



WMHT Public Media

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**WMHT Educational Telecommunications
WMHT Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
January 18, 2024**

A Meeting of the WMHT Board of Trustees was held on January 18, 2024. Shelby Schneider, Chair of the Board of Trustees, presided.

Present

Shelby Schneider	Susan Kress
Anthony Hayes	Martin Mbugua
Bridget Ball Shaw	Karen Opalka
Ian Berry	Mary-Ellen Piche
Karen Carpenter	Del Salmon
Angela Dixon	Benita Zahn
Doris Fischer Malesardi	Teresa Zielinski
Tammis Groft	

Excused

Don Applyrs	Tobi Saulnier
Barb Nelson	Mary Simoni
Susan Novotny	Danika Vittorio
Khadijah Peek	Gwen Wright

Also Attending

WMHT Staff: Sandra Beer, Val Belden, Virginia Claus, Michele Desrosiers, Mara Drogan, Keith Martin, Will Pedigo, Julie Raskin, Matt Rogowicz, Chris Wienk.

Call to Order

Ms. Schneider called the meeting to order at 4:03 PM

***Consent Agenda
Items***

On a motion by Mr. Salmon, with a second by Ms. Groft, the consent agenda of minutes and notes listed below was unanimously approved by the Board of Trustees.

Minutes and Notes

- November 30, 2023 Board Annual Meeting, with a name correction as announced.
- January 16, 2024 Finance Committee Meeting

***Governance
Committee***

Ms. Groft introduced Dr. KMarie King, with a brief review of her impressive resume, to serve on the WMHT Board of Trustees, for a first three-year term.

On a motion by Ms. Fischer Malesardi, duly seconded by Dr. Benita Zahn, Dr. KMarie King was approved to serve a first three-year term.

Ms. Groft introduced the proposed slate for election to the Audit Committee:

- Angela Dixon
- Tammis Groft
- Barb Nelson
- Susan Novotny
- Teresa Zielinski

On a motion by Ms. Carpenter, duly seconded by Mr. Mbugua, the above-named individuals were elected to serve on the Audit Committee.

Finance Committee

Ms. Carpenter noted that the newly formed committee reviewed the finances, highlighting pertinent information, including the FY24 budget during the January 16, 2024 meeting.

Ms. Raskin reported that at this halfway point in the fiscal year, membership is at 103% of its goal, corporate support is at 101% and cash position is strong. Our net income before depreciation is very good, well above budget. The station is debt free as the last IDA bond payment on the \$5.2 million loan was paid on December 1, 2023. WMHT has 39 staff members out of 43 budgeted positions.

President's Report

Mr. Hayes observed that this month marks his first anniversary as President and CEO of WMHT. WMHT is a regional treasure. Supporters recognize and appreciate the value of its quality content, multiplatform delivery and educational services, enhanced community engagement and responsiveness to constituents. Mr. Hayes noted that it's important to build on their trust, and demonstrate with clear actions, WMHT's firm commitment to being a trusted source for the very best in public media content and educational services.

This was a year of growth, prosperity, creativity, transition, and collaboration. Noteworthy efforts included increased press coverage and emphasis on local content creation as evidenced by *NY&*, *Reframing an Empire* and *Work in Progress*. WMHT created more Learning Media content than in all years prior.

Mr. Hayes noted his focus on creating the right internal culture, elevated community engagement and outreach, and his participation in hundreds of external meetings and events.

WMHT ended FY 23 \$1 million better than budget. At the end of FY 23, he approved necessary salary adjustments and several promotions. Each employee received a raise and bonus. Investments were made in WMHT's capital needs. Most recently, WMHT invested in a new FM transmitter.

The station partnered with Planetarium for Part 1 of the Listening Tour/Market Study. WMHT recruited two fabulous trustees – Dr. Benita Zahn & Dr. KMarie King.

Mr. Hayes' plan going forward is to reschedule a culture training session, launch Part 2 of the Listening Tour, invest in capital needs, and work collaboratively to develop a new strategic plan. The station will aggressively attempt to fill open positions. In February, WMHT will air PBS's Gospel and our local companion piece, *Echoes of Praise*. The station is planning a climate event and will create a President's Council of Advisors to serve as ambassadors for WMHT and advisors to the WMHT President. Ms. Fischer Malesardi, as chair of the Institutional Advancement Committee, will work with Mr. Hayes to create an advisory board of past trustees.

Mr. Hayes noted that WMHT is in very good financial shape.

Leadership Team Reports

Institutional Advancement

Mr. Carpenter introduced himself and provided a summary of his work history. He's excited about his role at WMHT and looks forward to working with the board and advancement staff.

Radio Services

Mr. Hayes shared that WMHT-FM has a new staff member and host, Charlotte Wilson.

Community Advisory Board

Ms. Desrosiers noted that there were 23 applications for the Community Advisory Board and is recommending the following thirteen people to serve. They sought out people with strong community connections who represent a variety of geographic areas.

Nominees – term ends December 31, 2025

1. Daniel Butterworth, Albany, NY
2. Katelyn Egan, Rensselaer, NY
3. Ayesha Geter, Latham NY
4. Stephen M. Long, Jr., North Adams, MA
5. Charlie Owens, East Greenbush, NY
6. Katy Peace, Schenectady, NY
7. Elizabeth Press, Troy, NY
8. Kathleen Preston, Delmar, NY
9. Gabrielle Raven, Willow NY
10. Gemma Rinefierd, Delmar, New York
11. Peter Edward Sutherland, Voorheesville, NY
12. Alexandra Walters, Loudonville, NY
13. Deborah Warnock, Cambridge, NY

On a motion by Dr. Benita Zahn, duly seconded by Ms. Kress, the above-named individuals were elected to serve on the Community Advisory Board for a two-year term ending December 31, 2025.

It was shared that the following members are serving their second year of their term ending December 31, 2024.

1. Albert Belenchia, Castleton on Hudson, NY
2. Margaret Clements, Albany, NY
3. Gordon Davis, Albany, NY
4. Sarah DiPasquale, Galway, NY
5. Dustin Lanterman, Troy, NY
6. Paul Powers, Schodack Landing, NY
7. Crickett Thomas-O'Dell, Ballston Lake, NY

It was shared that the station is required to have a Community Advisory Board, according to CPB legislation and subsequent regulations.

WMHT's Learning Services Advisory Committee (LSAC), is mandated by our funding from NYSED. The LSAC vets our educational services and resources for PBS Learning Media.

***Echoes of Praise:
Gospel in the NY
Capital Region***

Mr. Pedigo showed previews of the PBS documentary, Gospel, and WMHT's local documentary, Echoes of Praise. The local production highlights several local churches, and then moves to a more secular look at local gospel music and wraps up at *Caffé Lena* to conclude with *A Joyful Noise*. Mr. Pedigo congratulated Mr. Rogowicz (producer of Echoes of Praise) as he announced Mr. Rogowicz's promotion to Sr. Producer and Host. He also shared that Nicole VanSlyke has been promoted to Manager of Content and Engagement.

Mr. Pedigo invited the trustees to the VIP Echoes of praise screening on February 8th at the WMHT studios.

Chair's Report

Ms. Schneider wished Mr. Hayes a Happy Anniversary. She thanked the board for its support as she begins her 2nd year as chair of this board. Ms. Schneider announced that Danika Vittoria has resigned, effective January 19th, as she has been unable to make the time commitment to remain a trustee. Ms. Schneider welcomed Mr. Salmon as the new Vice Chair, and Ms. Carpenter as our new Treasurer, Ms. Groft as the new Governance Chair, and thanked Ms. Saulnier for having served as the previous Governance Chair. She also thanked Ms. Fischer Malesardi for her leadership in helping the board become a Triple A board. Mr. Berry will be the Institutional Advancement Vice-Chair to guide phase 2 of the listening tour, ie, meet the CEO events in town hall style gatherings. Ms. Piche will lead the Strategic Planning Committee.

Ms. Schneider acknowledged the importance of being local and complimented the team on Echoes of Praise.

The Board and Finance Committee schedules are set, and other committee meetings will be added to the calendar in BoardSpot. The Board Retreat will be an all-day event on May 31st at Pat's Barn.

Adjournment

On a motion by Ms. Ball Shaw, duly seconded by Mr. Salmon, the Trustees unanimously approved closing the board meeting.

Mission: WMHT uses media to enrich our communities with programs and services that advance education, culture and civic engagement, empower individuals, celebrate our diversity, and reveal what we have in common.