

**WMHT Educational Telecommunications  
WMHT Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes  
September 21, 2023**

A Meeting of the WMHT Board of Trustees was held on September 21, 2023 via a hybrid in person and zoom visual and audio conference call. Shelby Schneider, Chair of the Board of Trustees, presided.

***Present***

Shelby Schneider	Barbara Nelson
Anthony V. Hayes	Susan Novotny
Don Applyrs	Karen Opalka
Ian Berry	Mary Ellen Piche
Karen Carpenter-Pumbo	Del Salmon
Tammis Groft	Tobi Saulnier
Kathy Jimino	Mary Simoni
Susan Kress	Gwen Wright

***Excused***

Bridget Ball Shaw	Khadijah Peek
Angela Dixon	Danika Vittorio
Doris Fischer Malesardi	Teresa Zielinski
Martin Mbugua	

***Also Attending***

WMHT Staff: Val Belden, Virginia Claus, Michele Desrosiers, Shantel Destra, Keith Martin, Will Pedigo, Julie Raskin and Allison Valiquette.

WMHT Guest: Bob Mason

***Call to Order***

Ms. Schneider called the meeting to order at 4:05 PM

***Consent Agenda  
Items***

On a motion by Ms. Novotny, seconded by Ms. Jimino, the consent agenda of minutes and notes listed below was unanimously approved by the Board of Trustees.

**Minutes and Notes**

- June 15, 2023 Board Meeting
- June 22, 2023 Audit Committee Meeting
- July 18, 2023 Governance Committee Meeting
- July 20, 2023 Investment Sub-Committee Meeting
- August 7, 2023 Executive Committee Meeting
- August 7, 2023 Community Advisory Board Meeting
- August 24, 2023 Governance Committee Meeting
- September 11, 2023 Executive Committee Meeting
- September 15, 2023 Governance Committee Meeting

- September 14, 2023 Finance Committee Meeting
- September 19, 2023 Onboarding Committee Meeting

***Governance  
Committee***

Ms. Saulnier reported that the Governance Committee is working on a list of candidates to recommend as trustees at the November meeting. The committee has also been reviewing the by-laws to recommend a name change from Development Committee to the Institutional Advancement Committee.

On a motion by Ms. Simoni, seconded by Ms. Groft the proposed change was unanimously accepted by the Board of Trustees.

In keeping with the rules for changes to the by-laws, this recommendation will need to be approved by a majority of trustees present at the next board meeting scheduled in November in order to be finalized.

***Finance and  
Investment Sub-  
Committee Reports***

Mr. Salmon shared that WMHT continues to be in very good financial shape. WMHT ended FY23 having achieved 99% of its revenue goal, with sustainers accounting for 39% of its membership revenue. Net income was conservatively budgeted at \$58,097 and ended up being \$966,076 primarily due to operational saving of more than \$1 million.

For FY24, as of the end of August, membership is at 119% of the budget. We are doing quite well financially and are cautiously optimistic about the future.

On a motion by Ms. Wright, seconded by Ms. Piche, the financial reports were unanimously accepted by the Board of Trustees.

Mr. Salmon noted that the Investment Sub-committee met in July. The WMHT Board Designated Fund was \$11,503,147 as of June 30<sup>th</sup>, and the Investment Sub-Committee confirmed its confidence in Graypoint's management of the fund.

***Development  
Committee***

Ms. Schneider read a report from Doris Fischer Malesardi who was unable to attend the meeting. The report noted the new name of the committee that reflects its mission to advance this institution. Doris referenced the excellent mid-month update report sent out by Virginia Claus updating trustees on fund/friend raising activities. The committee is about to embark on a strategy to bring new energy to the Edison Society, which recognizes and celebrates members at the highest levels of giving. Trustees were thanked for being Ambassadors for the station.

***Onboarding  
Committee***

Mr. Berry noted that the committee just met and had a recap as it plans to sunset this ad-hoc committee at the end of this year. The committee noted the success of the Meet the CEO lunches. The new VP of Marketing and Communications, Michele Desrosiers, discussed the kickoff of the listening tour. A late November lunch is being planned for legislators, in addition to trustees, Edison Society members and stakeholders.

### ***President's Report***

Mr. Hayes gave credit to his team for an exciting and impactful beginning to the fiscal year and acknowledged August was a tremendous month for membership. A video was shared highlighting events from the past couple of months as well as the building refresh initiative. The video will be tweaked a bit before it is presented to the public on broadcast, digital and social media.

Mr. Hayes is placing significant emphasis on creating a positive culture - "culture will eat strategy for lunch." We are in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of our existing strategic plan. Next spring, the process will begin to create a new strategic plan for the next 3 years; a bold vision for the future. Recruitment is happening for a Chief Advancement Officer. An annual impact report is being created and will be available at the November board meeting. Mr. Hayes introduced Michele Desrosiers as the new VP of Marketing and Communications.

### ***Leadership Team Reports***

Ms. Desrosiers shared that the past 10 weeks have been a whirlwind of a learning curve. She is actively recruiting for a digital communications specialist. The listening tour has also been a top priority. The RFP was sent out to 6 vendors, 4 proposals were submitted. Planetarium was selected. Its founder and managing partner, Bob Mason, was present. He explained... we're looking for rigor around the methodology to establish some accountability with quantitative and qualitative work to create an accurate strategy for this market.

Bob Mason presented his company and then outlined the listening tour process - 10 total sessions and a quantitative survey. An aggressive schedule was shared, with the aim being a report to the board during the Annual Meeting.

Mr. Wienk reported that there have been nearly 30 events this summer. WMHT-FM and WEXT were at Music Haven, The Linda, City of Albany, Old Songs, Hillview Farm, Saratoga Lunchtime Concerts, Schoharie Crossing, Rock the Lock, Art in the Park, and several concerts and festivals. He explained the summer events will end this weekend with Opalka Gallery and Fresh Grass Festival.

Beginning in January, WEXT will host a new First Friday Local 518 musician showcase at The Linda and the First Tuesday Sound and Vision music movie series will continue at The Linda.

On February 3<sup>rd</sup> a new piece commissioned by the Friends of Chamber Music will be featured to celebrate WMHT-FM's 50th anniversary.

WMHT-FM hopes to finalize the hire of a new host soon and WEXT is searching for a new midday host. During the summer, there were more than 30 interviews with local and touring musicians. The Latin Alternative Show is looking to 2024 for its

15th anniversary, and cohost Ernesto Lechner just published his 50 Best Latin Rock albums of all time in Rolling Stone. WMHT-FM is also improving its website and adding content.

Mr. Pedigo introduced new multi-media producer, Shantel Destra. Her first piece was on the New York State Fair. She is working on a *New York Now Special* to accompany the acquisition of rights to air a documentary about Willowbrook and Geraldo Rivera's expose of that place 50 years ago. This will air on October 6<sup>th</sup> followed by the new hour-long documentary, *Reframing an Empire*. NY&, our YouTube civics series, just received a *Serving New York* award, from the New York State Broadcasters Association.

New York State projects are wrapping up and the team is exploring opportunities for the future. Will and WMHT will be at a workforce development conference and will participate in a panel discussion in October. The team is also considering a Reimagining the Canal proposal around the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Erie Canal and is evaluating a project with Olana around the 200<sup>th</sup> birthday of Frederick Church in 2026.

The education team has invested in the Public Media Learning platform in a way we have never been able to do before. One piece about invasive species went viral and had more than 13,000 hits in one month from educators.

### ***Chair's Report***

Ms. Schneider has been working with Mr. Hayes on an action plan. She thanked Mr. Berry and other trustees for their guidance and assistance during the onboarding process. She is looking forward to building an Advisory Council to help support Mr. Hayes and provide assistance with a future Capital Campaign. Ms. Schneider also placed emphasis on the need for effective public relations and marketing.

The board retreat will be scheduled after completion of the listening tour. Everyone now has access to the board portal which is beginning to be built out with all the information, and she invited everyone to log in and use it.

### ***Meeting Adjourned***

On a motion by Ms. Piche and seconded by Ms. Wright the board unanimously approved adjourning the meeting at 5:28 pm.