

MISSISSIPPI AUTHORITY FOR EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION

Teleconference Meeting of the Board of Directors

Tuesday, March 8, 2022
10:00 a.m.
MAET Administration Building
3825 Ridgewood Rd.
Jackson, MS 39211

Directors present on call:

- Vice Chair Pete Smith, Russ Latino, Whitney Lipscomb, Ric Sawyer, Shawn Mackey

Directors absent:

- Chairman David Allen, Jeanne Luckey

Staff present on call:

- Teresa Collier, John Gibson, Alicia Harris, Jason Klein, Sophie Wolf, Anna Neel Nathan Tate, Beth Ann Wann, Tara Wren, Cedric Grizzell

Others present on call:

- Angela Ferraez, Avery Lee, Lisa Lancaster

OPENING OF MEETING

Vice Chairman Pete Smith opened the meeting, and it was determined that a quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Director Sawyer and seconded by Director Lipscomb that the Board approve the agenda for the meeting, and upon a unanimous vote, the motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Director Mackey and seconded by Director Sawyer that the Board approve the minutes of the January 11, 2022 and January 26, 2022 videoconference meetings of the MPB Board of Directors, and upon a unanimous vote, the motion carried.

AUDIT REPORT

Shauna Post presented the Auditor's report. There were no issues, and no big changes from last year.

The audit report is included in these minutes as **Exhibit A**

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Alicia Harris presented the financial report for MPB through February 28, 2022 and noted several items.

Alicia Harris stated that we are at 65% revenue. We should be at 67%. Total revenue collected is 9.5 million. Expenditures are at 50% at 7.3 million. Director Latino asked if the Salaries were under budget because of the open pins. Alicia Harris explained that it was partly because of that.

The financial report is included in these minutes as **Exhibit B**

EXPENDITURES OVER \$50,000

Alicia Harris presented to the board three items needing approval as they are over the \$50,000 amount that the executive director has authority to approve:

- \$120,000 to Mosaic Media to perform video production services
- \$250,273 to Teledyne for back up tubes for our radio tower transmitters which will no longer be made

Director Latino asked for clarification about the radio towers tubes which Nate provided. Director Lipscomb asked for more insight into the project Mosaic Media would be doing and John Gibson provided that information

A motion was made by Director Lipscomb and seconded by Director Mackey that the Board approve both purchases, and upon a unanimous vote, the motion carried.

HUMAN RESOURCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Beth Ann Wann presented the Human Resource report for MPB through February, 2022. There are 17 vacant pins now.

Director Lipscomb asked if the 3% increase in January was across the board. Beth Ann Wann explained if they were eligible for it, they did. There were only a handful that were not eligible or did not get the full 3% because they were already at the level required.

Vice Chair Smith asked if we had any employees that received the full 10% increase. Beth Ann Wann let him know there were not many at all that received that.

Director Lipscomb also asked if they had been told by the Legislature if they are appropriating money for any of the employees that are not at the minimum to get them to the minimum starting salary. Alicia explained that they have been submitting a list of those (not the minimum) to Charley, our LBO analyst.

Director Mackey asked if we were having the same workforce hiring issues that others were having trying to fill positions, and if so how it was effecting the operation in the areas where there are vacancies. Teresa Collier said there are a number of positions that need to be filled, some of which won't be filled until the new Executive Director being put in place. Part of the issue is the salary, but now with the pay increase they might be easier to fill.

Vice Chair Smith asked if the salaries shown on the Personnel report reflect the new SEC squared salary ranges. Beth Ann Wann replied that not all of them reflect that. If they were vacant when the new SEC squared ranges were put in place then they increased, but otherwise they are doing it as they go along because the start steps are so much higher which eats compliance.

Ric Sawyer asked for a more detailed explanation since he was not knowledgeable on the subject. Beth Ann Wann explained the process that was gone through that enabled each state employee to have an updated job classification starting January 1, 2022 with a new salary range.

INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S/ NEWS DEPARTMENT REPORT

Teresa Collier reported on some of the major things that have happened since the last Board meeting.

- TV Production has completed two big annual on location multi-camera productions. The Governor's State of the State address which was broadcast live on January 25, 2022, and the Governor's Arts Awards that was aired February 18, 2022, and played on MPB Think Radio on February 20, 2022.
- A new season of MS Roads aired last month and will continue rolling out new episodes every Thursday for the next few weeks.
- A new season of Fit to Eat will be shot in our studio this month.
- Reed Branson with Capitol Resources, Alicia Harris, Anna Neel, and Teresa Collier met and presented our budgets requests to Legislative leaders on January 26.
- MPB Capitol Day was on February 15, 2022. It was scaled back from previous years but was quite successful.

- The House Appropriations bill has been filed. It is below what we need, which happens every year. We are still waiting to find out what our final budget will be.
- MS Spelling Bee will be held Saturday March 12, 2022 in Columbus, MS. MS Association of Educators pulled out as a long time sponsor. As a result it was possible that MS would not have had a Spelling Bee. Thanks to the people in the Lowndes County area they stepped up and joined with a television station in Columbus to produce it, and we plan to air it when it is done.
- MPB Classroom has resumed production in our studio, which is aired on our 5th channel.
- This years Poetry Out Loud was produced in collaboration with the MS Arts Commission.
- Gulf States Newsroom is going very well. They just hired a content editor and have begun advertising for a Development Director. A story that Brittany Brown produced regarding the wave of bomb threats at several HBCU's is part of several stories featured on NPR's home page.
- The old TV antenna in Boonville has been brought down and they have started to put up the new one. This is the last tower in our repack efforts.
- We had a death in the Technical Services Department, Eric Denson. His mother called to let Greg Wells know he had passed away during the night. Teresa thanked the Foundation for sending a plant.

Director Latino stated that he had heard back from some of the Legislators, and they all said Mrs. Collier did a good job in the presentation.

He also asked about the MPB Classroom and if there is some kind of guide available for people to know what is being played and when. Tara Wren let him know that they publish a schedule every week and post it on our website as well as social media. The videos are also on our website so they can be watched on demand.

Director Latino asked if parents could submit requests Ms. Wren let him know that they are not quite there yet but if someone requests a certain class that has been done they get directed on how to locate it.

A grant through MDE allowed them to hire someone dedicated to organizing the content so that it is better searchable and easier to find. She gave a brief overview of how MPB Classroom got started.

MPB FOUNDATION DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Angela Ferraez reported on Foundation updates as follows:

- TV pledge drive is not going as well as planned. The first day of the drive was the day Russia invaded Ukraine. Our demographic watches the news, so there were not many pledges during that time. The pledge drive rebounded the following Monday and then Tuesday was the State of the Union so pledges were minimal

- during that time as well. Nationwide this drive has been the worst since the recession in 2008.
- Radio pledge drive is planned for April 4th – 8th. This will be the fourth drive we have had a consultant work with us on pledge drive strategy. Each drive we have been able to increase each drive.
- The foundation is planning on partnering with Gestalt Gardner on April 1, 2022 at The Max in Meridian. It will be similar to the On The Road events the foundation held last year.
- The foundation is planning on partnering with the radio department on April 30 and May 1st for the Home and Garden Show being held at the Clyde Muse Center. They will be holding a donor brunch.
- The foundation by laws require we have one joint board meeting per year. Angela proposed Tuesday August 23, 2022 as a possible date for a joint meeting.
- At the last Board meeting 2021 not been closed out. We are now closed out through January 2022. Our cash remains strong, and our year-to-date donations are over budget by 7%. We are over the prior year by 9%. The expenses for the foundation are under budget by 16%. The foundation has had two sub committee meetings regarding starting an endowment.

APPROVAL OF PUBLIC RECORD REQUEST POLICY DOCUMENTS

A motion was made by Director Mackey and seconded by Director Sawyer that the Board approve the Public record request policy, and upon a unanimous vote, the motion carried.

The public record request policy is included in these minutes as **Exhibit C**

STAFF UPDATES

John Gibson gave updates on TV Production as follows:

- Two documentaries in the works. Medgar Evers and Bobbie Rush. The interview with Myrlie Evers-Williams has been put on hold due to her health. Two team members are schedule to interview her on March 28, 2022 at her home in California. The following week they will be interviewing Bobbie Rush in our studio. They are working on planning a Bobbie Rush concert this summer.
- TV production is benefitting from partnerships with others. They are waiting to hear back from the Walter Anderson program that has been picked up nationally.
- Robert St. John is in Spain working on his next TV series. It will be a travel show, but it will not be Palate to Palette.
- David Ray Morris is making a documentary about his father Willie Morris. Talks are in the work to collaborate with him so it can be aired.

- TV department has several new programs from MS State University. They have a great documentary on Farmers and their mental health issues which was very impressive.
- Just finished shooting some 60 second interstitials called "A More Perfect Union". It's a series about Mississippians who fought for justice and inclusion. This came from the MS Humanities Council and was funded by the National Endowment for Humanities. Roger Wicker, Delbert Hosemann, Reena Evers, Bennie Thompson, and Greg Harper were a few of the notable people interviewed for this.

Jason Klein gave updates on the Radio department as follows:

- The construction on the new Radio studio is going great. There are a few logistic issues being worked out because of waiting on supplies to come in but we are coming close to being finished.
- Reiterated that the radio department will be at the Jackson Home and Garden Show on April 30th and May 1st. Fix It 101 will be hosting a live show and Gestalt Gardner will be there as well giving a talk.
- They are recording and getting ready for the MS Book Festival.
- Radio podcasts broke a new barrier recently. Gestalt Gardner is the number one podcast with over 230,000 downloads. Second podcast, Fix It 101 has over 200,000 downloads. They both recently acquired two new sponsors just for the podcast. For half of the year True Fuel out of Louisiana has purchased it, and the other half Porch.com out of Oregon has purchased it.

Tara Wren gave updates on the Education Department as follows:

- The education department received a \$15,000 grant from the Sesame workshop to support our MPB student council.
- They were awarded a grant a couple of years ago from the Harden Foundation in the Lauderdale county area, and just received the 3rd allotment of \$40,000 to support the digital education network.
- E-Learning offers CEU's for teachers has been doing a lot better. There was a drop during the pandemic, but now they are back up to 725 registered educators over the last couple of months. This is a good revenue maker for MPB.
- Preparing for starting back with in person events. The Summer Learning event is being planned and they are talking with MDE and MS Library Commission and partnering with them
- Workforce Development never stopped. They did them virtually. They are held on the 3rd Thursday of the month. This month they will be talking about mental health in the workplace.
- A new program that they have created is the MPB Library Literacy Tour with Ed Said. They are booked up through the rest of this year and are working on adding more dates for next year.
- PATT (Parents Are Teachers Too) still on course and going well

Sophie Wolf gave updates on the Communications Department as follows:

- Communications has recently played a role in helping other departments with events such as the live stream, press coverage, Governors Arts Awards, and MPB day at the capitol.
- Working on having a concert for Bobbie Rush. It will take place at New Horizon Church on June 18, 2022. They are hoping that New Horizon will have a gospel concert on the same stage the next day. This will give TV production several production opportunities beyond just the concert for the documentary.
- Conversations have been had about the different seasonal shows coming up and how communications can assist.
- They have been working to sign the contract with Sprout social which will help capture better data.
- They have been working with Q catalyst. There has been a social media focus which ended at the end of February. There will be a new project in the next week or so. One thing they worked on in the fall was email marketing. Efforts are paying off.

OTHER BUSINESS

Vice Chairman Pete Smith determined there was no need for executive session, and there being no further business, the Board adjourned.

SIGNED, this the 8th day of March, 2022

David Allen, Chairman
Board of Directors

Teresa Collier
Interim Executive Director