Davies

**WVIA Staff Absent:**

Ginny Fredmonski

**Additional Attendees:**

Paula Kerger, President of PBS via Skype

Chairman Walzer opened the meeting at 12:03pm, and declared that there was a quorum present. Chairman Walzer thanked everyone for their attendance and welcomed Paula Kerger, President of PBS who is with us via Skype.

Chairman Walzer asked Ms. Alley to give the Secretary's report. Ms. Alley asked if there were any corrections or additions to the Secretary's Report from the October 10, 2013 Board Meeting. There were none. **A Motion was made to accept the Secretary's Report by Ms. Alley, seconded by Mr. Wieder and approved by all.**

Chairman Walzer asked Mr. Niles to give the Financial/Treasurer's report, as of October, 2013. Mr. Niles went over the line items in this report with the Board. **A Motion was made to accept the Financial/Treasurer's Report by Mr. Niles, seconded by Dr. Brereton and approved by all.**

Chairman Walzer turned the meeting over to Mr. Currá who introduced Doug Cook, WVIA's Vice President of Multi-Platform Content, Distribution and Promotion.

Mr. Cook showed the Board of Director's and Paula Kerger the WVIA Sizzle Reel that focuses on the programs that we have done in both TV and FM in the last 6 months. Mr. Cook explained that the pieces on this reel can be broken out individually and used as promotions. Mr. Cook thanked Neil Prisco and Joe Chrobak for their research and then Mr. Prisco again for his great job at producing this piece.

Mr. Currá gave some background on Ms. Kerger and welcomed her again to the Board Meeting.

Ms. Kerger thanked the Board of Directors for inviting her to be a part of this Board Meeting.

Ms. Kerger spoke about the relationship between PBS and WVIA and that she wants to improve this relationship. Ms. Kerger mentioned the research that WVIA is undertaking with Magid, and spoke about her Senior Management Retreat with her Senior Leadership Team. They are looking at the plan they last put together about 4 years ago and are making some changes, including the way people watch and listen to PBS via I-Pads, phones, etc. Ms. Kerger said that there are some opportunities and challenges, and that change can be daunting for all. Ms. Kerger mentioned that she has been in her current position for 8 years and was at WVIA with Kevin Klose, who was then the President of NPR, to do a show when we launched the HD Theater. Ms. Kerger then spoke about programming on television and how this has changed over the years. A lot of the cable stations have changed their path, as far as programming, and have become mostly reality TV, which is good for us. Ms. Kerger stated that with content that is educational, enjoyable, and substance filled like what she saw on the Sizzle Reel, WVIA is on the right track. Ms. Kerger stated that there is a profound difference between PBS/WVIA and the cable stations, where we are focused on reaching citizens not consumers. Audiences have increased by 7% on PBS due to their programming. Ms. Kerger said that they have also looked very carefully at the content they are producing, so some of our long standing series like *NOVA* are looking to the future to make their programming more relevant. Ms. Kerger said that PBS is looking at events and anniversaries like the 60's, the recent JFK piece including the other shows on this same topic and have thought a lot about the variety of programming, including education, history, and science, and are looking to boost their content. She stated that on any given night they will be running series that have the same subject matter like science, history, etc., to make a strong block. They are also looking at children's shows, checking to make sure the content is safe for children to

watch, and are embedding core curriculum into these shows to help these children get the opportunity to learn basic skills including literacy, social, patience, and controlling their emotions to help them do better once they start to attend school. The number one kids program, *Curious George* is the top kids program, not just on PBS, but all over. Also new shows like *Peg & Kat* are applying new techniques for children to access these programs from tablets, phones, etc. The children are comfortable with the new technology so they are putting more effort into this at PBS. How do we put this all together to benefit the stations? PBS is looking at their national programming and some of the local stations are building events around *The Kennedy Experience* and *The Gettysburg Address*. Ms. Kerger said that they recognize that communities are different and want to help the local stations link to these communities. The other thing PBS is looking at is the economic model. Ms. Kerger referenced our financials and the Little League doc where we are waiting for funds. How can we be more affective in fundraising? There are Capital Campaigns, on air fundraising, talking to our donors to become sustaining members, etc. People will watch something during a pledge drive and they will make a pledge, but if we can get people accustomed to giving on a regular basis, this would give us the support to build instead of having to track people down every year to renew their memberships. Building a long term relationship is important. PBS has an initiative on Planned Giving. PBS's TV audience is mostly either very young or older adults. There is a natural place for the older adults who are thinking of their estate plans to help them remember Public Broadcasting. Another area is education. A number of the stations have been heavily involved in education, becoming sources for teachers and students, with content specifically made for the classroom. PBS has a deep relationship with teachers through some of their programs. In this new digital age, PBS can deliver educational materials to the schools more directly. This information can be organized by class age, lesson plans, etc. There are over 33,000 assets available from PBS but also from agencies like NASA and The Smithsonian. Ms. Kerger acknowledged that she knows WVIA is now looking at Learning Media and feels that this will benefit us greatly. We would create programs that would benefit our local communities. Another area that Ms. Kerger saw in the Sizzle Reel is around the arts. Ms. Kerger feels very strongly that the arts need to be focused on PBS and the local stations. Arts content on TV is not readily available and that's where we come in. *Great Performances*, visual arts local programming, fall arts festivals, arts programming on Fridays have been carved out on PBS. Ms. Kerger also thinks that, looking forward, there are a lot of places we can be true conveners of conversations and also access content that can make a difference in people's lives, including using some of our local programs like CTD and national programs to achieve this. *The Forgetting* that looked at Alzheimer's is one example. We can create opportunities to share content and information. PBS is national but also local and this gives us the advantage and makes us different from the other media outlets. Ms. Kerger stated that Mr. Currá has the experience in television production, etc. and is a good source to work with.

The floor was then opened for Q & A:

Mr. Currá asked about last night's bi-partisan press conference on the national budget and how did funding for PBS turn out. Ms. Kerger said that it looks good for us. We are forward funded by 2 years and this is important due to the production cycle which usually is 1-2 years. Second, Ms. Kerger stated that in regard to the editorial firewall, there has always been concern that if PBS is doing its job right we will upset people so we have to watch and keep any negative comments, etc. from any representative. Ms. Kerger stated that they are getting rid of all forward funding except for CPB and Veteran's Affairs. Mr. Wieder asked if there is anything we can do on the

local level and Ms. Kerger stated that the support of the federal government for public broadcasting happens because they recognize the importance of our work. Politicians are inherently local and legislators make the decisions so, yes, by being advocates for public broadcasting with our legislators and their constituents can only help our cause. Ms. Kerger also stated that it is best to talk to our legislators when they are at home rather than when they are in Washington. Ms. Kerger said that we should invite our legislators to the studios to show them the great work we are doing. Mr. Currá stated that we are interviewing our three congressmen and our two U.S. Senators in our studio for a one hour, one on one interview that starts next Tuesday with Congressman Barletta. This will be a five part series launched in February, 2014, and we continue to make our relationship with them strong since we do not do ambush journalism. Ms. Kerger congratulated WVIA on doing this series and said that most stations do not have the opportunity to do so. Mr. Melberger spoke about Mental Health and that this is a major problem all over, but locally, with our Medical College, we could make a national program on this. Ms. Kerger said that they have been looking into this issue, starting after the Newton CT shooting, to find something that would be impactful. They did a piece with the *NOVA* team around mental illness and these discussions need to be brought to the local communities. Mr. Niles asked about how we go from here to take the next steps in education with their platforms and our curriculum guides. Is there a way we can work together to make this a more dove tailed experience? Ms. Kerger said certainly, we should supply a platform and basic information to work off of and their education team will help us to expand on what we are doing in education. Ms. Kerger said that they are spending time putting together clips and curriculums for the teachers who do not have time to get this done. Whatever we are building should tie into core curriculum so it's easy for the teachers to add this additional content. Ms. Kerger said that they also hear from teachers that content built around math is also important. The arts content can also be integrated into the classrooms but if this could be mixed with history, science, etc., the kids will get more exposure in the arts. Mr. Currá stated that WVIA has signed onto Learning Media and are uploading a dozen or so unit plans that are standardized nationally and state-wide. We started with a dozen schools and now have over 40. We are aggressively going after this market space since *Discovery* also offers this. Mr. Currá stated that the PBS model is better and costs less, and that the supers can go into the content to see when and where it is being used. Mr. Currá said that we are hoping to close the deal with NEIU 19 and also Lycoming County. Mr. Currá mentioned that we have developed learning plans on the Pinchot, The River doc, and the Gov Scranton shows, to name a few, and are making this very easy for the teachers to pull. Mr. Cook stated that there are a couple of our programs that we will be putting outside the firewall like *degrees that work* so schools throughout the country, who use PBS Learning Media, can take advantage of this. Mr. Niles spoke about dove tailing Ken Burns' work with the Pinchot film and asked if this could be integrated into the educational units? Ms. Kerger said that she thinks there is some of Burns content in there all ready but is not sure. Burns' next series is 14 hours on Roosevelt and they are focusing on getting the right small pieces of material that can be easily used in the classroom and get the kids excited about learning the country's history. Dr. Lemons asked about relationships with TED for shorter content, and also asked if the data cast is proving to be a good source to grow revenue on the national level and locally. Ms. Kerger, on data cast, stated that this is winding down and that this makes less sense since the returns are diminishing. In regard to TED, they have worked with them and did a series on education at the beginning of the year. Digital Studios was created and looked to people who had the TV DNA to help them create a whole new way to connect with people. Their first project was *Gardens of Your Mind* that got people thinking about education. They also created the *Idea Channel*, intersecting the arts, culture and technology to connect with 20 something's, and this

is also being used by students and teachers. They have also done work with on-line film festivals, and on-line short films. For PBS, what they are doing is experimenting in this space to see what works. Social Media is also a place to create conversations as well as promoting series. They need to figure out who is on Social Media and how to use this space for different things. The YouTube space is also good and the people who watch PBS via this are our benefactors. It's not just about putting up the promotional videos but thinking on how to connect to people through these spaces. Mr. Wieder asked about the 7% increase in audience, and looking ahead for 3 years, did they predict an additional increase in viewership. Ms. Kerger said that they are looking at this in the Leadership Team retreat where they are also looking at how people are watching the PBS content. She does not know what those numbers will look like in the future and they need to figure out who is watching. Once they figure out how to find this information through talking to members, funders, underwriters, etc. they will then share this information with the stations in the system.

The Board and Staff thanked Ms. Kerger for attending our meeting.

The meeting was continued.

Mr. Wieder asked where the marketing research stands and Mr. Currá stated that we have signed with Magid. Mr. Currá said this summary is on an audit of the strategic plan and market research. Mr. Currá said that some of the action plans are on hold while we wait for the market research to be done in January since we were advised by PBS not to do this during a pledge drive. Mr. Currá also said that some of the items that have TBD by them are due to cash flow issues. Mr. Wieder asked if the research will include national as well as local. Mr. Currá said that PBS has all the national data and what we are doing is localized. Mr. Currá stated that WVIA is now the only local station, which is to our advantage now that the commercial stations are all owned by big, out of the area corporations. Their local programming could diminish but ours will grow. Mr. Jones stated that during a call he and Mr. Currá had a bit ago, they talked about how people are watching these days. Mr. Jones stated that we can't just pigeon ourselves into tablets because there are also phones, pads, etc. How WVIA can better serve those who want their content digitally is what they are looking into. Mr. Currá stated that the content we are developing will open correctly on the different digital media items. This is a responsive design to help us gain more eyeballs on our station. Mr. Cook stated that years ago people watched when we gave them the content, but now it has switched to when they actually consume it. Mr. Jones expanded on this.

Ms. Bovard spoke about the audience that comes to our theater and asked if we are still encouraging people to come. Mr. Norton spoke about The Philharmonic and how they have brought their chamber music here and also doing HGM and Simply Grand's in the theater and the people are coming to us for these higher cultural types of shows. The entertainment programming is where we get the audiences, not the talk shows, so we are not pushing the talk show audiences anymore. However, if the topic is right they will come.

Mr. Melberger spoke once again about the mental health issues and that this has grown in this new digital age and how we can work with PBS on this topic. Mr. Currá said that when *The Forgetting* was broadcast, we had a follow up show and took over 100 phone calls and sent out packets to local people dealing with this issue and perhaps we can do the same for mental health. Dr. Brereton mentioned that WVIA and the Medical College cover the same areas and

our mission statements are very similar, and perhaps we could try to get Vice President Biden here to interview on this topic. Mr. Thomas stated that the Jan. 14<sup>th</sup> CTD is *Are Psych Drugs Pulling The Trigger*.

Mr. Currá invited the Board to stay after the meeting to watch the Little League trailer.

Mr. Currá then pointed out that in the Board Packets there is a comparison between yearly members and sustainers as well as other items. Included are the two new packages that Underwriting is offering. Mr. Norton spoke about the Hawley Winterfest and the one sheeters they handed out on WPAU to try to build the audience in that region. Mr. Norton also spoke about the upcoming *Our Town Hawley* reunion that is taking place in January that Ms. Genzlinger is hosting. Ms. Genzlinger spoke about this reunion and that Mr. Niles is helping out on this. The reunion is on Jan. 9<sup>th</sup> at the Hawley Silk Mill. Mr. Niles has some ideas on how to make this a model for follow-ups after we do the Our Towns, to keep these communities engaged with WVIA. Mr. Glynn spoke about the upgrades to the automation system for FM which has allowed us to get the signal better to WPAU and how we can separate Williamsport from Hawley and focus local interstitials on these stations. Mr. Glynn stated that he looked into who becomes a member with WVIA and that in Hawley 4% are members, and with the borough that holds only 1500, the number per capita is large.

**Chairman Walzer asked for a Motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:50pm. The motion was made by Mr. Wieder, seconded by Mr. Walzer and approved by all.**

The next meeting is on Thursday, March 13, 2014 at Noon

Respectfully submitted by Kathryn K. Davies, Assistant to the Board of Directors