

## **WFAE Community Advisory Board (CAB) – Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday, 10 January 2018, WFAE Station**

### **Attendance**

*CAB Members:* Keenya Justice, Dalya Kutchei, Chair John Lincoln, Secretary Tish Stoker Signet, Cricket Weston, Kelly Wyche; *WFAE Board Chairman:* Ed Williams; *Staff:* Jeff Bundy, Greg Collard, Ju-Don Marshall, Joe O'Connor, Jean Zoutewelle. The group missed Meghann Batchelor, who was ill.

### **Agenda**

5:30-6 p.m. Gathered over dinner. Meeting began at 6.

#### **"State of the Station" Update – Joe O'Connor**

Joe reported that WFAE is strong. November year-over-year ratings were better than last year, providing a foundation for social capital. Fundraising results are good, reflecting increased multi-media platforms and events plus an increased donor base. The cumulative average number of people who sample WFAE in a week has increased by 20%. Re our physical location, the lease on our current office space is up July 2019 and can be extended, if needed.

#### **Sexual Harrassment Issue**

Joe provided a detailed update on both NPR and WFAE response to this critical issue. At the NPR/national level, Michael Oreskes and David Sweeney have resigned and a law firm hired to conduct independent outside investigation. CEO Jarl Mohn is returning.

WFAE has moved proactively to examine our own culture, following the Tom Ashbrook case complaints about bullying, public berating and humiliation. The station has begun Charlotte Employers' Association harassment training to be done annually to maintain a safe and welcoming workplace. The WFAE protection statement has been expanded to include sexual orientation. WFAE Board Chair Ed Williams underscored a firm policy of required – not optional – reporting of any sexual misconduct observed, suspected or experienced. He has called on HR (under Jean Zoutewelle's leadership) to add him and/or Vice Chair Mark Ethridge to the contact list so that employees who feel unsafe have the option of reporting their concerns to someone outside their workplace reporting structure.

#### **December Membership Campaign, Major Giving, Financials – Jeff Bundy & Jean Zoutewelle**

**Highlights:** Revenue growth over past 3 years averaged about 10%; so far about 20% for this fiscal year. Membership is 46% of that; underwriting 35%; major (more than \$100 a

month) donors 12%; CPB funding 5%; grants 1%; and miscellaneous income 1%. Both individual contributions and underwriting up significantly from a year ago and over budgeted projection. **Vehicles of membership revenue:** On-air fundraising 29%, mailings 23%, website 21%, sustainers, 18%, vehicle donations 5%, employer matching 2%, telemarketing 2%, and events < 1%. On-air fundraising is most efficient tool we use. Greatest growth potential is major gifts. **December campaign:** exceeded goal of \$210,000 to \$213,000. **Member count:** 18,485 in December 2016, officially passed 20,000 to 20,417. (40% growth since Jeff arrived in 2015).

**Benchmarking with other NPR stations (Jeff):** Median number of annual fundraising days nationally is 33/year; most is 55, least is 5. WFAE began FY with 30 days scheduled; anticipate 33 after fall and winter extensions due to such factors as Hurricane Irma. Increasing sustainers as a percent of membership, while also adding new donors via on-air fundraising (without losing the sustainers) is key.

**Major gifts:** we have brought on two major gift officers, 700 people in system tagged as major donors, looking at lifetime plans. Also talking with foundational experts about best practices.

**Investment in staffing:** 7 content positions, 3 advancement positions, IT manager: enhanced IT capabilities via backup broadcast engineer. Industry standard is 1 engineer per tower (we have 4). By comparison WUNC has 5, plus university IT. Asheville has 2, FDD has 1 engineer (IT = WFU). WDAV, 1 contract engineer. Organizational chart & staffing levels: Have grown from 35 to 46 FTE with solid financial rationale for more growth, as we are a little small for the size of our media market.

### **Programming Changes, Content Q&A – Ju-Don Marshall**

#### **Highlights from Ju-Don:**

14-person newsroom growing to 23 in FY 2018. Adding 2 show producers, 5 people focused on digital/emerging platforms: ME, news and digital; on-demand content and community engagement producer; 2 digital content editors; 1 mm journalist

#### **Priorities and Goals:**

**Increased digital capacity:** mobile, laptop, social media, smart home and personal devices such as Alexa. (1-in-6 people have an in-home device.) **Increased news capacity** (when Greg Collard came, we had 2 reporters plus a stringer). These changes allow increase coverage hours, earlier mornings and later evenings and weekends. Also allow more focus on spot news ; enterprise news in core topics (education politics, health,

environment, criminal justice); critical issues (economic opportunity, immigration, etc.); and continued focus on expanding robust arts focus. Managing Editor position recruiting nearly complete, have made offer with February 5 anticipated start date. *Charlotte Talks* producer started this month. Joni Deutsch hired in November to do podcasts and as producer of on-demand content/audience engagement. **Increased community engagement capacity.** More events around news and content. Listening posts: goal to put locations where listeners can respond to questions from the station. Community-driven storytelling - FAQ City (Nick D.), community podcast initiative.

Goal to get a listening app, enable people to engage with us, to gain a physical presence. **Increased partnership capacity:** NPR and member stations. Local organizations, nonprofits focused on media initiatives. (Eg, partnering with WDAV in Davidson, plus SC radio stations.) **Upcoming, powerful series to come:** Sarah Delia, story that began with her probing backlog of rape kits. Tentatively targeted for April, sexual assault awareness month. **Audience growth.** Increased 70% since fall 2015, 132,700 to 224,000. Digital (web) much smaller but 82% increase in two years. With more strategic focus should see exponential growth in this. (Still only 10% of listeners give.) Greg Collard added that the newsroom has done a tremendous job with the gerrymandering issue, both breaking news and digging down into the issues. Joni's coming on board has allowed the on-demand content as well as podcast production. We are being slow to hire others, as candidate pool is plentiful and very good.

### **CAB Recruitment and Strategic Planning – CAB Chair John Lincoln**

#### **Highlights from update on Strategic Plan. (Two years ago this month).**

Maximum CAB membership 24, we have 12 (6 in the room for this meeting). Special focus is to increase membership (and diversity of all kinds in membership) and to define and ratchet up the Ambassador role.

#### **Events scheduled before next meeting:**

Feb. 15 – chocolate and wine tasting event. April 19 – *Charlotte Talks* 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary  
 May 9 celebration – Charlotte Museum of History. Foundation for Carolinas pencilled in, but looking at larger venue. Early June – *Charlotte Squawks*. New public conversation on sexual assault TBD around the time of Sarah D.'s podcast.

John Lincoln adjourned the group soon after 8 p.m.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Tish Stoker Signet, Secretary**

**10 January 2018**