

WBEZ Community Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
7/17/08

CAC attendees: Joe Grossbauer, Rebecca Teasdale, Marc Hauser, Lester Blair, Susan Messenger, Evan Freund, John Robinson, Jennifer Schlueter

WBEZ staff attendees: Torey, Steve and Wendy

General Public attendees: 3

Call to Order at 6:04pm

- Steve was welcomed
- Approving the minutes was tabled until September's meeting

Station Report

- Torey reported on both the staff organizational and fiscal updates:
 - Ron Jones has left WBEZ, the station has delayed filling the position for 6-12 months.
 - Steve Edwards has assumed the role of Acting Program Director and will handle all the daily operations associated with programming the station while working with Torey on overall programming.
 - Steve will also serve as the 'official' staff liaison to CAC. In addition, the position description for VP of Programming will include this duty, once it is posted.
 - Due to the current fiscal/economic climate, all new programming and hiring has been put on hold. In addition, *Hello Beautiful* has been pulled and Dick Buckley's show will not be replaced by a new, similar program once he retires.
- The Sunday program schedule will change to the following:

Bob Edwards	10am-Noon
Tavis Smiley	Noon-2pm
Omnimedia	2-3
Speaking of Faith	3-4

(Steve promised to send out an updated program list)

- CAC questions in response to Torey's report above:
 - ? What is the source of the revenue shortfall?
A It is a combination of a decrease in federal, state and local government funding, a poor first quarter as a result of the June pledge drive, underwriting shortfalls and a down turn in May 2008 renewals.
 - ? What, if any, impact differences have you seen between the mail drives vs. the live pledge drives?

A The live pledge drives have greater yield, but do require a programming adjustment. The mail-in campaigns are becoming less successful. So the station will be re-examining the use of future mail-in campaigns.

? Do you know why folks are changing their giving patterns?

A The number of members continues to grow, but the pacing and giving amount has changed.

-Steve reported on the upcoming structural changes with the editorial staff:

-Identifying their overall strategy—knitting together the local, national and international news coverage.

-Asking CAC and other groups what is missing from WBEZ broadcasts and what topic are among the high priorities for audiences.

-What form should the pieces take?—Short form vs. long and how to strike a balance.

-CAC questions to Steve's report above:

? What is the percentage of time CAC members listen to WBEZ?

A Ranged from 90%-10%. "Too much of the news is recycled", one of the comments provided by a member of the general public.

? Will music be a part of the new approach? Not just jazz, but classical?

A No, WBEZ is working on carving a niche out of the market that is dedicated to news and current events. Entertainment will be among the topics covered, but not music programming in the traditional sense.

-Wendy reported on the new tower being erected in Indiana that will spread the Vocalo broadcast into Chicago. She also reported on the new structure/approach the Vocalo staff will be taking in the coming year. The staff are divided into day-part teams—Morning, Mid-morning and so on. Each team is dedicated to engaging the community and collaborating with the community via the web, broadcasts on Vocalo and by becoming involved with one community and its organizations. Since Vocalo is web-based/focused, each team has selected a web community to work with/become a part of in addition to the live community involvement.

-Joe provided a Chair Report

-The most recent BOT meeting was grim, based upon the current fiscal climate and its effect on the station. BOT members are very tied to the station and want to do whatever they can to help it succeed. This dedication should serve as inspiration to CAC members and provide motivation for CAC to become even more closely tied to the mission of the station by providing content ideas and connections to communities that could serve as resources to the station.

-The new member event has been tabled until spring 2009, to make time for the Issues Forum.

-Executive Committee Nominations will change for the coming year. CAC members are encouraged to provide Joe with nominations for all the Executive Committee positions (Chair, President, Secretary) and the

Council will vote the new members into office. Formal discussion of this topic will continue at the September meeting.

-CAC Strategy Report (Evan and Susan):

-Susan suggested WBEZ add two more field offices to the current four, one in the loop and another at O'Hare airport.

-Susan introduced her guests (Suhail Kahn and Victor Lang) from the Chicago International Model UN. They reported on the success of their organization's recent growth and high number of repeat participants.

-Issues Forum (Marc):

-Topics sent to Sally for review with her staff for the first annual Issues Forum included; local effects of the recent gun decision, voter trends and the status of 2010 school reform plan.

-Steve reported in that the discussion of the ideas amongst the staff was great, the staff made an alternative suggestion to focus on healthcare. Everyone was receptive to the topic.

-Marc stressed the importance of and the necessary assistance from Steve to get the staff at the event.

-Bylaws (Marc):

-The group needs to provide input, rather than Marc adjusting the bylaws independent of group feedback. Therefore, Marc will prepare a list of the key items and bring them to the next meeting.

-CAC Member Reports:

-(Joe) The economic downturn is being felt in NW Indiana, upscale neighborhoods have several houses that have been foreclosed upon and vacancies in the commercial and retail districts are very high.

-(Evan) The impact of the potential Olympics has been top of mind recently as well as the fact that the agricultural growth in the Midwest is actually quite robust in comparison to other parts of the U.S.

-(Susan) Condo developments continue at a rapid rate, including the Spire, the question is who is moving into these units? What is the purchase rate vs. the building rate?

-(Jennifer) The recent 9 yr old CPS student that was shot is from Jennifer's neighborhood. He survived and each week the neighborhood has been coming together for a peace march on Friday evenings.

-(Marc) Ravenswood School Board did not renew the contract for the current principal. The school community is split on the individual's effectiveness.

-(Rebecca) The economic downturn is being felt in the NW suburbs as well. There have been a lot of folks in the library requesting resume assistance and job seeking skills as well as information on banks, bank failures and FDIC/FSLIC policies.