

WFAE Community Advisory Board (CAB) - Meeting Minutes
Thursday, 29 April, 2021 | 5:30 pm | Zoom Meeting

Attendance CAB Members present:

Kwame Agbeke	Dr. Magdalena Krajewska	Raquel Rivera
Jennifer Beightley	Dennis Lazarus	Lecia Shockley
Allyson Colaco	Barbara Lom, Chair	Dr. Shante Williams
Ingrid James	Diana Quarry, BOD Liaison	Bryn Wilson

CAB Members Not Attending:

Dr. Myah Davis	Jarrett Hurms	Sri Nagarajan
Stephen Guardipee	Keenya Justice	Hema Parekh

WFAE Staff present:

Lisa Gergely, Corporate Development/ Sponsorship	Joe O'Connor, President & CEO	Renee Rallos, Community Relations Manager
Ju-Don Marshall, Chief Content Officer & Executive Vice President		

Meeting began at 5:31 p.m. over Zoom
Renee established that we did not yet have quorum.
Agenda

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Welcome | Barbara Lom |
| 2. Approval of the Minutes | Barbara Lom |
| 3. Station Update | Joe O'Connor |
| 4. Content Update | Ju-Don Marshall |
| 5. Corporate Development Presentation | Lisa Gergely |
| 6. CAB Member Feedback | Barbara Lom |
| 7. Recruitment Updates | Barbara Lom |
| 8. Questions | All |

Meeting Notes:

****There was not quorum when the meeting began, so voting on minutes was delayed until nine (9) CAB members were present on the call. Quorum established at 5:47 pm.****

Welcome - Barbara Lom

CAB agreed to start meeting with Joe's presentation while waiting for quorum.

Station Update - Joe O'Connor

General Updates:

- Station received biggest grant/gift in its history from the [American Journalism Project](#) (AJP): \$590,000
 - Unique opportunity as foundations typically like to give to a program for a year and then leave a station to their own devices after that first year.
 - This is a demonstrated investment in WFAE to find additional ways to generate more money around these important initiatives, including how to bring in younger and more diverse listeners.
 - Also provides funding to bring on an events coordinator.
- Permanent hiring of three (3) new reporters through [Report for America](#):
 - Comparison: WNYC through a similar initiative, moved reporters from other areas; WFAE, in contrast, recruited externally.
 - Working to hire a newsroom director for diversity team, which will help to keep everything from falling on Ju-Don's shoulders

Financial and Fundraising Overview:

- Beginning major donor campaign: goal to raise \$1.2M for the diversity initiatives
- Overall, giving is ahead of budget:
 - Corporate Sponsorship is ahead of budget
 - Other funding sources include, but are not limited to:
 - PPP loan/grant
 - CARES Act
 - [Corporation for Public Broadcasting \(CPB\)](#)
 - American Rescue Plan

Diversity Statement

- North Carolina Media Equity Project (Elon)
 - Though WFAE has been exploring these conversations for a while, this project has helped inspire and fuel much of the momentum forward.
 - [News Release](#) (02.01.2021)
 - [NC Local News Workshop website](#)

- **WFAE Diversity Statement** ([LINK](#), and pasted below)

To fulfill its mission of creating quality journalism that informs, engages and inspires, WFAE will ensure its audience, staff, on-air voices, news sources, vendors and work culture reflect [the diverse community](#) it is licensed to serve.

WFAE is managed by a [Board of Directors](#) that consists of volunteers from throughout the Charlotte region. The Board has established and regularly revisits a strategic plan to guide its efforts. The station has established a [Community Advisory Board](#) to offer counsel on news coverage as well as community engagement. Both the Board of Directors and the Advisory Board will continue to recruit members to more deeply connect with the Charlotte region's rapidly diversifying residents.

WFAE will be guided by the [Corporation for Public Broadcasting's nondiscrimination requirements](#) as well as its commitments to equal opportunity and diversity. It expects its audience to hold the station accountable to these standards.

For more information, see [a letter](#) from our CEO Joe O'Connor about WFAE's current DEI initiatives.

- In an effort to make the WFAE efforts more visible and transparent in the commitment, the station is looking to provide a clickable statement which will inevitably offer a cleaner pipeline for information:

- CEO Letter ([LINK](#))

- Barbara asked about the use of the word "accountability" in the CEO letter.
 - Joe shared that Ju-Don is working on an app that can allow for listeners to provide feedback on content and whether there is enough representation throughout the coverage.

- Bryn asked about the overall goal (intention) in publishing these pieces -- more specifically, who are you trying to reach?

- Joe shared that being transparent in these areas is mandated by the National Broadcasting guidelines. It is also so important to recognize how WFAE is connecting with its audiences. It is important for advertisers and donors as well. It also helps develop our talent.

- Ju-Don shared that it is now considered a best practice for any media company. This is not the first time WFAE has published something, but we found we need to better communicate with our audience. Presumably, it helps reassure the audience that we are committed to these ideas.

- Ju-Don also noted that there have been calls around the country, specifically from journalists of color, for stations to hold themselves accountable.

[Media 2070](#) gives an overview of some of the harm done by media to certain communities.

- WFAE is holding itself accountable just as external groups are holding the station accountable.
- Allyson asked if Joe (or someone else) will be sharing these efforts on air in “promo spots” in an effort to be transparent around these initiatives.
 - Ju-Don mentioned that there is a concerted effort to push shareholder updates - beyond donation updates. This is information that could be included.
 - Ingrid added that this statement should not stand on its own; the station is generating diverse content that represents this commitment. Sharing this statement should be part of this plan.
 - Joe agreed that this allows the station the time to tell the WFAE “behind the scenes” story. On air promos can be part of the arsenal -- and it can be different voices.
- Raquel asked, via chat, if there is a link or space showing specifically which trainings will be done annually?
 - Ju-Don shared a link (AC Missed this link...)
 - Barbara asked about the word “Justice” not being included in the statement.
 - Joe mentioned that it was not intentionally omitted but acknowledged that there is an active debate about the use of the phrase “social justice” being used. To the degree to which we will soon be the leading newsroom in the region, we need to make sure our words and our actions are helping to set the tone. We are aware of this and remain committed to this transparency.
 - Ingrid mentioned that neutrality is so difficult to have, even if as a journalistic organization
- How does this map to us and how can we join on the path.
- Ways the CAB can be helpful:
 - Bringing on three journalists through -- This is teeing up efforts to cover issues in communities of color
 - Reporters have previously worked with us, which means they have trained with our newsroom.
 - Focusing on fundraising for the Race Development team.
 - Human centered conversations -- what do people want and need?

- First Year Series: follows women on their first year after being incarcerated
- Still Here: stories of resilience over the last year
 - Bryn mentioned that she has really enjoyed these stories!
- Working on:
 - Series on what it means to be trans
 - Series on healthcare: looking regionally, nationally, and internationally
 - Bryn asked if there is opportunity to have this broadcast more broadly
 - Ju-Don mentioned that WFAE does let NPR know about stories that may be interesting on a national level
 - For this outreach, WFAE's reporter will be included on the Kaiser Permanente series coming up because of her work.
- Allyson asked about any negative audience feedback
 - Ju-Don said the Charlotte Business Ledger received feedback about stories about businesses in communities of color
 - Hearing from people who support the direction of the station
 - Our community is much broader, and we are bringing people into the conversation -- none of us are a monolith. Our mission is to educate, inform, and bring people together. We are giving

LINKS to include

- <https://www.publicmediaforall.com>
- <https://current.org/2021/01/an-antiracist-future-a-vision-and-plan-for-the-transformation-of-public-media/>

NPR Board Update

- Diversity is the north star in the plan
- Significant efforts and buy-in by the NPR staff and newsroom
- Challenges with NPR and station collaborative fundraising
- Digital listening audience (specifically through podcasts)
 - Why doesn't a station like WFAE have access to national audience members
 - Announcements from Apple and Spotify where NPR is a launch partner

- Revenue will be shared with stations at some point
- Exploding in a way that it should benefit everyone...but we are still working on how to “share” listeners
- Building a national and local audience at the same time and how does it impact the listener/visitor experience.

Content Update - Ju-Don Marshall

***With quorum of nine (9) CAB members still present... ***

Approval of the Minutes – Barbara Lom

No comments heard.

Motion By: Dennis Lazarus

Second By: Missed the second

April 29, 2021 meeting minutes were approved without objection or abstention.

Corporate Development - Lisa Gergely

Market Enginuity (Lisa’s employer)

Build a company based on the things we like in supporting media companies AND focuses on treating people well.

- 14 markets (6 of the top 10) and work with PRX (distributors of content)
- Discuss what topics and categories of topics are working in markets

Media Type	Client Name	Location
Podcast	PRX	
Radio & TV	KERA	Dallas-Ft. Worth
	Houston Public Media	Houston
	GPB	Atlanta
Radio	KCRW	Los Angeles
	WBEZ	Chicago
	WAMU	Washington, D.C.
	KJZZ & K-BACH	Phoenix
	WMFE & WMFV	Orlando
	St. Louis Public Radio	St. Louis
	WFAE	Charlotte
	Nashville Public Radio	Nashville
	KUER	Salt Lake City
	WUWM	Milwaukee
	KUT & KUTX	Austin

The Team:

WFAE Sponsorship Team

	Lisa Gergely Executive Director of Business Development 5.5 years		Steve Jameson Account Manager 2.5 years
	Joel Sprouse Senior Corporate Development Specialist 5 years		Charlotte Shaver Community Accounts Specialist 1.5 year
	Noelle Culler Senior Corporate Development Specialist 3.5 years		

Community Accounts Specialist focuses on accounts that are \$2,500 or below

- 80% of the revenue comes from the top 20% of the clients
- Works with the accounts that want high touch, but are not at the level of major corporate donors (yet)

Sponsorship Team works to understand the client:

- Needs Analysis
- Buying cycle
- Client engagement opportunities

We work to make sure that what is presented on air is in line with our brand -- public media. We are NOT entertainers, we are teaching, informers, educators.

- We are not ratings driven.
- Listeners come because they want to connect with us, and they want to connect with others. It's a bond of people enjoying the same things. This transfers over corporate sponsors, too.

"Words Matter"

- We do not air advertising; we air sponsorship messages.
- We are not sharing promotional language, comparative language, or address the audience.

Connecting with Public Media Fans

- Need to reach them in more ways -- meaning we reach them more times
- Examples: Broadcast, Streaming, Newsletters, Multi-market, Events, Display, Podcast

Ideal Customer Profile:

- What the team needs:
 - Understanding of the Spending Potential
 - Access to the decision maker (not someone who can simply say “no”)
 - Usually multiple people: sometimes marketing, CSR, corporate giving, etc.
 - Audience Interests
 - Halo Benefits
 - Demonstrates Community Support
 - Best clients are those who truly live to serve the community
 - Category Success
 - Personal Interest

Ideal Customer Attributes:

- Educated -- life-long learners -- courteous, want different perspectives
- Influential -- people listen to their opinions
- Affluent -- can be a misunderstood attribute: index high with high-earning individuals, but this really means, they make smart buying decisions
- Cultural -- think outside of themselves

Key Categories:

- Healthcare
- Performing Arts
- Legal | Finance
- Education
- Professional Services
- Non-profits

Who do you know?

- Ideal Customer Profiles:
 - Spending Potential
 - Access to the decision maker
 - Audience or personal interest
 - Demonstrates community support
 - Category success
- How can you help...steps below:
 - Contact Lisa if you know prospects who meet the above criteria
 - Make an introduction
 - Ask them for a meeting

Questions:

- Ingrid: what is the response to “rankings”? Is it listener profile? Engagement levels?
 - Lisa shared that they talk “qualitative” -- working to create top of mind content
 - Commercial radio airs 24-26 minutes of ads during an hour
 - Example: first Subaru giveaway -- someone drove from the mountains to buy from Tom Chester. He sold four cars because he supported WFAE.
- Bryn, found presentation fascinating, especially the percentage of 80% of the support coming from the top 20% of the sponsors. What is the minimum level for that on-air sponsorship?
 - Lisa shared the difference between scaling sponsorship opportunities -- events are time limited verses services that may be needed throughout the year
 - This breakdown is pretty traditional for media buys, and fundraising, alike.

Contacting Lisa with Prospects:

Lisa Gergely
lgergely@wfae.org
704-770-8533

CAB Member Feedback - Barbara Lom

*This is the one mandated item we need to have for every CAB meeting.
See feedback in the minutes above.*

Recruitment Update - Barbara Lom

- 17 applications that were received
- 7 recommended for interviews; 6 responded with interviews scheduled
- Had more CAB members volunteer than spots available -- thank you.
- Meeting May 25-26 to complete selection
- Targeting 4 new members

Questions - ALL

Ingrid: any plans to return for in-person meetings.

-Renee shared that at this time, there are no plans to have in-person gatherings.

Community Advisory Board 2021 Meeting Dates

- Thurs., July 15, 2021 at 5:30 pm via Zoom
- Thurs., Oct. 28, 2021
- If the meeting is online, the time is 5:30-7:30 p.m.
- If the meeting is in-person, the time is 6-8 p.m., with dinner served.
- In-person meetings will be at WFAE unless otherwise noted.

MEETING FOLLOW-UP for members:

- Human centered conversation -- Ju-Don will work with Barbara and Renee
- Fundraising prospects for the race diversity initiative
- Follow WFAE on social media:
 - [Facebook \(@WFAE\)](#)
 - [Instagram \(@WFAE\)](#)
 - [Twitter \(@WFAE\)](#)
- Sign-up for WFAE newsletters ([link](#))

MEETING FOLLOW-UP for staff:

- Discussion on Notice of Diversity Statement
 - Share range of examples from other stations
- Joe will send examples of how other stations are showing stance on diversity, outside of published statements (i.e.: signature of other station managers)

REMINDERS:

- The next Community Advisory Board meeting is Thursday, July 15, 2021.
Location will be online at 5:30 p.m.
- [CAB Google Drive](#)

Meeting concluded at 7:26 pm.