

Notes from WPFW Community Advisory Board (CAB) Meeting

7:00 PM, 19 March 2012, at WPFW, 2390 Champlain St. NW 2nd Floor, Washington, DC 20009

Participants:

CAB members:

Alvernon Garey, Hyattsville, MD
Carolyn Brown, Forestville, MD
Charles Turner, Washington, DC
David Vega, Takoma Park, MD
Gloria Turner, Fort Washington, MD
Ron Benjamin, Greenbelt, MD

WPFW staff members:

John Hughes, General Manager
Wylie Rollins, interim Program Director

Guests:

Eric Ramey, Washington, DC
Pete Tucker, Washington, DC
Tony Norman, Washington, DC

Notes:

1. Ms. Brown, noting that a quorum was present, called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.
2. The CAB members discussed and approved the meeting agenda (Attachment 1).
3. Mr. Vega, Mr. Turner, and Ms. Brown were nominated for CAB chair. Mr. Vega declined. Mr. Turner and Ms. Brown gave short statements in support of their candidacies. The members voted, resulting in a 3-3 tie. At Mr. Hughes' suggestion, the members decided to table the election until the next meeting. Ms. Brown said that she would contact missing members, urging them to attend the meeting.
4. Ms. Brown recommended that WPFW solicit additional CAB members, via an appropriate Public Service Announcement. The members concurred. Mr. Benjamin pointed out that the CAB had discussed adding a member during 2011, and had decided not to do it. Ms. Brown volunteered to draft an amendment to Article II of the Bylaws and provide it to the members at least 10 days before the next meeting, as required by Article V of the Bylaws.
5. The members discussed and approved the notes from the 23 January 2012 meeting (Attachment 2).
6. Mr. Hughes reported that:
 - Relocation: The station is continuing to look at multiple candidate locations. As announced at the January Local Station Board (LSB) meeting, Pacifica received a draft proposal from the University of the District of Columbia (UDC). The LSB's Relocation Committee reviewed the proposal, and is preparing a response. The relationship specified in the draft proposal is strictly landlord / tenant. The Relocation Committee is considering counter proposing an alliance /

partnership relationship, formally recognizing the opportunities that WPFW offers to UDC and its students. The recognition may result in a corresponding rent reduction.

- Strategic Plan: An initial Strategic Plan is being drafted by the staff. There will be an internal (staff only) meeting on the topic on March 29. The draft is based on the previously specified elements of challenges, resources, and desired future.
- Fund Drive: The recently completed March fund drive made \$316,583, exceeding the \$300,000 goal. A one-week extension, during which pitching was done only during *Democracy Now* and on Saturday, was used. The drive highlighted the strength of the station's Saturday programming. Andrea Bray's show, for example, had a goal of \$3,000 on the first Saturday but brought in \$11,000. The programmers, staff, and volunteers are all commended for their contributions to the success of the drive.
- Finances: The station needs money:
 - For the move,
 - To purchase the new equipment accompanying the move,
 - To maintain the existing equipment, and
 - To bring the staff members who are currently at ¾ time to full time, as soon as possible.
- Fête de la WPFW: The event at the French Embassy was a high point, a tremendous success. Thanks are extended to the attendees, and to the people who made the Fête happen, including the pledge team (which has been functioning as the event planning team) and Katea Stitt. The Fête raised \$49,986 plus additional from the bar (which is still being computed). Ticket sales to the Fête were cut off at 750.

Ms. Brown said that she enjoyed the Fête, particularly seeing other phone bank volunteers. She said that she arrived early, and was able to park close to the Embassy. Mr. Hughes acknowledged that parking was an issue, but acceptable given that it was free street parking. Ms. Brown said that the parking problem was minor considering that WPFW got the use of the venue for free. Mr. Hughes concurred, noting that the Embassy is a prestigious location. He added that WPFW will need more special fundraising events in the future, to take some of the pressure off of fund drives. He asked the CAB members to propose ideas.

Mr. Vega said that it was his understanding that WPFW wanted to buy, not lease, a building. Mr. Hughes said that buying a building is a dream predating his arrival. While the station would not turn down a building (e.g. a vacant school) if somebody gave it to them, the cost of building out an old building (installing heating, ventilation, air conditioning, and information technology infrastructure systems suitable for the station and its equipment), and of bringing it up to code, is beyond the station's means.

Mr. Turner asked if the station can get a rent reduction in exchange for its partnership activities with UDC. Mr. Hughes said that he hopes so; the station will offer internships and mentorships to UDC students and community residents. The proposed location is on UDC's main campus. That is advantageous, because the station will have access to UDC's facilities, including the auditorium, for lectures, workshops, meetings, and other events.

Mr. Vega asked about the obstacles to reaching an agreement with UDC. Mr. Hughes said that the primary obstacle is the current negotiations. Mr. Vega asked about move schedule risk; Mr. Hughes replied that the process is already behind schedule. In response to a question from Mr. Turner, Mr. Hughes said that UDC is not imposing a deadline for signing an agreement with WPFW.

7. Mr. Benjamin said that at the last meeting all concerned had agreed that the station's programming goals are stated in the Pacifica and WPFW mission statements. According to its Bylaws, the CAB is required to evaluate the station's progress toward those programming goals. He asked Mr. Rollins if there is any data available describing the extent to which current programming complies with the goals. Mr. Rollins said that there isn't.

Ms. Brown recommended that the CAB construct a suitable program evaluation instrument, and contribute to LSB Outreach and Development (O&D) Committee events. Mr. Hughes noted that feedback obtained during Town Hall meetings can be used to ascertain the community impact of programs. Mr. Rollins added that the quarterly Program Issues Reports that the station submits to the Federal Communications Commission may also be useful.

Mr. Garey asked how CAB work on programming evaluation could be coordinated with the LSB. Mr. Norman replied that the LSB is considering modifying the LSB page on WPFW's Web site to allow community input. Mr. Hughes said that the staff wants feedback from both the CAB and the community regarding programming. Mr. Norman also asked the CAB to help out during Town Hall meetings. In response to a question from Ms. Brown, he said that the O&D Committee has tentatively planned a Town Hall meeting for Spring.

8. Mr. Benjamin said that his understanding is that Mr. Redd is out of town for an extended period on family matters. Ms. Brown volunteered to collect comments on the draft community survey in Mr. Redd's absence.
9. Mr. Benjamin, noting the success of a previous effort in which programmers called selected high dollar value contributors to thank them for their membership, proposed that during 2012 the CAB members call all current WPFW members, to:

- Thank them for their membership,
- Advise them of the existence of the CAB, and
- Invite them to participate in CAB meetings and to submit issues and concerns to the CAB.

Mr. Hughes, noting the large number of WPFW members and the small number of CAB members, asked about the logistics associated with such an effort. Ms. Brown commented that the 2012 CAB plans need to be realistic. Mr. Hughes recommended that the CAB plans focus on contributing to special events. Ms. Brown reviewed the draft list of events created by the O&D Committee in January, and promised to email it to the CAB members.

Mr. Vega said that he hopes to:

- Have a dinner party for people, including Mr. Hughes, who attended his previous, highly successful, house party. He will give attendees CDs, extras drawn from his collection, as thank you gifts.
- Have a repeat house party, probably in October.

Mr. Hughes endorsed Mr. Vega's plans.

10. Ms. Brown said that she received a voice message from Tiffany Jordan, asking for CAB members to support WPFW participation in "Cone Day" at the Ben & Jerry's in Fairfax Center, 12 noon – 8 PM on Tuesday, April 3. The event is expected to draw 1500 to 6000 people.
11. Ms. Brown opened the meeting to comments from guests.
 - Mr. Ramey:
 - Said that he endorses Mr. Benjamin's suggestion of contacting WPFW members, and believes that it could be done realistically using email rather than phone calls.

- Said that the Cafritz Foundation or a similar organization may be willing to provide a grant for building out a donated building.
 - Said that relocation at UDC is “a train crash waiting to happen”; UDC will attempt to influence the station’s policies and programming. Mr. Hughes assured Mr. Ramey that his concern is not new, and that UDC will have no input to WPFW governance (the LSB, CAB, the Pacifica National Board, the broadcasting license). The agreement with UDC is for residency only, similar to the current agreement with the City Paper. Mr. Ramey responded that the danger is greater with UDC than with City Paper, because UDC is publicly funded and therefore easily subjected to political and financial pressures. Mr. Hughes said that the counteroffer to UDC has been made, but that firewalls and other provisions as necessary to protect the license will be part of the final agreement.
 - Asked if the station still accepts corporate matching contributions. Mr. Hughes said that it does.
- Mr. Norman:
 - Asked the CAB to notify the LSB if there is anything that they can do to assist.
 - Said that he wasn’t aware of some of the O&D Committee events that Ms. Brown had mentioned. Ms. Turner said that the events were still under review.
12. Mr. Hughes noted that the rebuilt Howard Theatre is about to open. He said that WPFW staff has met with the Theatre’s community engagement committee, and that the station will consider partnering with the Theatre.
 13. Ms. Turner said that the station’s remote capabilities had been used successfully during fund drives in the past. Mr. Hughes said that the station still has the capability to do remotes, but that each such event comes with a (financial) price.
 14. The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 PM.

March 2012 Meeting of the WFW Community Advisory Board
Agenda

1. Adoption of agenda
2. Election of officers
 - a. Chair
 - b. Vice chair
 - c. Secretary
3. Adoption of notes from previous meeting
4. General manager comments
5. Old business
 - a. Evaluation of station progress toward the programming goals
 - b. Significant policy decisions made by the station
 - c. Assessment of the community impact of the significant policy decisions
 - d. Community survey status
6. New business
 - a. CAB plans for 2012
7. Listener comments
 - a. New comments – written
 - b. New comments – from guests
8. Set date for next meeting (nominal date: Monday, May 21, 2012)
9. Adjourn

Notes from WPFW Community Advisory Board (CAB) Meeting

7:00 PM, 23 January 2012, at WPFW, 2390 Champlain St. NW 2nd Floor, Washington, DC 20009

Participants:

CAB members:

Alvernon Garey, Hyattsville, MD
David Vega, Takoma Park, MD
Gloria Turner, Fort Washington, MD
Perry Redd, Washington, DC
Ron Benjamin, Greenbelt, MD

WPFW staff members:

John Hughes, General Manager
Sataria Joyner, Development Assistant
Wylie Rollins, interim Program Director

Guests:

Tony Norman, Washington, DC
Pete Tucker, Washington, DC
Louis Wolf, Washington, DC

Notes:

1. Mr. Vega presided in the absence of Ms. Brown. Noting that a quorum was present, he called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.
2. The CAB members discussed, revised, and approved the meeting agenda (Attachment 1).
3. The members discussed and approved CAB Resolution 2012-001, **Community Advisory Board Members** (Attachment 2).
4. The members decided to postpone the election of the 2012 CAB officers until the next meeting.
5. The members discussed, revised, and approved the notes from the 21 November 2011 meeting (Attachment 3).
6. Mr. Hughes distributed his report (Attachment 4). He said that he would not go over the report in detail, in order to provide as much time as possible to Mr. Rollins. He said that:
 - The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) requires each station to have a CAB in order to qualify for CPB Community Service Grants. CPB used to require stations to conduct community ascertainment studies. The studies are no longer required, since the CAB represents the community.
 - One of his key activities has been working on the Strategic Plan in conjunction with the chair of the Local Station Board (LSB). The starting point has been the “conversation starters” (financial, partnerships, resource and delivery, content, internal environment, and marketing) that he provided previously. The CAB is an essential contributor to the development of the Strategic Plan, and is requested to participate in the process.

- Mr. Benjamin noted that the station had expected a relocation proposal from the University of the District of Columbia (UDC) in December, and asked about the move status. Mr. Hughes replied that the UDC proposal has not been received yet, because UDC's in-house counsel resigned and the University is still making arrangements to have the proposal reviewed by outside counsel. Mr. Redd asked when the "alarm date" for receiving the proposal is. Mr. Hughes said that the move schedule has been relaxed somewhat, because WPFW has been notified that it will be offered a lease extension to at least the end of 2012, and possibly beyond. *[Editor's note: The lease was previously scheduled to end on July 15, 2012.]* Mr. Redd asked if UDC is the only move option. Mr. Hughes replied that UDC is the only location currently being considered. Mr. Benjamin recommended that move status information be posted on the WPFW Web site. Mr. Hughes said that that could be done, after there is something to post.
7. Mr. Rollins led the discussion of WPFW programming goals.
- Mr. Rollins noted that the station recently began receiving Arbitron data via the Radio Research Consortium (RRC). The data revealed that:
 - The majority of the station's listeners live in Maryland. Roughly one third of the listeners live in Prince George's County; one quarter live in Montgomery County; and less than one quarter live in the District of Columbia.
 - Four out of five listeners are at least 45 years old.
 - Three quarters of the listeners are African American.
 - Mr. Rollins said that the programming goals are as stated in the WPFW Mission Statement.
 - Mr. Redd noted that the CAB had discussed programming goals before, and asked Mr. Rollins what his vision for the station is. Mr. Rollins replied that his vision is in alignment with the Mission Statement, and that he would like to improve the listenership; WPFW has only one quarter to one third the listenership of WAMU and WETA.
 - Mr. Redd asked how the improvement will be accomplished, noting that the Web site improvement has worked well, and that donating by text may be valuable. Mr. Vega asked how the CAB could contribute to the improvement. Mr. Rollins said that the variety of programming that WPFW offers is both a blessing and a curse. It requires a checkerboard schedule, which confuses listeners. WAMU, in contrast, is an information-only station. Mr. Hughes noted that:
 - WPFW serves the ninth largest radio market in the country; there are more than 5,000,000 listeners.
 - WAMU is information-only, which produces a consistent schedule.
 - Jazz is the most difficult radio format to program.
 - WPFW's jazz and public affairs audiences compete with each other.
 - Jazz is not the station's most popular format. The station's peak listenership is on Saturday, for the consistent strip of blues and oldies programs. The second most popular day is Sunday, when there is a consistent stream of jazz that begins with Lona Alias' program and continues through Jim Byers' show.
 - The station needs to improve its Time Spent Listening (TSL).
 - Mr. Rollins noted that the WPFW TSL is about 2 ^{hours}/_{week}; WETA and WAMU's TSL is about 4 ^{hours}/_{week}. He said that he would like to improve the WPFW grid (programming schedule), mostly by strengthening existing programs. He may move some programs around. Improvement

is difficult because the station uses a plethora of volunteer programmers rather than a few paid staff.

- Mr. Hughes said that Pacifica national has challenged the stations to improve both programming and fundraising. The Pacifica mission statement informs, but does not exclusively govern, programming. WPFW is required to serve the community, which is interested in healthcare and education issues, and other issues that the CAB can help identify.
 - Mr. Garey said that younger listeners are familiar with WPFW only if their parents listen to the station. Mr. Hughes said that the strip of hip-hop shows is good, but that the allotted time is too short to attract young listeners.
 - Mr. Benjamin noted that WPFW used to have a completely checkerboard schedule. A previous general manager introduced the weekday and weekend strip concept that the station currently uses.
 - Mr. Redd said that listeners are attracted by both content and personalities, such as Rush Limbaugh and Ambrose Lane. Mr. Hughes said that the best situation is to create a buzz, programming that surprises and delights listeners. Mr. Rollins said that the station has some strong non-Saturday programmers, for example Nightwolf and Robyn Holden.
 - Mr. Redd asked if Arbitron data is the only programming tool. Mr. Hughes responded that Arbitron is just one tool, especially because the station needs to program in accordance with its mission statement, and with its (future) strategic plan.
 - Mr. Rollins said that:
 - There have been some good special programs recently, e.g. Askia's comments after the State of the Union speech and the coverage of the Tavis Smiley event.
 - There will be a programmers' meeting on Saturday. It will include a presentation on the RRC data.
 - There will be some special programs during the upcoming fund drive.
 - Given programmer sensitivities, programming changes will have to be gradual.
 - The hate and uncertainty that he was initially met with is beginning to wane.
8. Mr. Vega said that friends and associates have asked him about the Program Director (PD) selection process, and that, despite his position on the CAB, he wasn't able to answer; it appears that Mr. Rollins was hired based on some unidentified person's fiat. Mr. Hughes responded that he hired Mr. Rollins to fill the interim PD position because it needed to be filled. He explained that, in accordance with the Pacifica Bylaws, the LSB had conducted a search for the permanent PD and forwarded the names of selected candidates to him; and that he had rejected all of those candidates. Mr. Norman, who is chair of the LSB, said that the LSB's Management Assessment and Search Committee may be authorized to re-open the PD search in February or March. Mr. Redd recommended that the situation be explained on air. Mr. Benjamin said that it appeared that Mr. Hughes' rejection of Bob Daughtry's candidacy for the PD position was based on a threat from Pacifica's Executive Director. Mr. Hughes said that the Executive Director had nothing to do with the PD selection decision. Mr. Rollins said that some of the current complaints are based on disappointment with the PD selection decision, and that we now need to move forward in a less poisonous atmosphere. Ms. Turner noted that this is the first time there has been this sort of dissension in the station, which has had numerous management changes over the course of its history. Mr. Hughes noted that rumors stoke distrust.
9. Mr. Vega offered the guests the opportunity to speak.
- Mr. Wolf said that:

- He is a long-time listener, and particularly loves jazz and blues.
 - WPFW should not be compared with WETA and WAMU. The stations differ not only in programming, but also in their acceptance of corporate underwriting.
 - He is offering back issues of *Covert Action*, a magazine that he published from 1978 to 2005, to the station as a fund drive thank you gift.
 - Mr. Tucker thanked the CAB.
 - Mr. Norman noted that the CAB and LSB have common interests, and should coordinate.
10. Mr. Vega said that communications need to be improved, so that CAB members will be able to answer questions posed by friends and associates. He asked Mr. Hughes to address personnel issues in his reports. Mr. Hughes said that he would do so, to the extent that he legally can, and that he would lead off by mentioning that Robert West, an 8-year WPFW staff member, resigned to take another position. Ms. Turner said that general managers and PDs are selected in accordance with processes stated in the Pacifica Bylaws, and that CAB members should attend LSB meetings in order to understand the processes. Mr. Vega responded that he had researched the PD selection process in the Bylaws, but that listeners will not do the same. Ms. Turner recommended that CAB members become familiar with the LSB.
11. Mr. Redd handed out copies of the current state of the listener survey (Attachment 5). He explained that it is designed to accomplish two things:
- Supplement Arbitron data with “knowledge from the street”.
 - Advertise the station’s existence.
- He thanked Mr. Benjamin and Ms. Arnwine for their comments on the previous draft, and asked that comments on this version be sent to him at PerryRedd@ymail.com. Mr. Hughes said that the survey is great, will be a useful tool, and that the final version should be put on the Web site.
12. A motion to adjourn pending the next meeting on March 19 was made, seconded, and passed. The meeting was adjourned at 9:07 PM.