

ILLINOIS VALLEY PUBLIC TELECOMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION

Community Advisory Board (CAB) Meeting

Tuesday, October 28, 2025, 4:00 PM - WTVP Executive Conference Room

MEETING AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Feedback on Recent Programming (CAB Members)
3. Updates on Local Productions (Jenn Gordon)
4. Updates on Future Programming (Jed Klabunde)
5. REMOTE Channel
6. Other Questions/Items
7. Adjourn

MEETING MINUTES

- Jenn Gordon called the meeting to order at 4:07 PM.
- In-person: Henry Blackwell and Brittany Miller
- Via Webex: Lee Maki
- Absent: Jess Hill, Marcia Lough and Carrie Roos.
- Staff Present: Jenn Gordon (CEO), Jed Klabunde (Chief Programming & Operations Officer) and Mark Lasswell (Director of IT / Compliance Officer)

Summary

Building community engagement through local programming, expanding streaming accessibility, and growing membership to sustain station operations amid declining federal funding and changing media consumption habits.

- Station is financially stable compared to other PBS stations nationally
- Strong community response to "We Believe" campaign
- Significant shift toward streaming and smart TV viewing
- Local programming (Docs on Call, You Gotta See This, Vibe 309) central to mission
- Passport membership increase coming March 2025
- Goal of 2,000 new members by June 2025 is ambitious but necessary
- Community feedback essential for programming decisions

Purpose of Advisory Board

- Provide staff with important feedback on programming
- Serve as "ears in the community" and "eyes" monitoring thousands of hours of programming
- Ensure programming meets community needs
- Build transparency about station health and upcoming initiatives

Local Programs - Update

Docs on Call with Mark Welp

- Format: Bimonthly (2nd and 4th week of month)
- Partners: Rotates between OSF, Graham Hospital (Canton), and Carle Hospital
- Topics covered: Breast cancer awareness, ADHD, back-to-school health
- Availability: video.wtvp.org under "Local Shows" or PBS app
- Approach: Mark Welp builds relationships with three medical institutions rather than individual doctors
- Feedback: Impressed with breadth of topics covered

You Gotta See This

- Part of rotating local programming on Thursday nights
- Features local community stories (Dragonboat, Miracle League, Akerman wildlife)
- Available: Full episodes and segmented "fillers" on YouTube and PBS app
- Amy chops episodes into packages for use between dramas

Let's Talk Mental Health

- Format: One-off special (Sunday, 6 PM)
- Goal: Represent various mental health care modalities without advocating for one treatment type
- Participants: Multiple mental health providers from community
- Topics: Anxiety management and treatment options
- Availability: PBS Passport app
- Future: May do 1-2 more shows within next 6 months

Vibe 309

- Air Date: Thursday, November 6th at 8:30 PM (after At Issue)
- Format: Late-night talk show/in-the-field hybrid
- Tone: Characterized by laughter; outside-the-box for PBS
- First Guest: John Morris from the museum
- Segment: Out-of-studio segment with Dozer Bark
- Status: Pilot episode in November; limited 5-episode season starting January
- Funding: Grant received to help fund initial five episodes
- Production Note: Requires significant resources to produce

Streaming & Access Information

PBS Video App

- Name: PBS Video (NOT "PBS Passport" - that's a fake app)
- Availability: Most platforms except LG TVs
- Access: Free for anyone; Passport membership (\$6/month, increasing to \$8/month in March) unlocks additional content
- Localization Issue: App may default to Chicago due to internet routing through Chicago hub
- Solution: Enter zip code to localize to WTVP
- Features: Share episodes via phone to friends; cast to TV from smartphone

Nielsen Data

- Station now purchasing Nielsen data for viewership tracking
- September data available at next meeting
- Accounts for streaming on PBS app, Roku, Xfinity, and other platforms
- Recording window matters: must watch within certain timeframe for data capture

Streaming Platforms

- PBS app (free and Passport)
- Roku
- Amazon (live stream and on-demand)
- Xfinity
- Smart TVs
- YouTube (select content)

Popular Programming & Viewership Data

High-Performing Shows

- Antiques Roadshow: Nearly double viewership compared to other programs
- Lawrence Welk: ~10,000 viewers during pledge drive; popular in retirement homes; nostalgia factor
- Contract extended for two additional years due to strong performance
- Airs once weekly, prime time Saturday
- News Hour: Strong viewership
- Motor Week: Consistent audience
- This Old House: Popular
- Masterpiece Series: Strong following

Other Notable Programs

- Maigret
- Astrid (subtitled; some viewers find reading difficult)
- Gold (features Downton Abbey actor)
- Treasure

Viewer Feedback

- Viewers often only call with complaints; positive feedback is rare
- Requests for show returns (e.g., Call the Midwife back on Passport)
- Calls requesting new episodes of deceased performers (Bob Ross, Lawrence Welk)

November Programming Highlights

Veterans Day Programming

- Stories about Philippines fighting in WWII
- Vietnam War and Laos conflict coverage
- Personal stories about fathers' WWII journeys
- Iwo Jima special
- U.S. Army Field Band musical special
- World War I music tribute
- Iraq War story
- Breaking the Enigma: Story of breaking Nazi code machine

American Revolution Series

- Ken Burns' new 6-part series
- Air Dates: November 16-21 (back-to-back nightly)
- Pledge Re-airing: Episodes 1-2 first Saturday; 3-4 Sunday; 5-6 next Saturday (daytime)

Pledge Programming

- Andre Rieu: Orchestral music
- Air Supply 50th Anniversary
- I Wanna Be in the 80s Tour Live: 80s bands performing hits
- Made with Love: New series about craftspeople (France focus)

December Programming

Hanukkah Special

- Air Date: Sunday, December 14th (first night of Hanukkah)
- Significance: First new Hanukkah special from PBS; addresses lack of Jewish cultural programming (previously only Holocaust content)
- Content: Family traditions, favorite recipes, celebration methods
- Additional Jewish Programming: Family recipes special, Barber Strides

Christmas Programming

- Tabernacle Choir (large orchestra and choir)
- Nutcracker (English National Ballet production)
- Call the Midwife Christmas Special (date cannot be announced per PBS)

- Multiple choir specials (Purdue, St. Olaf, etc.)
- Theater of the Mind: Two holiday specials (old-fashioned radio show format)
- Holiday Storybook
- Christmas Carol
- George Parris (Greek crooner, Frank Sinatra style)
- Holiday Handbells with ringers

Post-Christmas Programming

- Kwanzaa Special: Cultural history and natural progression of celebration
- New Year's Eve Special
- Crossroads of the Nation: Missouri: History from Civil War onward; Missouri's unique slavery/Civil War position
- Lawrence Welk History: Family background (Ukrainian heritage, German settlement in North Dakota)
- Hollywood in Utah: Western films and movies shot in Utah
- Courtmaker: About John Marshall and Supreme Court powers (2-hour special)
- Quanta Special: Cultural history of Quanta (APT production)

Halloween Programming

- Theater of the Mind Halloween specials
- Frankenstein, Dracula, Werewolf of the Bayou
- Brain Readers from Outer Space (available on video app)

Membership & Fundraising

"We Believe" Campaign Success

- Launched: July
- Goal 1 - \$300,000 Matching Grant: Reached before end of October (exceeded expectations)
- For general public donations above last year or new donations
- Fills million-dollar gap in federal funding
- Goal 2 - \$200,000 Matching Grant: Originally for board members; now opened to public by anonymous funder
- Open through June or until met
- New Members: Hit 1,000 new members since July
- Goal: 2,000 new members by end of June
- Significant achievement compared to typical retention focus

Passport Membership Changes

- Current Level: \$6/month (\$60/year)
- New Level (March 2025): \$8/month
- Unchanged since rollout (10+ years)

- PBS-driven decision; station cannot change this
- Messaging Strategy: Soft messaging in January/February before March membership drive

Financial Context

- PBS dues: ~\$700,000/year (temporarily reduced this year)
- Federal funding covers basic programming only
- Community support essential for local programming, staff, and operations
- Some stations closing; one Illinois station left PBS due to funding inability

First Dues Payment

- Due next month

Streaming & Viewership Strategy

Current Focus

- Converting existing viewers into members
- Building presence on streaming platforms (Roku, Amazon, Xfinity, smart TVs)
- Targeting broadband internet-based viewers as future funding base
- Average screen time remains high despite cord-cutting

PBS Learning Media

- Online archive of sortable videos by grade and topic
- Aligns with Illinois state standards
- 4-12 minute average video length
- Free resource for teachers
- Accessible through station homepage

Remote Programming

- Ending: October 31st (Friday last night)
- Final Program: History of Zombies
- Duration: 5 years
- Purpose: Filled gap during pandemic; supported homeschooling and classroom needs
- Equipment: Available for revival if needed (e.g., future pandemic)
- Reason for Closure: Low engagement; same programming repeated; schools now have remote capabilities

High School Choral Showcase

- Second Annual Event
- Format: A cappella performances (low production lift)
- Benefit: Builds connectivity with parents and high school students
- Viewership: Nielsen data showed significant numbers for this time slot
- Airing: Pledge initially, then scattered throughout December
- Reason for Format: Magical sound quality; low equipment/mixing requirements compared to full band

Community Advisory Board Role

Responsibilities

- Watch and provide feedback on local shows
- Solicit feedback from friends and neighbors
- Share programming with community
- Engage on social media (like, share, post)
- Help station understand community needs

Social Media

- Search "WTVP" on Facebook, Instagram, etc.
- Like to see in news feed (optional)
- Share content without liking
- Recent posts: Finding Your Roots with Lawrence Fishburn, Kissinger documentary

The meeting was adjourned at 5:07 p.m.

Minutes submitted by:

Mark Lasswell

WTVP Director of IT / Compliance Officer

Next Meeting: Tuesday, January 27, 2026 at 4pm