

WCA-TV Board Meeting, May 9, 2023 Minutes

Meeting (in person) called to order at 6:00 p.m. on 5/9/23

Present: Christopher McKenzie, James O'Connor, David Stokes, Jen Nicholson, Elaine Mello, Robert Romano, Samantha Henry and Andrea Santopietro. (Samantha Dudley also present for portions of the meeting).

Absent: George Skuse, Ninos Hanna

Handouts

Agenda for May 9, 2023

Minutes for March 28, 2023.

(Missing minutes for March 14, 2023)

Facilities subcommittee report for 5/9/23

Treasurer's report through 3/31/2023

Draft job description for content manager

Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes of the March 28, 2023, meeting made by Elaine, 2nd: David. Approved.

President's Report (Chris)

Chris brought up the issue of board meeting times that possibly conflict with other municipal meetings (City Council, etc.), but said the next meeting will be on the first Tuesday of June (June 6), so it won't conflict, nor will the next Zoom meeting in two weeks (May 23). Chris added he'll personally have more availability to attend sub-committee meetings or other things as needed, as his teaching semester is coming to an end.

Motion to accept president's report made by David, 2nd: James. Approved.

Treasurer's report (James)

James said the two things of note on the report he submitted are the two checks from RCN and Comcast. James said he finally has his own access/login for the Watertown Savings account. James said the auditors had contacted him earlier that day (May 9) to get access to the bank accounts. Andrea added that the auditors had come last week to do the in-person portion of the audit and wanted to confirm bank balances with James, etc.

Samantha H. asked a question as to how often the cable companies pay fee checks to WCATV. Andrea said Comcast sends quarterly checks (Feb., May, Aug., Nov.), and a capital check in June. RCN sends one check per year, usually in March.

Motion to approve the treasurer's report made by David, 2nd: Elaine.

Facilities Subcommittee Report (David)

David mentioned meeting with Vertex on an ongoing basis in May, June and July, and that the move date still seems to be on target for June 30 - early July, with final inspections and turn over scheduled for the first week of July.

Elaine mentioned they are still pushing/asking about radiators in the new space, with David adding the studio and FDIF spaces have radiators that are not controllable by WCATV and need to be. George mentioned he's having the same issue in the IT suite.

Window leak investigation is complete/solved, and was pointed out to be a core shell issue – they need to provide us with a leak free, appropriately HVAC-ed space, etc.

David mentioned Andrea is scheduled to meet with the city manager next week, and Chris also plans to attend. Discussion around the “placeholder” budget number the city has for WCATV in the budget (\$800k?) – they seem to have priced the full renovation and will remove the core shell stuff that WCATV is not responsible for – but it's still unclear how they came up with the number they're citing. David pointed out that perhaps the city doesn't know exactly what we're asking Ockers, etc. to do, and that he doesn't think the city is expecting us to give the \$800k back, but that the city manager meeting is an opportunity to explain what we've done to make the space a viable community resource going forward.

The facilities subcommittee is scheduled to meet tomorrow (Wed., May 10).

Andrea mentioned Jim Kane (dir. of public buildings) is leaving to go to MassArt.

Motion to accept facilities subcommittee report, made by James, 2nd: Elaine. Approved.

(Food break)

Executive Director's Report (Andrea)

Andrea gave an overview of the budget and confirmed they had received the LiveU equipment.

Andrea provided an update on staffing, and a review of the content manager position. She said that the current content manager, Ashley, would be leaving May 19. She has been at WCATV for seven years and worked her way up from intern to videographer.

Andrea expressed interest in hiring a new content manager, but said she and Sam D. had talked about reworking some positions. Both agreed that the current position doesn't need to be continued as-is, but could be more of a part-time post and add website management to its job description. They looked at relevant positions elsewhere to determine that \$22 per hour would be a fair/going rate for such a position. Andrea added it wasn't necessary to replace Ashley before she leaves, and that some of the content management will be handed over to Victoria in the interim, and Dan and Victoria will share some of the volunteer programming and maybe see if a videographer could take on more work with the community. Andrea added that

videographers used to work with volunteers and that it would be good to have them participate more again on the community side of things. Another possibility she mentioned is adding another (part-time) videographer to the arsenal at some point, an idea that could perhaps be revisited at the end of summer/start of fall.

Discussion/suggestions on the content manager job description: Jen suggested maybe removing the college degree requirement as it could be a job that college students may be interested in. Elaine mentioned it could also potentially be a full time position if they found a videographer with web skills. Chris and Andrea said making the position part-time (29 hrs/wk) could give them more flexibility during lean times, and it will be \$20k less than what they paid for payroll last year. James asked if there will be any extra compensation for those absorbing parts of the content manager's job before its re-filled, and asked if they'd let people know they're trying to hire someone. Andrea said she was trying to be transparent with the staff and was holding weekly staff meetings to let everyone know what's going on. Chris added that those absorbing the extra work could also be taken into account at bonus time. Elaine asked where the job would be posted, and Andrea mentioned several industry sites. Elaine also suggested Mandy and others mentioned job sites. James suggested adding the salary to the posting. Robert asked if the board could view it before it's posted. Chris summarized that Andrea would share the post with everyone with an eye to sending it out by Friday (or Monday), and that the board could give its 'ok' to the post.

Motion to accept the content manager job posting made by Robert, 2nd: Elaine. Approved.

Andrea said they were also hoping to offer 1 or 2 paid internships, for around \$15/hr. Chris pointed out that as per the bylaws, the board just approves job descriptions and Andrea can pay them if she wishes, she should just let the board know.

Andrea gave some project updates: Comcast has been in touch with the general contractor to get into the space for fiber construction/splicing. Ockers got their wiring permit from the city and didn't have to pay for it. Update given on Surplus Tech Solutions pricing, and a quote from them for 3 bins (they don't charge for what you don't use).

Andrea gave a financial update:

Total Savings (1/1/23):	\$ 968,512.09
Accrued Interest (4/30/23):	\$ 296.92
Total Transferred (5/4/23):	\$ 300,000.00
Total Savings (Current):	\$ 668,809.01
Total Approved (as of 4/25):	\$ 545,460.31
Total Transferred (as of 5/4):	\$ 300,000.00
Remaining To Be Transferred:	\$ 245,460.31
Total Spent (as of 5/8):	\$ 170,637.88

She also added that no board financial approvals were necessary at the moment.

Sam D. presented on closed captioning system issues, proposing that we switch to Cablecast Captioning (as she pointed out, there are multiple issues with the current EEG system the station uses). The current system costs \$7,600 per 500 hours (EEG), whereas Cablecast is \$3,700 for 500 hours or \$6,500 for 1k hours and no additional equipment necessary.

Motion to approve the purchase of the Cablecast package for 500 hours with the option to increase if needed, made by James, 2nd: David. Approved.

Andrea mentioned that George had brought up the idea of applying for ARPA funding for future upgrades to add hybrid broadcast capabilities to sites around the city. Applications are due May 26, and Andrea is working on drafting the proposal with the facilities subcommittee and getting quotes from Ockers. There was some discussion around ideas for the grant.

Andrea mentioned they had applied for a \$2,640 grant from the Watertown Community Foundation to partner w/Charlie Breitrose of Watertown News for coverage about food insecurity in Watertown.

Andrea provided a programming update:

- YTD - Apr
 - Total programming hours: 232:29:30
 - 10% increase from 2022
 - Total programming: 211
 - 20% increase from 2022
 - 25 gov, 16 edu, 14 pub
 - Less edu, more pub and gov
 - Radio programming moved to public channel
- VOD
 - Total views of programming produced YTD through April: 3634
 - Average views per video: 14
 - Most views: Unity Breakfast - Jan 16, 2023

She also provided a brief legislative update (cable subscriptions continue to plummet, streaming bill may have movement soon, proposed 5% franchise fee on streaming services).

Motion to approve executive director's report made by David, 2nd: Elaine. Approved.

No old business. New business for next mtg: discussion of date for July meeting. Virtual (Zoom) meeting on May 23rd, 6pm. Next in-person board meeting is June 6, 2023 @ 6:00 PM.

Motion to adjourn made by James, 2nd: David.