

**Louisville Public Media Board of Directors**  
**Tuesday, March 24, 2020**  
**3:30 p.m.**

*This meeting was held via conference call due to COVID-19 social distancing requirements. Dial-In Number: (712) 770-4698 with Access Code: 893273.*

Board Members Attending: Eric Carrig, Tyler Allen, Abby Shue, Ann Coffey, Todd Lowe, Gail Becker, Ellen Call, Linda Ewald, Ankur Gopal, Brenda Hart, John La Barbera, Heather McHold, Holly Weyler McKnight, Susan Moss, Keith Runyon, Wendy Sirchio

Board Members Absent: Andrew Simon, Dr. Nat Irvin, Jose Donis

Staff Attending: Denny Stovall, Ellen Oost, Gray Smith, Stephen George

Members of Public Attending: Rod N, Cynthia Matthews

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- I. Roll Call – Ellen Oost
  - II. Call to Order at 3:34 pm – Eric Carrig
    - A. Vote to approve January Meeting Minutes - a motion was made by Gail, seconded by Heather, all voted in favor.
  - III. Highlights and Questions Regarding Financial Statements – Abby Shue
    - A. We were in a strong financial position going into the pandemic and are trying to better understand what the next few weeks or months will hold.
    - B. Abby put forth a recommendation from the Finance Committee on a revised investment policy that would allow up to 10% to be invested in non-US securities. After a brief discussion, Gail moved to approve the revision. Her motion was seconded by Eric, and all voted in favor.
  - IV. Diversity, Inclusion and Community Engagement Committee – Tyler Allen
    - A. The committee proposes a Board DEI session with the contracted consultant that has been working with the staff, for May 19, 2020, from 9 am – 1 pm. The hope is that we'll be able to meet in person, but a virtual option will be planned for in case we cannot all be together.
    - B. The staff will have their first virtual session next week and Stephen will report back on how it goes.
  - V. Response to COVID-19 crisis – Stephen George
    - A. We were prepared to respond and the state of mind is generally positive among staff. Communication and workflows have been good and business operations have not been interrupted in any significant way.
    - B. Several policies and procedures have been enacted:
      - i. The majority of employees have been working remotely since close of business on March 12, 2020. There is a skeleton crew of broadcast employees still going into the building at staggered times.

- ii. Employees and contractors who can't do their jobs remotely and who LPM can't accommodate are still being paid and don't have to use PTO or vacation. That policy has so far only applied partially to one employee.
  - iii. We are temporarily waiving our vacation carryover policy as many staff have had to cancel travel plans.
- C. A chain of command/continuity plan has been fully articulated among the leadership team. In addition, Stephen and the Kentucky Broadcasters Association have been in touch with Governor Beshear to ensure we're categorized as an essential service in the event of a lockdown.
- D. Stephen opened up the discussion for questions:
  - i. Susan complimented Stephen's leadership during this process - the proactivity, care for staff, the ability to keep operations going smoothly. Stephen then complimented the leadership team for finding ways to continue services without interruption.
  - ii. Wendy echoed Susan's compliments, and the amazing work of WFPL live blog and calm, well-delivered news.
- E. Stephen then continued with a state of play discussion:
  - i. Content:
    - 1. Our work is more essential than ever, and the audience response shows that - we have seen three times more audience on WFPL than typical.
    - 2. We have added new news products (expanded newsletter, live blog, expansion of *In Conversation*) and added weekly Mental Health Wednesdays on WFPK. We have a new show debuting Friday on WUOL and Facebook Live hosted by Daniel and Teddy Abrams from the Louisville Orchestra.
  - ii. Major donors:
    - 1. Stephen and Ellen have contacted more than fifty major donors over the last week to check on them and let them know what we're doing to continue our services. The resounding message they had for us was that they have our back.
    - 2. We expect the majority of outstanding pledges to be fulfilled and are still on target and working on raising final funding to meet our end of year goal, but it may prove to be more of a challenge as the economy changes — it's too early to say right now.
    - 3. We plan to continue with frequent contact/stewardship for current donors and will focus on renewing top spring prospects and assessing the environment for new asks as this situation continues.
  - iii. Membership:
    - 1. We are doing a much heavier digital push — via emails, website popups, digital marketing (we are being less invasive on-air than we would during a drive, a bit more invasive online than usual). Last week we raised more than \$25,000 online, mostly via email, Facebook and web pop-ups. The team continues to experiment with ways and messages to

fundraise during this crisis as a way to make up for the postponed Spring Membership Drive and fund the important work we're doing. Goal is to raise more each week than a "normal" non-drive week so that we can make a dent in our membership deficit caused by a postponed drive.

2. Sustainer cancellations came in about two times more than normal, and were all for financial reasons. At this pace we would take a 2% hit over the next eight weeks. We are tracking this carefully and have a plan to follow up with cancelled/suspended sustainers in the months after this settles down with a special renew appeal.
3. The team will continue to explore options for an on-air drive of some kind before the fiscal year-end. In the meantime, we're focusing on retention, additional gifts, finding new supporters in our new audience, and positioning ourselves as an essential service right now (and one worth supporting now more than ever).

iv. Underwriting:

1. So far we've seen about \$50,000 in cancellations for the rest of fiscal year, and new business has come to a halt.
2. Our team is working with existing clients to retain business and is offering incentives where possible and looking at repurposing avails.
3. The team will continue to follow developments to pursue new or enhanced business — new hirings, brand polishing, etc. during this time

v. Expenses:

1. We have instituted a hiring freeze and hope to garner some savings from holding two open positions until we learn more about the effects of the crisis on our financial position.
2. We are reducing contract labor, technology and building costs, as well as other business expenses, where it makes sense.
3. There are also some inherent savings since events and travel have been cancelled.

F. Financial contingency planning:

- i. Our strategic plan gives us a strong architecture for decision-making in tough times. We know what is core to our mission and will operate accordingly.
- ii. We don't yet know how this situation will unfold, so we are looking at a range of revenue scenarios. A worst-case scenario assumes what we've seen for the past ten days continues at the same pace. In that case, we would have to make more drastic changes to control costs.
- iv. Cash is in a good place through May, so we have time to evaluate our options.

G. Stephen opened up the conversation to the Board for comments:

- i. Gail mentioned that many people are relying on us right now and we have a large donor base, which should help us to weather this crisis as it has in previous crises. But there are so many needs arising in the community and nationwide, so there will be lots of competition for revenue. She complimented our messaging and subtle insertion of need at this time - that is important to continue. She is

concerned that our projections may be a bit too optimistic, but we should watch what happens in the fourth quarter and we'll know more soon.

- ii. Keith echoed Gail's sentiments, calling this a "golden moment for public broadcasting." This is going to be a really hard time for print newspapers and alt weeklies and people who have already cut staff and resources. It will be tough for us in the coming weeks, but in the long run we will have important impact to point to during this time.
- iii. Eric asked for other examples of what Board members are hearing and reading, about the effects of this crisis on other local organizations, and a general discussion ensued.

H. Stephen then shared how the Board can help:

- i. Need to continue articulating our essential service in an environment where many others are doing the same
- ii. Assisting with asks of all sizes, including:
  - 1. Facebook fundraisers
  - 2. Email your networks
  - 3. Let us know if there is someone you would like to introduce to us now, virtually or via a conference call so that we can continue sharing our work with more people and cultivating future donors.
- vi. Underwriting opportunities

VI. Board Discussion Regarding Financial Planning and How We Can Help - Eric Carrig

- A. Gail suggested we increase the number of asks on air as live reads, they are subtle and tasteful and she suggested being very consistent and to keep repeating the message of service and need.
- B. Susan reminded us that all messaging has to be sensitive to what people are going through. People worried about losing their jobs and not getting tested, dying even
- C. Heather suggested that we keep the Board apprised of fresh messaging to share.
- D. Stephen thanked everyone for the open conversation and mentioned that we'd follow up with specifics on ways to help.

VII. Eric closed by saying he feels fortunate to be part of what is an essential service at this time and to lead a Board that is so passionate about our success. He spoke on behalf of the Board to say they will do what they can to support Stephen and his team at this time. He then reminded everyone to stay healthy and safe.

- A. At 4:25 pm Ann moved to adjourn the meeting and Gail seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the meeting concluded.