

MINUTES OF THE WLRN

COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD (CAB) MEETING

May 14, 2009

CALL TO ORDER: James Swain, the Chair of the CAB, called the meeting to order at 12:10 PM.

CAB Members, WLRN Staff and guests in attendance: Susan Angulo, Jacquelyn Esco, Noreen Frye, Alan Greer, Alex Herrera, Albert Jones, Betsy H. Kaplan, Ron Levitt, Patricia Maldonado, Jimmy Morales, Joan G. Robbins, James Swain, Frederick F. Thornburg, Ted Eldredge, Adrienne Kennedy, Ginette Grey, John LaBonia, Peter Maerz, Lisa Bethune, Leah Weston, and Kenny Malone.

Members with excused absences: David Young, Sr., and Jeanne Westphal.

Absent members: Jo Asmundsson, David Berley, Maria Ines Castro, Dr. A. Robert Goddard, Dr. Martin Karp, Darrell Payne, Geraldo Rodriguez-Menendez, Larry Smith, and Blair Walker.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes from the previous CAB meeting held on March 20, 2009. Members present accepted and approved the minutes as published.

Digital Television Transition – June 12, 2009: General Manager John LaBonia reported that all of the Miami-Fort Lauderdale television stations are now broadcasting in digital, and will take their analog signals off the air between now and June 12, 2009, which is the new Federally mandated deadline for the complete switchover to digital television broadcasting in the United States. WLRN will end its analog broadcasts on June 12th. Mr. LaBonia also reported that small battery operated digital TV sets are just now coming on the market for use during hurricanes and other emergencies.

State and District Funding: John LaBonia reported that the State of Florida is cutting all public broadcasting expenditures by 24%. This amounts to a little over \$220,000 just for WLRN. This is in addition to cuts of 6% made earlier. However, the recent Radio pledge drive came within 5% of making the goal of \$750,000, while TV pledging continues to be weak. The School Board cuts amount to about \$300,000 in addition to the State cuts.

Some part-time hours may be cut, but no layoffs are anticipated. The State has zeroed out the Radio Reading Service, but we intend to continue the service by shifting our budget dollars around. TV grants are larger than those for Radio, but much of the infrastructure of the stations can be charged to the TV side (business, engineering, etc.) so Radio isn't impacted as much.

Outreach Projects: Krista Tippett, host of "Speaking of Faith" on 91.3 FM appeared recently at Miami's Trinity Episcopal Cathedral and attracted a very enthusiastic crowd of around 300 people. The stations have now gotten into social networking, with just under 670 members joining our Facebook program. We are also on Twitter, and are receiving a minimum of ten "tweets" a day from listeners.

WLRN has participated as a media sponsor for "City Year," with activities in about ten MDCPS schools. Young people take a year off from their education to help out in the schools and other community projects, and are paid a small stipend for their involvement.

"My Source" continues on both Radio and TV. A total of ten radio spots and nine for TV have been produced. Several of the TV spots were previewed at the meeting.

General Manager's Report: The "Nixon" documentary is about finished, with the search continuing for a narrator. Dick Cavett is a possibility, and Alan Alda was approached but had too many other commitments already booked to be able to participate. The stations have received a number of awards including four "Tellys." "Breath of Hope" recently debuted on TV. WLRN is making a local production to be tied in with Ken Burns' next venture, a series focusing on America's National Parks. "Weird Florida" is another project that should be finished by the end of May.

On the Radio side, awards were received for "Under the Sun" segments, a piece produced for WLRN/Miami Herald News by Phil Latzman, as well as the modules that were produced in conjunction with the Jazz Roots series presented at the Arsht Center. A "Perspectives" program was produced highlighting the recently ended Florida Legislature session, and several more are planned for later in the year.

Lisa Bethune reported on the recently renewed "Ready to Learn" grant received by WLRN. The funds will be used to produce two town hall meetings, providing PowerPoint presentations and DVDs to the approximately 100 parents who are participating. Children participating will receive some money to learn how to manage their funds as a part of the learning process. May 26th (in Spanish) and June 11th (in Haitian-Creole) are the projected dates for these meetings. The funding is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Town Hall Meetings/CAB Summer Project: James Swain, chair of the CAB, reported on his idea for WLRN to produce several Town Hall Meetings, which would cover current topics (economy, flu epidemic, crime issues, weather-related issues, etc.). These would be broadcast three or four times a year. Budgetary issues were raised as well as finding the appropriate location to stage the meetings were discussed. Mr. Swain hopes that a list of issues could be developed no later than July 1st. An e-mail will be sent to all CAB members.

New Business: Peter Maerz reported on the all-time high audience for WLRN Radio. Information was handed out to the members. Discussion of a few vacancies on the CAB was noted as well as the fact that some of the present members cannot meet on the new midday schedule of meetings and may have to resign from the CAB as a result.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 10th at noon at the WLRN studios. There will not be a meeting over the summer months.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:10 PM.