



WPFW COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD

August 17, 2015

Petworth Neighborhood Library

Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Chair Aminyah Muhammed-M'backé, Nancy Switkes, Antonio Johnson-Bey, Astrid G. Munn, Carlos Ellerbe Jones, Enyinnaya Udo and Thomas Alan Young.

Collette Dawud was excused as absent.

Unexcused: Toussaint Tingling Clemmons and Phillip Everett.

WPFW Staff: None

Guests: Alan Barysh, Tony Norman.

ROLL CALL

Seven members were in attendance and quorum was met at 7:52 pm, after the Listener Comments:

GUEST COMMENTS

Alan Barysh has had growing concerns about the direction of WPFW since Lou Hankin was part of the station and left.

- I discovered online that Sunyatta Amen is not a doctor. (So she no longer calls herself Dr. Sunyatta Amen.)
- Where did Dr. Theodore Watkins get his degree? Is it a conflict of interest that he is Katea Stitt's personal doctor? The medical shows turn into infomercials. They

are run with no disclaimers that you should consult your doctor before following their cures.

- During one drive, outside fundraisers came in, playing a series of recordings from Zeitgeist radio that were blatantly anti-Semitic and totally un-historically documented. They were conspiracy theories that could not be proven or disproven.
- He finds a growing anti-Semitic trend. One example is the absence of “Jew” or “atheist” in the spot: “Come together Muslim, Christian...” Uncritical, unquestioning support for the Honorable Louis Farrakhan who pushes his book, *Synagogue of Satan* is a problem. Our hope to be inclusive must be addressed in a scientific way. Alan would like the station to endorse Cornel West’s “Rise Up October” event in New York to fight police brutality.
- For every election, something goes awry. There hasn’t been a legitimate one in years.
- Sojourner Truth could have been more tactful when haranguing listeners for not donating. She got very upset at not meeting her fundraising goal.
- Katea Stitt never says anything when Tahuti calls in with his bigoted remarks.

Astrid Munn asked questions to clarify some of Mr. Barysh’s opinions. Alan Young said he often hears a disclaimer aired for other shows, that the views of the host are not the views of the station. Aminyah has heard, “consult your doctor before...” on-air on occasion, but Alan B. is correct that it is not always aired. There are valid concerns about credentials of those on some of the medical shows; but DC licenses many kinds of doctors besides medical doctors (e.g. chiropractors).

Tony Norman of the LSB and Pacifica National Board said where LSB election information can be found: WPFWM.org web page. If there’s a postponement, an official notice will be provided by Pacifica, via the national election supervisor as well as the local election supervisor. The intention of Pacifica to scale back on expenses has probably led to the rumor that the election might be postponed. The local election supervisor, David Levine, is the official person who can give you a statement: wlfw-les@pacificafica.org, 240-343-5174. Tony suggested that CAB invite Mr. Levine to a meeting. He was specially hired to handle the elections and he came to the recent LSB meeting. The schedule which Aminyah looked up:

- Ballots mailed online and voting begins August 29. Online voting return deadline is Oct. 22.
- Ballot count and election certification is November 6.

Aminyah asked questions of a woman at Pacifica a month ago and awaits an answer regarding how Pacifica does or doesn’t keep track of the hours that volunteers work

which should substitute for a monetary pledge according to the bylaws. Tony suggested having Volunteer Coordinator Vinnie Jack, the IGM and the Local Election Supervisor to address this. Aminyah spoke with Carol Wolverly, possibly at KPFA who thought counting CAB service hours as the three volunteer hours toward WPFW membership would be a conflict of interest. It is a national issue and Aminyah will contact Mr. Levine about this matter. There is nobody even saying on-air to Members that you can put in 3 hours of work rather than paying your \$25 and beyond that, nobody is explaining to these members that you have a vote and what the process is like; there is no engagement of the membership. Antonio noted that Richard calling members to get people for the phone banks is the only method of engagement and that just started this summer.

UNDERWRITING

We have been assailed by several members to look at the issue of underwriting with WPFW and Pacifica. Aminyah provided her research without taking a position, to the Programming Committee of the LSB. Underwriting can significantly change who WPFW and Pacifica are, even if the funders are non-profits rather than large corporations like Exxon. There is a blurred way of pursuing underwriting that needs to be examined. An example is a holistic dentist being interviewed (and therefore advertised) who does not even accept DC medical insurance or pro bono cases.

Katea Stitt and Nancy Sorden of the LSB's Programming Committee is drafting a policy on underwriting.

Tony underscored the importance of cultivating a direct line to the Interim General Manager to ask him questions and offer input. The question came up of whether CAB Members can be considered to have done their three volunteer hours to constitute station membership; Carol at KPFA told Aminyah that her station considers it a conflict of interest for CAB to donate committee time as membership "revenue." It should be a national policy or decided by the local and national election supervisors.

Nancy read a statement written by longtime listener and volunteer Gary Gibian, who gave reasons for opposing underwriting on April 22, 2015:

"I am opposed to business underwriting, though I am not informed about the budget of WPFW or the details of the potential arrangements and am open to getting more information. Please represent me and any other concerned listeners that you may be aware of, as I think I will not be able to attend.

Reading your email slightly more carefully, I notice the words underwriting some shows. I guess that could be more palatable than general underwriting, as on-air acknowledgements would only occur during those shows, though it opens the door to corporate influence, which can gradually influence more shows. Some hosts may want to solicit or accept business donations rather than work so hard to get listener donations to support their shows, or to go off the air.

I would prefer to have the station management (at all levels) decide which shows to have the station's fund pool support rather than have businesses decide.

Accepting business underwriting would make us unable to make the claim that we accept none.

It actually has made me uncomfortable to hear that such and such a business has provided refreshments for volunteers during fund drives because it sounds like an advertisement and businesses could vie for the privilege, but I believe my view is a little extreme.

Best wishes, and thanks for your service to WPFW!
Gary”

Listener and volunteer John Wortman’s views were paraphrased by Nancy. John is vehemently opposed to underwriting since it will corrupt the essence of the community-supported radio model. He points out many methods of raising revenue that have not been tried. One idea: people who cannot afford the monetary membership could be encouraged to tell three friends to listen—if one of the three donates, we’ve raised \$25 and increased the listenership by three people.

Until the problem is solved of un-sent pledge gifts of WPFW, the station will continue to alienate the once-devoted 6% who loved us enough to make a pledge. If the management turns this around, maybe it won’t be so difficult to raise revenue monthly according to Nancy Switkes. Working the phone bank during a pledge drive, Alan Young replied that it would benefit the recipient and save the management labor hours if the volunteer entered the caller’s info into a computer instead of writing it on carbonized paper during the drive. This is how Time Warner logs gifts in to a distribution company.

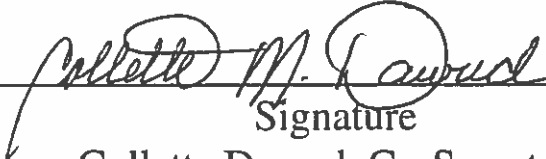
Aminyah turned the chair position over to Nancy for several minutes in order to speak outside of her position. As a listener, Aminyah does not believe that raising money is the problem. Both Pacifica and WPFW raise plenty of money. The issue

is *management of funds*, what happens to the money. More money creates more opportunity for mismanagement. From what she saw while serving on the Relocation Committee and then chairing the Strategic Planning Committee, there was no accountability. The organization is underdeveloped as a nonprofit; if it were to develop a normal relationship to accountability, it could consider many ways of raising revenue. There is not a need for underwriting at this time for the Pacifica Foundation or its affiliates. What is needed is strategic development and planning with performance targets and a system of accountability. Two weeks ago, someone in California asked, "Why did we (KPFA perhaps) spend \$20,000 on carpet when they now need money for elections?!" Aminyah listed easy ways of asking a carpet manufacturer to donate carpeting, or seeing who among the membership knows a carpet maker/distributor/warehouse. Funds are being mismanaged if carpet is being *purchased* rather than received as a donation.

Astrid Munn's concern with underwriting: during her work with in St. Louis, Monsanto essentially ran the local NPR affiliate. She expressed uncertainty about whether the current management, have the wherewith-all to incorporate CAB's ideas and whether they are sticking around long enough to cultivate relationships with large donors. Nancy replied the if the listenership was engaged many of these tasks could be performed by listeners (retired, unemployed, under-employed and generous employed listeners are waiting to be called on.)

The CAB went into Executive session at 8:50 pm.

Signed this ~~20th~~ day of ~~August~~ 2015 by my hand:



Signature

Collette Dawud, Co-Secretary
WPFW Community Advisory Board