

**WMHT Educational Telecommunications
WMHT Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
March 20, 2025**

A Meeting of the WMHT Board of Trustees was held on March 20, 2025. Gwen Wright, Chair of the Board of Trustees, presided.

Present

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| Del Salmon | Maire Masterson |
| Anthony Hayes | Livingstone Mukasa |
| Jason Benitez | Paul Powers |
| Angela Dixon | Tobi Saulnier |
| John Eberle | Gwen Wright |
| Glinnesa Gailliard | Benita Zahn |
| Tammis Groft | |

Excused

| | |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| Don Applyrs | KMarie King |
| Doris Fischer Malesardi | Karen Opalka |
| Martin Mbugua | Toyin Tofade |
| Steady Moono | Teresa Zielinski |

Also Attending

WMHT Staff: Val Belden, Patrick Carpenter, Cole Mead, Will Pedigo, Julie Raskin, Chris Wienk, Virginia Claus.

Also attending Kevin Testo, Partner, The Bonadio Group

Meeting Call to Order

Ms. Wright called the meeting to order at 4:02 PM

Consent Agenda Items

On a motion by Mr. Salmon, duly seconded by Ms. Zahn, and hearing no discussion, the consent agenda of minutes and notes listed below was unanimously approved by the Board of Trustees.

Minutes and Notes

- January 15, 2025 Board Meeting
- January 29, 2025 Investment Committee Meeting
- February 3, 2025 Community Advisory Board Meeting
- February 13, 2025 Institutional Advancement Committee Meeting
- March 4, 2025 Executive Committee Meeting
- March 13, 2025 Finance Committee Meeting
- March 19, 2025 Governance Committee Meeting

***Institutional
Advancement
Committee***

Mr. Carpenter opened by noting that IA Committee Chair, Ms. Doris Malesardi, was unable to attend due to a board commitment at Bucknell University. He reported that the Institutional Advancement Committee held a meeting in February. During that meeting, committee members received a comprehensive orientation on the work of the Institutional Advancement team.

Mr. Carpenter shared the Committee's short-term priorities include updating the gift acceptance policy and approving a new donor recognition model for implementation in FY26. He expressed his belief that the new model will support accelerated growth in individual giving to the organization. He also reported that fundraising performance was strong in December and January. Although February had a strong start, momentum slowed midway through the month. Mr. Carpenter attributed this decline to a significant drop in consumer confidence. However, fundraising in March showed promising results, and he anticipated meeting or exceeding the monthly goal.

Mr. Carpenter provided an update on the hiring process for open positions within the Advancement team.

***Governance
Committee***

Ms. Groft spoke about the election of a trustee to the Executive Committee as allowed by the bylaws. The Governance and Executive Committees met to discuss and agreed to ask Mr. Livingstone Mukasa to join. Mr. Mukasa accepted.

On a motion by Ms. Salmon, duly seconded by Ms. Groft, a motion to nominate Livingstone Mukasa for the Executive Committee was unanimously approved by the Board of Trustees. Mr. Mukasa abstained.

On a motion by Ms. Dixon, Duly seconded by Dr. Zahn, the election of Mr. Don Applyrs, Mr. John Eberle, Ms. Maire Masterson, Ms. Karen Opalka, and Mr. Paul Powers to serve as the Audit Committee was unanimously approved.

Ms. Groft reported the Governance Committee met to discuss the findings of the completed board demographics surveys. Ms. Groft would like to extend the deadline to complete the surveys, so we have a better understanding of the makeup of the board. Ms. Groft will send the survey to the board for those who have not had the opportunity to complete it.

Ms. Groft reported on the board orientation. WMHT held a board orientation on January 15th. The session was deemed a success. The orientation was praised for its thoroughness and the use of data to support the reports. A virtual orientation will be offered to trustees.

Ms. Groft discussed WMHT's board portal, BoardSpot.com

Finance Committee

Ms. Dixon and Ms. Raskin noted the highlights.

February 2025 Financial Statements Review

- WMHT's fiscal year is from July 1 through June 30th.
- After 8 months, WMHT continues to be on track to make its budget

Net Income before Depreciation is \$225,983 higher than the budget.

Operational Income is \$276,456 lower than budget.

- CPB Grants are \$22,529 higher than the budget. Full year FY25 CPB grants will be higher than budget by \$33,794 due to the adjustments in the CPB formulary
- Membership (including matching gifts) is \$82,727 lower than the budget. Membership is at 98% of the goal. Sustainer income (\$1,291,125) makes up 40% of February 2025 YTD membership revenue.
- Program Underwriting is \$155,442 lower than the budget. Operational Expenditures before Depreciation are \$502,439 favorable to budget. Lapsed salary savings account for \$299,923 or 60% of the favorable variance. Another favorable variance is maintenance and repairs at \$74,270.

Balance Sheet

- Cash is \$569,278 higher than the prior year due to the WMHT reserve account realized gains and interest (\$117,457) along with operational savings (\$441,251).
- Accounts Payable is \$330,230 higher than prior year due to payments due on the Ross video router.

Ms. Dixon and Ms. Raskin have invited the board to join the next investment committee meeting that takes place on Wednesday, April 30th at 4pm, where they will look at the investment policy statement as well as have a regular meeting.

On a motion by Mr. Salmon, duly seconded by Ms. Groft, the motion to accept the financial report was unanimously approved.

Presentation of the 990's

Mr. Testo noted that he reviewed the 990 in detail with the Finance Committee. The 990 is an informational return, filed annually with the IRS and then becomes public information. A key compliance question requires the affirmation that all board members had access to the 990 prior to its filing. The 990 tells a great deal about the station, including financial data, what the station does, board members, compensation of key staff, and the station's mission. WMHT also files a 990-T for earned revenue for unrelated business income, the production income, but the expenses are such that no taxes are due. There is an equivalent form for New York State, the Char500, that also must be filed by May 15.

The chair confirmed that all board members received the 990 in advance of the meeting. On a motion by Mr. Powers duly seconded by Ms. Dixon the 990 was unanimously accepted by the Board of Trustees.

***Leadership Team -
Radio***

Mr. Wienk reported we just had a very successful classical pledge drive, exceeding a goal that was set much higher than recent spring campaigns. The Next Gen Festival is at the Troy Music Hall on Sunday (3/23).

WEXT's Local 518 Festival date is set for July 26th (hold the date) at Music Haven in Schenectady's Central Park. Our 18th birthday party, the Blues BBQ will take place in August. Date to be set.

The team will be at the Adirondack Sports Summer Sports Expo all this weekend at the Saratoga City Center.

Hear the Women's History Month podcast "HerSONG" with Local 518 women artists, daily at 11a and 7p on WEXT. It is hosted by local musician Emily Curro of The Hold on Honeys. You can also hear podcasts on our website, or wherever you get podcasts.

***Leadership Team –
TV***

Mr. Pedigo reported the following:

North to New York

- Almost 200 people showed up at the New York State Museum for the premiere screening. Thanks to Gwen Wright and Angela Dixon for attending.
- Through WMHT's community engagement efforts, area libraries held additional screenings - including in Castleton NY. Paul Powers was in attendance.
- North To New York has been shared with NY PBS stations and New England Public Media. A screening link was shared with WORLD Channel.

Nine PBS in St louis is creating a Community Engagement Toolkit. PBS recommended WMHT share a video featuring our work as an example for the nation. We'll share that link with you.

WMHT represented NY PBS stations at the March 12th meeting of the New York State 250th Commission. WMHT received a grant to support our engagement efforts around the Sept. 10th Ken Burns visit and coming launch of The American Revolution.

Our first American Revolution / 250th event will be a screening of NOVA | Revolutionary War Weapons on Sunday April 6th at 3pm at the New York State Museum's Huxley Theater. Joining WMHT for a discussion will be:

- Aaron Noble, Senior Historian and Curator with the New York State Museum
- David Allen, a 250th Commissioner and SUNY Maritime College professor of history.
- Matt Keagle, Curator from Fort Ticonderoga

Keep an eye out for Stanley Nelson's *We Want the Funk*, coming to WMHT on Tuesday, April 8th at 9pm. Mara Drogan will screen *We Want The Funk* as part of our Indie Lens Pop-Up series on Saturday, April 12th at the Albany Pine Hills Branch Library at 2pm.

Also on April 12th:

WMHT embarks on the first episode of the 10-part series *Reflections on the Erie Canal*.

The videos run between British dramas and will be posted on Youtube.

***Leadership Team –
Engineering***

Mr. Mead reported the following:

Completion of the 2025 Capital Projects

- Video Router
- Production Switcher
- Master Clock

Capital Projects for CRB

- WMHT is currently responsible for scheduling and leading the approved capital projects for the shared transmitter site called CRB (Capital Region Broadcasters)
- Tower Work
- Transfer Switches for the generators

President's Report

Mr. Hayes reiterated that WMHT is a well-run organization with a talented team of dedicated professionals, a focused, committed and supportive board, and healthy reserves. He shared that WMHT is positioned to withstand most challenges that may come its way. Unfortunately, not every organization is as well positioned as WMHT.

Mr. Hayes commented that these are interesting times, and public media is facing unprecedented threats, challenges and scrutiny. He reminded everyone that March 26th is an important date for public media. It's when the PBS & NPR CEOs will go before a DOGE hearing to defend its business practices. Mr. Hayes also noted that in recent weeks, the FCC started investigating the underwriting/corporate sponsorship policies and practices of at least 20 public media organizations. Mr. Hayes pointed out that FCC Chairman Carr is not a friend of public media. He is a Project 2025 Contributor and has been vocal about his position on public media. Mr. Hayes acknowledged that we are facing an uphill battle, but he remains cautiously optimistic. He informed the board that last

Friday we learned CPB funding was included in the bill that was approved by both the House and Senate. During the recent APTS Summit, the APBS Board (Association of Public Broadcasting Stations of NY) had the opportunity to meet with Senator Chuck Schumer. He reiterated his support for public media and suggested that we do the following:

- Advocate for public media
- Encourage trustees to reach out to legislators
- Solicit support from viewers and listeners

Strategy:

- Launch marketing campaign
- Continue to work with Steve Janack on PR initiatives
- Provide you all with the opportunity to come in and record testimonials
- Pro public media communication to donors and members
- Enhanced engagement efforts - Jason Benitez, Capital Region Men of Color Network (Tuesday, March 11) (Angela received feedback)
- Open to other thoughts and ideas.

Chair's Report

Ms. Wright wished everyone a happy spring. She said in this ever-changing environment, WMHT stays true to its mission. This is one of the things that brightens her day, being engaged with this organization is a blessing. Ms. Wright truly enjoyed the North to NY screening and appreciated how well the event was organized and coordinated. The sold-out room was a testament to WMHT's good work. It was an opportunity to lift up WMHT and spread the word. Ms. Wright thanked the Governance Committee for the work on the surveys. She was happy to read trustees felt involved and had an opportunity to be engaged. Ms. Wright looks forward to having the information needed to be able to recruit new trustees that will fill in some gaps. Despite what's happening in Washington, Ms. Wright reiterates we are blessed and doing the work and staying true to the mission, we are moving forward and not resting on our laurels. Going forward, programming on the horizon will continue to move us in the direction that puts us above the standard. Ms. Wright let the board know she will not be able to attend the May Board meeting. Ms. Groft will run the May board meeting.

Other Business

No other business

Executive Session The board went into executive session at 5:01 pm.

Adjournment On a motion by Mr. Salmon and seconded by Ms. Dixon, the trustees unanimously approved ending the executive session and closing the meeting at 5:30 pm.