

## **WCATV Board Meeting Minutes, Dec 19, 2023**

Present: **Chris McKenzie, George Skuse, Elaine Mello, David Stokes, Ninos Hanna, James O'Connor, Jen Nicholson, Samantha Henry and Andrea Santopietro**

The virtual meeting (zoom) was called to order at 6:06 pm on 11/14/2023.

### **Handouts:**

- Agenda for Dec 19, 2023
- Minutes for Nov 14, 2023
- Treasurer's report through 10/31/2023 for Dec 19, 2023
- WCATV Financial Audit for years ended 12/31/2022 and 12/31/2021

### **Approval of Minutes**

**Motion** to accept the Minutes for Nov 14, 2023, made by **Elaine**, seconded by **James**, Unanimously approved.

### **President's Report**

**Chris:** Staff moved into the new space on 11/27/2023 and are working to unpack.

Chris and Andrea had a discussion with the City Manager regarding the new lease; he proposed \$400k over ten years, \$40k/year. We had proposed \$250k over ten years, \$25k/yr. Further discussions are needed.

The city is holding an Open Meeting Law refresher session in January for members of most boards, commissions, etc. All are encouraged to attend in person.

A **motion** to ensure that agendas and minutes are posted to WCATV's website in compliance with Open Meeting Law, made by **Elaine** and seconded by **David**, was unanimously approved.

A **motion** to accept the President's report, made by **Elaine** and seconded by **David**, was unanimously approved.

### **Treasurer's Report**

**James** read through the Treasurer's report as submitted—total cash available: \$691,945 as of 10/31/2023. Total current liabilities are \$15,018.55 in accrued payroll expense. The narrative portion of that report is below.

Our new business and mailing addresses have been updated with Watertown Savings Bank and M&T Bank.

The "old" checking and savings accounts have now been closed out at WSB and M&T and their balances have been transferred to our current accounts.

On November 29, a cable franchise check was deposited to our WSB checking account in the amount of \$102,156.93.

I enrolled in M&T electronic statements (no paper), which will save us a \$2.00/month account fee (\$3.00/month starting Jan 1).

On December 12, I received an update via email from Senior Relationship Banker Andrea Weerasekera at the Belmont Center branch at M&T bank. This was regarding the fraud of three checks that I initially reported in June 2023 totaling \$13,750.00. The WCATV board needs to discuss what our plan of action from here might be. Her email correspondence is as follows:

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*Good afternoon James,*

*Thank you for your patience in this matter. I was able to get final answer from Investigation manager. Also your address has been updated on all your business accounts.*

*Per reply from Investigation unit 3 banks were contacted - the Bank of First Deposits, Carter Federal Credit Union, Chase Bank and Republic Bank of Chicago, and was told all funds were depleted and no recovery was able to be made.*

*Also they suggest that you follow up with the police department and file a complaint with them to see if they could assist you. I would suggest that you bring copies of the checks (front and back) with you. The Banks of First Deposit could provide information to the police that they could not provide to M&T Bank due to customer confidentiality.*

*Suggestion from Investigation Unit:*

*Has the customer signed up for payee positive pay? This helps with the changing of the payee's names on stolen/altered checks that are then counterfeited with all of the same information except the payee's name.*

*Sorry I could not give you better news.*

*Kind regards,  
Andrea [Weerasekera]*

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James provided some background on the fraud case. He was previously working with a different account manager (Mira) who then left M&T; In an email from Mira, she stated that M&T was "in the middle of the fraud investigation." Yet later, when dealing with Senior Relationship Banker Andrea Weerasekera, M&T had no record of the investigation. James suggested that our accountants should be questioned further. Jenn will get a copy of the police report tomorrow (12/20/2023). Chris will reach out to KP Law as this clearly requires legal advice.

**Motion** to accept the Treasurer's report, made by **Ninos**, seconded by **Elaine**, Unanimously approved.

### **Facilities Committee Report**

**David:** We're in the new space! The last committee meeting was the week before the move. Nothing new to report, but future committee meetings will likely address any emerging issues..

### **By-Laws and Organization Committee Report**

**Samantha H:** Sam has edited the working document ("Policies and Procedures"), but otherwise nothing to report..

**Motion** to accept the By-Laws and Organization Committee Report, made by **David**, seconded by **George**, Unanimously approved.

### **Executive Director's Report**

#### **Staffing**

Staff appreciation day was held on 12/18/2023 at an escape room in Cambridge. Staff appreciated the event (and successfully escaped with five minutes to spare). Dinner, with a seasonal gift exchange, followed.

Andrea recommends year-end bonuses for staff based on their responsibilities and time with the station. A spreadsheet with the proposals was shared, totaling \$7,750 in bonuses across 8 employees. Chris pointed out what a tough year this has been for staff. George supported the bonuses for this year as they're expected by staff but would like to see "bonuses" rolled into annual compensation going forward (along with conversations setting such expectations). David agreed, noting that rolling bonuses into annual compensation would benefit staff and the station. Andrea agreed with the concept and will incorporate prorated bonuses into the regularly planned salary increases going forward.

A **motion** to accept the proposed bonuses, made by **Elaine** and seconded by **Jenn**, was unanimously approved.

#### **Projects:New Space**

We've occupied the new space for a few weeks. Unpacking is almost complete; a few boxes still remain. Ockers continues to make progress on their contracted work; Gary (from Ockers) expects to be finished by mid-January.

JML has begun the lighting installation and is almost complete in Studio A. The track for Studio B arrived damaged and will be replaced (at no cost to WCATV).

Andrea continues to work with DPB (Paul B) on heating issues; Andrea's office has reached 88 deg. The in-wall unit beneath the windowsill is especially problematic.

Andrea is coordinating with WBMason to add power to the conference room tables. Some as-needed items have been order from Ockers (monitors, etc...).

A grand opening is tentatively expected in late January.

### **Projects:ARPA**

Funds for the carts were approved by the Council following the recommendations of the subcommittee. Andrea will reach out to the city auditor to determine our next steps.

### **Programming**

YTD through November:

- Total programming hours: 700:39:34: 26% increase from 2022
- Total programs: 565: 18% increase from 2022 (29 gov, 9 edu, 11 pub)

VOD

- Total views of programming produced in November: 723
- Average views per video: 15
- Most views (44): City Council - November 27, 2023
- Most live viewers at one time (230): Field Hockey vs Sandwich November 15, 2023
  - Semi Final for field hockey, first time covering the semi final live

Social media: Dan posted a reel on Instagram with a snippet from the Watertown Square meeting and currently it has 184,610 views, 4,228 likes, 183 comments, 589 shares, and 336 saves.

### **Fundraising/Outreach**

The workshop series at the Watertown Free Public Library ended in early December. The next orientation workshop is scheduled to take place in early February. One new member from the Senior Center has a specific interest in learning podcasting to run a monthly show for Watertown seniors. Planning for a full slate of workshops for 2024 has begun; these are expected to start in mid-March and run seasonally.

Grants: We're very excited that we have been awarded \$1,000 from the Cultural Council to run a free Youth Summer Film Camp in 2024! Andrea will be planning the curriculum for the two-week youth camp, which will likely take place in July. The camp will culminate in a "viewing party" for the participants and their families to watch their final project(s).

### **Legislative Update:**

The Protecting Community Television Act has gained several new cosponsors (including MA Rep Stephen Lynch) and little-to-no resistance.

HR 3557 - ACM Board discussed with both Senate and House staffers about the importance of voting against the Bill should it ever reach the floor and to highlight language that may be attached to other "must pass" legislation with this Congress over the next 13 months

**Motion** to accept the Executive Director's report, made by **George**, seconded by **David**, Unanimously approved.

**Motion** to enter the Executive Session made by **Elaine**, seconded by **David**,

Roll call:

Samantha H. - yes.  
Jennifer Nicholson. - yes.  
David Stokes. - yes.  
Ninos Hannah. - yes.  
James O'Connor. - yes.  
Christopher McKenzie. - yes.  
Elaine Mello. - yes.  
George Skuse. - yes.

Unanimously approved.

**Motion** to exit executive session made by **George**, seconded by **Elaine**

Roll call:

Samantha H. - yes.  
Jennifer Nicholson. - yes.  
David Stokes. - yes.  
Ninos Hannah. - yes.  
James O'Connor. - yes.  
Christopher McKenzie. - yes.  
Elaine Mello. - yes.  
George Skuse. - yes.

Unanimously approved.

A **motion** to give a bonus of \$2500 to Andrea in recognition of an extraordinary year, made by **Elaine** and seconded by **Ninos**, was unanimously approved.

#### Old Business

**George**: we should continue the discussion regarding our posting of meeting minutes to comply with Open Meeting Law.

#### New Business

none.

The **Next meeting** will be

- 01/10//2023 at 6pm onsite

**A motion** to adjourn, made by **George** and seconded by **David**, was unanimously approved.

Meeting adjourned at 8:44pm.