

Marfa Public Radio Corp. Board Meeting Minutes
Friday, May 19, 2017 | 12 PM
Midland Shared Spaces

Board in attendance: Jim Byerlotzer, Ginger Griffice, Royce Mitchell, Lee Anna Good, Bill Dingus, Liz Rogers (phone), Cory Van Dyke (phone)
Other in attendance: Elise Pepple, Sara Melancon, Bayla Metzger, Patsy Culver
Not present:

The first point of order was the last minutes of board of directors meeting in February. Jim noted corrected minutes to reflect CPB funding as 25-30% of budget instead of 40%, Royce moved. Liz seconded.

Second, Patsy brought up note 5 on commitments reflecting \$12,000 in utilities regarding the Alpine tower that will more than likely be paid; she accrued for that. Notes payable were less complicated. No major notes except commitment contingencies. Kirkpatrick grant was for Studio C and was restricted to that use, so she made a note as to that restriction. Patsy has not finished the management letter, but has always disclosed about segregation of duties. She would like to add a conflict of interest form for board and staff. Longer term, a stronger compliant program should be implemented. Jim asked if Patsy has received copy of policies and procedures from Verdicos and she had not. Staff agreed to forward those to her. Royce - Positive items in those recommendations particularly to cash receipts and disbursements. Royce wants Patsy to be aware and to make sure we are in compliance. Next the discussion moved to the financials. First quarter had positive cash flow, but only because of receipt of CPB funds. In regards to income, MPR was behind. At that point, MPR had taken in a little over 100K in underwriting, memberships, and grants. That was offset by under-spending in various categories. If CPB was allocated over the period, we would still be behind. It was expressed that hopefully revenue would pick up in the second quarter. Nothing else of note. Bill moved to accept, Ginger seconded. All were in favor.

Elise then gave a presentation to the board, beginning with (intern) Zoe's letter to the board. Elise talked about the intern applications the station received: over 30 applicants with many qualified candidates. She presented 2 objectives: observing and understanding to create systems and widening the range. She spoke about the paid internships, the Independent Producer Fund, and showed some specific examples. Elise also spoke to the Residency Program and how it creates content and mentorship to the station and provide community outreach, then spoke about the live storytelling program. The station started prioritizing how the Permian Basin is covered. Then, she spoke about the walking tour that began during Marfa Myths and how that is an extra source of income.

Next, Elise spoke about the membership drive and the amount of work and organization that goes into the back end. Patsy spoke about the challenges of record-keeping. Elise said the driveway moments were celebratory of MPR's sense of place. Jim said the station needed a better system for processes and procedures. Lee Anna said there should be a better push to tap the Basin. Looking forward, it was decided there would be a kick-off event during Chinati weekend, and the next drive would be 10/9 to 10/16.

Elise then moved to talking about staffing and the holes that were created recently and how they were filled. She hired a new Morning Edition host and contracted 2 people to take on grant writing and underwriting, as well as events and a development calendar. Other staff who stepped up were handling volunteer coordination, and coordinating West Texas Talks. Elise explained how thematically and geographically, the talks are much more diverse. Lee Anna expressed a like for the Writing Center interviews on West Texas Talk. Bill recommended that there be a backlog of ideas and that all board members contribute ideas for talks.

Finally, Elise discussed the staff retreat and how it was a chance to meet and address challenges and talk about what works. Elise specifically discussed the challenges of people working on different computers. Jim and Royce discussed speaking with companies who might be able to help, Cory offered some names of people in Marfa who are tech-savvy and might be able to help. Elise moved on to present the take-aways, goals, and priorities from the retreat. Then the board discussed the difference between KXWT and KRTS and how programming may be more alike in the future. Elise also shared a comment from the Think Tank from the director of Transom. Her two priorities are clarifying what roles are on every level and creating a strategic plan after reaching out to West Texans and orienting staff and board to how we function in our communities. Lee Anna offered the JBS Leadership Center as a resource, and said the smaller events the station holds need to be planned further in advance. Ginger asked what outreach looks like? Elise said a multi-platform strategy would be best where MPR listens to people in person, as well as use a questionnaire and online survey that is shared with listeners and members via email and cross promoted on social media.

Jim reviewed the dashboard and asked if anyone watched the social media and said it should be prioritized. He also emphasized with the lack of percentages for on-air time that the station's number one priority is being on air at all times. Cory asked if there was any movement on putting a tower on top of the station. Jim said the board was waiting on numbers from Neil Chavigny.

It was next discussed that Bill, Lee Anna, and Ginger were up for renewal. Liz moved to renew their terms, and Cory seconded. All were in favor.

Steph Steele, Al Davis, and Woody Leverett were proposed as new board members. Ginger moved to accept them and Bill seconded. All were in favor.

Lastly, the Alpine tower issue was discussed. Martin wants more money for rent and Big Bend Telephone has a tower in Alpine that has more than what MPR needs. Solutions proposed were: MPR rent space from Big Bend Telephone, MPR would rent from them and tower trade, or MPR would give BBT free underwriting for space on their Alpine tower. MPR has an FCC permit for the Presidio tower, and decisions need to be made said Jim. The first option is a lower wattage station, or to have a long term vision for a 900 watt station where MPR would broadcast into Mexico. The board asked Neil to secure two bids, low 30-40K, high side 60-70K for adding an antenna to an existing tower and installing all necessary equipment. MPR could also talk to the West Texas Development Plan person about providing services to Presidio and getting some funding from them.

Before executive session, the board discussed the summer board meeting. Bill asked that Elise use a Doodle poll for deciding the date of the next meeting. For the strategic planning meeting, board and staff will wait until Winter.

Executive session commenced at 1:35 PM.