

WCA-TV Board Meeting Minutes, Oct 17, 2023

Present; Chris McKenzie, Ninos Hanna, Elaine Mello, Jen Nicholson, Robert Romano, Samantha, Henry, Andrea Santopietro, and Samantha Dudley. Minutes compiled by Elaine from the Zoom recording.

Meeting was called to order at 6:05pm on 10/17/2023. Meeting was via Zoom while new studio space is still being renovated.

Handouts:

Agenda for Oct 17, 2023

Minutes for Sep 19, 2023

Minutes for Oct 10, 2023

Treasurer's Report for Oct 17, 2023, including P/L and Balance Sheet Comparisons for August, 2023

To Be Purchased for Move spreadsheet for Executive Director's report

Acceptance of Minutes:

Minutes for September 19, 2023 were reviewed and a motion made by Elaine. Seconded by Ninos. Meeting notes unanimously approved.

Minutes for October 10, 2023 were reviewed and Andrea noted that Sam Dudley was not at that meeting. It was noted that this should be changed and Elaine made a motion to accept the minutes with the amendment. Seconded by Sam. Meeting notes were unanimously approved.

President's report:

Chris gave a brief report, noting that updates have recently fallen under other reports, such as Andrea's. He did note that he has not heard back from the city regarding the plan for lease/rent/moving forward with a payment scheme for the new space. He noted that the board needed to have some answers pretty soon, but as the city is in the final push for the project, it is understandable that things are still up in the air. Once WCATV gets moved in and settled, there will be a time to iron those questions out. Chris noted that the new manager is looking over a variety of contracts and agreements, not just with us, but with other organizations, and that eventually it will be dealt with in the end. Elaine pointed out that was the case with the RCN franchise agreement as well. Elaine also noted at in the City Council Meeting from Oct 10th that the City Manager mentioned revenue had exceeded the budgeted estimate, (in the meeting noting it was about a million or so, but upon reviewing the City Council meeting recording, gives the more accurate number of an increase in revenue of \$4 million in new growth and a total adjusted revenue of \$5.393m total. Whether this will have an impact on the city's request for funds for the Phillips build is anyone's guess. (note by Elaine with link for City council meeting – approx 56:00 minutes into recording: <http://vodwcatv.org/CablecastPublicSite/show/2803?site=3>) Chris said that was good to know, not that we have any expectations that any funds would be used to offset the amount requested by the city.

Motion to accept the President's report was made by Sam Henry and seconded by Elaine.

Report unanimously accepted by the board.

Treasurer's Report:

James was out with the flu, but had uploaded the Treasurer's report to the shared Dropbox for the meeting. Chris recommended everyone look at it, and said that nothing immediately stood out as something to address. Andrea noted that we finally got the long delayed Comcast check on October 4th. Sam mentioned that all of the previous reports had to do with the bank fraud issue, which has finally finished. (Chris noted that Rob joined the meeting at 6:14.) It was suggested that James be able to present the good news regarding the final settlement of the issues at our next meeting. Andrea noted that by the next meeting we should have another Comcast check for him to report.

A motion was made by Sam to accept the treasurer's report which was seconded by Elaine. Report unanimously accepted by the board.

Committees Report:

Facilities: Chris noted that David, who usually gives the report was not here and invited whether Elaine had anything in particular to add or whether to just roll it into Andrea's report. Elaine said there wasn't much to add other than Andrea had the latest info, and that the facilities subcommittee would be meeting with Vertex this Thursday, Oct 19th and that meetings had been extended until the end of the actual work, theoretically at the end of the month.

Bylaws & Organization Report: Sam said that they have been working with Andrea and Sam D to update the Policies and Procedures document. They would like to have an updated copy for the upcoming Orientation session happening in November. Sam had questions on how much the committee would be allowed to change without voting on it as a board. Elaine suggested that they keep a copy with all notations and create a new copy with the edits to use as a provisional copy for the Orientation session. Most of the changes were small changes to be updated to new language (ie, city for town, etc.) and to give new headers to make it easier to read. Rob agreed with Elaine's suggestion. Chris said that the changes should be made so that we don't vote on every paragraph, but to have the subcommittee do the necessary editing so the document can be voted on as a whole. Andrea noted that they already condense the document for when they talk about it and then ask the participants to take home a copy to read and sign before coming back to the studio.

Motion was made by Elaine to allow for the update of a provisional document for language and header changes with no substantive changes to the document for use by the staff in upcoming training and to be reviewed by the board at the next meeting. The motion was seconded by Rob. The report was unanimously accepted by the board.

Executive Director Report:

Andrea started off her report by saying how awesome the staff has been throughout this difficult time of the moving of the studio and working without most of their technology and space for the last few months. She noted that they are making it a point to show off all the work that they've been doing via social media and to get out the events that they are doing so that the community knows that they're still there and providing coverage of city events.

Andrea also shared updated photos of the new space, which has shown a lot of progress.. the photos generated some comments regarding issues still needed to be addressed (such as radiator covers, window screens and window still work.) Sam asked what the outcome was of the issue previously reported regarding construction work creating dust in the server racks in the MDF/IDF. Andrea noted that this is still yet to be determined, but that hopefully it wasn't enough to cause any damage in the future. Andrea did note that the construction crew was done in that space (other than removing the AC unit from the window and putting a screen back in) and that current work was with Ockers and other groups doing installs into that space for security. She did note that the built in desk for the media suite seems to have been mounted too high for regular chairs to use, but confirmed that this was in in the design specs. Elaine speculated that might be ADA required height and said it would be something to discuss further with Vertex on Thursday. Andrea finished the report for the building with saying there was a moving date of October 27th from the temporary location at the Parker school, but was dependent upon getting occupancy approval by the city so that the team could move in. But she said as of now they were on track to move in the 27th.

Andrea noted that she was finally starting to feel good and excited about this finally being over and being able to move into the new space. Elaine noted that it was only 4 month late. Andrea continued with her report to say that the construction team was doing their fire service and water protection testing, and that the first service shut off was yesterday (Oct 16th) and that another one will happen on Monday Oct 23rd and that as long as that goes well, we should be all set to move at the end of the week. Andrea also commended that Restream and Surplus Technology Solutions did their pickups of excess and recyclable equipment on Oct 2nd and that there may be a slight overage charge because of the LED screens, but should be in the budget, despite that they had to get to the space through a new pathway from what they originally estimated. She said there were one to two items that are still left in the space (a table to go to the high school and the old WCATV sign which we will keep rather than throw away.

Andrea also reported that she has met with Signs By Tomorrow to go over signage at the new space and to work at wayfaring information for access points in the school, working with the superintendent and the school before we go ahead and do the work. She also met with the representative from the Department of Public Buildings (Denise) regarding signage as well as to talk about the possible renovation at some point of the bathrooms in the new space, which were not part of the scope of the renovation project. They talked about the double doors at the end of the hallway which will be an exit only for staff to get equipment out to their cars in the back parking lot. She also met with Greg from DPB who is their project manager who is taking over the space from the school end of things. They discussed a key control plan – she just needs to give a list of names and she'll do a markup of a floorplan for him. He's also going to see if they can make the key fobs for the new space compatible with the door for access into the building, and to arm and disarm alarms in the building. She also noted that we will be able to use the custodial staff in the WCATV space, which will be convenient. She

mentioned that Ockers is installing the new aiphone system and control panels this week and that she ordered 30 fobs to have since they were so cheap to have on hand for the future. The total for the additional fobs was \$167.07.

Andrea mentioned that the team did a heat zone test to check the heating, making sure everything worked, both existing and new. Now that's been done, the last thing to do is to check acoustics and sound to insure that the HVAC won't create any sound issues for the studio spaces.

SAS still needs RCN to install the phone line for security, but that work should be done in the next week or so once construction is finished. That looks to be the only thing that Ockers can get done before the staff moves in – currently the space is not yet dust free enough for Gary to install the video equipment, so Rogan needs to clean up the space before that can happen, which will probably be after they move in.

Chris asked if there were quotes that needed to be approved. There were none, but Andrea is reference the spreadsheet that had some minor purchases (fridge, microwave, shelving, some furniture, etc) that was listed for us, but was within the \$5,000 budget already approved by the board for this purpose.

There is still a question about the address, or unit number. It looks like it will be 30 Common St. Elaine asked if that was actually accessible from the street. Andrea didn't think so, but said that was the common address used for the building. Chris noted that it would be good to have a set address and get that confirmed for our official documents and banking, etc. Elaine also noted the need for a separate external mailbox that will be needed so mail would not get mixed up with the city's school mail. Andrea mentioned she had a meeting coming up with Dee Dee to confirm all that.

Andrea gave an update on the ARPA proposal and described that the city has a process for review, and described those steps for the city counsel to confirm eligibility before they would go through the proposals that meet the eligibility before grading them, listening to presentations and then making recommendations to the city council. So she would keep us updated on the progress as it goes along.

Programming update:

Year to date through September:

Total programming hours: 538 hours, 5 minutes and 34 seconds

This is a 24% increase from 2022

Total programming: 461 programs, a 22% increase from last year.

Covered 31 government programs, 22 education and 10 public

studio More government and public, though not as much as hoped given that the has been closed for a few months, so the programming that is being done has been a little shorter as a result.

Video on demand: total views of programming produced in September is 772 Average views for videos is 12 and the program with the most views was Varsity Boys Soccer vs Catholic Memorial on September 9th, which had 67 views.

The program with the most live viewers at one time was football vs Wilmington

with 35 views on September 29th.

Andrea completed her report.

Elaine made a motion to accept the Executive Director's report. Seconded by Rob. The report accepted by a majority of the board (Jen was unavailable to vote)

Assistant Executive Director Report:

Sam D gave a quick policy update. Andrea attended a public policy call from the ACM as Sam was unable to attend. Most notably from that was a bill HR3557 – the American Broadband Deployment Act. This was a partisan bill that was brought out on the same day that the speaker was ousted from his position. A lot of local governments are against it – a short description of the bill is, if enacted would allow cable companies to eliminate all PEG channels in the United States. It is a partisan effort to support the cable and wireless industry for the stated purpose of supporting broadband deployment. It seeks to limit state and local rights at the federal level. This was sent through several committees and is now able to be brought in front of the House for a vote. She just wanted to have it on everyone's radar and said the ACM wants people to call the reps and senators to express the need to not support this bill.

In addition, the HR907 bill, Protecting Community Television Act. There have been no new co-sponsors since early summer. One of the original sponsors was Dianne Feinstein and with her passing is now reduced by a sponsor, so the bill will need to be reintroduced by a new senator, Butler.

Finally, the new FCC chairperson was sworn in and started naming staff, and there will be a full FCC for the rest of the term. Some of the agenda items are expanding spoken word requirements, the number of markets for accessibility and the ADA requirements for web distribution.

Lastly on the state level, Mass Access had conversations with attorneys about bill HR3557 and whether it was worth pursuing the streaming bill, and had positive reassurance from them to move forward. David will be meeting with the house and senate chairs to continue to advocate for HR74 and Senate bill 34.

Sam D went on to move to WCATV and gave a recap of Faire on the Square and that despite getting moved indoors, the green screen was a hit, especially with kids, interest from community members and in workshops and other events. Community Media Day is this Friday, October 20th. Given that the team is still without a studio, they will be handling it differently this year on social media and to talk about the streaming bill. Our videographer Ben is working on an informational video about the bills and Steve Owen recorded some segments in support of local access which they will be showing online throughout the day for people to view.

A miscellaneous item was that today they submitted a grant application to the Watertown Cultural Council (with Sam Henry's help) with a proposal for a summer youth camp for next year. The grant request was for \$1,000 to hopefully defray the costs of doing the camp and to allow for free or reduced fees for students to participate in a 2 week, 6 session workshop, with

a viewing party at the end of the camp for friends and families. Ideally they would like to rent a projector to show the videos, but that will depend on funding at the time on what funds are awarded. Sam D thanked Sam Henry for all of her help putting the proposal together, and that allowed them to submit the proposal this morning (17th.) She will keep the board posted if they hear anything on that front.

Sam reports that there were 4 new membership sign ups in the last week and they are hoping for more sign ups to attend the orientation, lighting and the December orientation session at the library.

Sam Henry made a motion to accept the Assistant Executive Director's report. Seconded by Elaine. The report accepted by a majority of the board. (Jen was unavailable to vote)

Old Business: None

New Business: Elaine mentioned the email sent the day before regarding the situation in Waltham with their access station WCAC copyrighting municipal meetings to prevent a local group from doing commentary on a Youtube Channel 781. She thought it worth mentioning for perhaps a look by the rules and bylaws committee to think of having a policy in place in case something similar happens in Watertown, though that is highly unlikely. Elaine said she would do more research and share any information which might clarify what is going on there. Chris noted that our mission is about access and public engagement and was curious that as long as it was being used in a commentary and critical based manner, that he didn't see why it would be an issue. Elaine also noted that they had mentioned they were doing this under the fair use doctrine. Andrea noted that she only had a chance to skim it, but it seemed like this group started to do it because some meetings weren't being covered by the access station. So we'll continue to monitor and find out more information.

Next Meeting: Normally would be Nov 21st, but as that a holiday week and people travel, Chris recommends that we move the meeting to Nov 14th. This will put it opposite of the City Council meeting, but can't be helped at this point. He also questioned whether it would be in person or on Zoom. Andrea responded to ask her after next week. Chris did note that the first meeting in person will be a bit substantial as we will want to tour the new facilities.

Next Meeting – Nov 14th (Jen was unavailable to vote) (possibly in person. TBD)

Chris also noted that we should keep it in the back of our minds for year end regarding employee appreciation day and also wished both Jen and David the best on the upcoming School committee election.

Elaine made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Ninos. The report accepted by a majority of the board. (Jen was unavailable to vote) Meeting adjourned at 7:36pm.