

## **Minutes of Meeting #457**

**Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Commission  
Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Center  
1800 N. 33<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Lincoln, NE  
December 7, 2017**

**PRESENT:** Commissioner Ken Bird  
Commissioner Stan Carpenter  
Commissioner Patricia Kircher  
Commissioner Lisa May  
Commissioner Fred Ohles (Chair)  
Commissioner Jackie Ostrowicki  
Commissioner Randy Schmailzl  
Commissioner Darlene Starman

**ABSENT:** Commissioner Matt Blomstedt  
Commissioner Marilyn Hadley  
Commissioner Clay Smith

Advance notice of the public meeting was sent to Nebraska news media by means of a news release forwarded from the Commission office with Agenda posted in the NET lobby and on the state and NET websites. LB898 (related to Open Meetings Act) is also posted in the NET Boardroom on the first floor.

Chair Fred Ohles called the meeting #457 to order at 10:39 a.m.

Following the call of the roll, it was determined that a duly constituted quorum of Commissioners to be present.

The Chair called for public comment. There was none.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

The Chair requested approval of the minutes of meeting #456 as held on August 24, 2017. It was moved by Commissioner Ohles to approve the minutes of meeting #456 as presented. Voting aye: Commissioners Bird, Carpenter, Kircher, Ohles, Ostrowicki, Schmailzl. Opposed: None. Absent: Commissioners Blomstedt, Hadley, Smith. Abstaining: Commissioners May and Starman.

### **COMMISSION ADMINISTRATIVE AGENDA**

#### **June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017 BKD Audit Report**

AGM-Administration & Finance Randy Hansen presented the June 30, 2017 Audit Report for both Television and Radio Divisions. Hansen reported the Audit went well, with the financial statements presenting fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the

Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Commission, as of June 30, 2017 and 2016, and the changes in financial position and cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles in the United States.

Both the Television and Radio Foundations had over a 10% return on their endowments. Hansen reported there will continue to be a decrease in net position because depreciation costs are higher than annual replacement costs. He said overall, the Commission is in a very good financial position. This audit report covers the end of the biennium budget.

It was moved by Commissioner Bird and seconded by Commissioner Starman to accept and place on file the BKD report on the Commission's combined financial statements and related management letter for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2017, with acknowledgment of a job well done. Roll call was recorded as follows: Aye: Bird, Carpenter, Kircher, May, Ohles, Ostrowicki, Schmailzl, Starman. Opposed: None. Absent: Blomstedt, Hadley and Smith.

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Budget Report

Randy Hansen presented the budget for the first quarter of the year, ending September 30, 2017. This is the first quarter of a new Biennium budget. There are no unusual items or concerns. A couple items of note include a decrease in Worker's Compensation Insurance premiums and catching up in the Utilities line item, coming in under budget. The rest of the variances are timing issues. We are under budget in both television and radio.

It was moved by Commissioner Starman and seconded by Commissioner Kircher to approve the September 30, 2017 Budget Report. Roll call was recorded as follows: Aye: Bird, Carpenter, Kircher, May, Ohles, Ostrowicki, Schmailzl, Starman. Opposed: None. Absent: Blomstedt, Hadley and Smith. The Finance Committee met prior to the full Commission meeting to review the report in greater detail.

#### Appoint Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee was appointed to consist of Clay Smith, Jackie Ostrowicki and Stan Carpenter.

### **COMMISSION INFORMATION AGENDA**

#### General Manager's Report

##### Update from GM Planning Meeting

General Manager Mark Leonard reported on the PBS/CPB Planning Meeting that he attended in October in Washington, D.C. The meeting, held each October, is an opportunity to look at the upcoming issues in the industry. Leonard reported that what we know about the legislative climate related to federal funding is very little. However, what we do know is there is a gap between what infrastructure needs are looming and the anticipated federal funding. One idea that CPB is moving forward with is a "Group Buy" initiative. The benefits to this would be cost savings and standardization.

Leonard spoke about the stations that received more funding from the Spectrum auction than others and how those stations have an unfair advantage over the stations who didn't receive as much or who received no funding. CPB is looking into this.

Lastly, Leonard mentioned “The Great American Read,” a new eight-part television series and nationwide campaign that explores the joy of books and the power of reading, as told through the prism of America’s 100 best-loved books, and chosen by the public. The Great American Read encompasses the eight-part PBS series, community reading programs and special events, and a wide range of digital and social media initiatives. The Great American Read will launch in spring 2018.

#### Update on ATSC 3.0 Planning

Mark Leonard noted that ATSC 3.0 is now called Next Gen television in order to appeal to the general public. This platform will give broadcast television the same capabilities as online broadcasting. NET joined the Public Media Venture Group this fall. The purpose of this group is to advocate for Public Broadcasting during the transition to Next Gen television. FCC finalized the standards for Next Gen television in October. The transition could happen in as little as five years.

#### Education Visit to NET

Mark Leonard said that he and Interim AGM of Education, Debbie Hamlett, hosted the Education Committee of the Nebraska State Legislature at NET in November. Although the attendance by Committee members was sparse, those that did attend were very impressed. Talking points included the new and improved Nebraska Studies website and resources and an overview of the NET Head Start Curriculum.

#### Miscellaneous

Leonard shared that the technology staff has completed a rigorous audit of all relevant equipment, which now gives NET a baseline within the system. In addition, the first translator to be displaced due to the Spectrum Auction was Falls City. The replacement antennae was installed over Thanksgiving and the translator is now operating on channel 25 with very little downtime due to the hard work of the technology staff.

Leonard shared that sexual harassment issues have been all over the news of late and he informed the Commissioners that NET and University policies and procedures related to sexual harassment were shared with staff at the All Staff Meeting held on December 6.

#### NET Education Update

Interim AGM-Education Debbie Hamlett gave the Education update. She said the Norfolk High School Vietnam screenings were particularly poignant as there were several Vietnam veterans in that community who participated in the screenings and shared their stories. She also reported that the Vietnam Slam Poetry project will debut with a performance piece in January.

NET received an \$8,000 grant from P.O.V. (Point of View – PBS) and NET’s participation in *Our America: Documentary in Dialogue* expanded into Omaha with a “Salute to Excellence” celebration at the 10<sup>th</sup> annual “State of Education in North Omaha” Summit.

Hamlett shared the 2018 Indie Pop-up Lens Schedule. *Dolores*, which airs in March, and tells the story of Dolores Huerta, an important American activist, may include an actual visit from Dolores Huerta herself. The Indie Pop-up Series is a collaboration between UNL and NET.

Hamlett reported she is still evaluating the Education department at NET and is attending multiple meetings. She spoke about the NET Head Start curriculum and the roll-out in January.

#### NET Engineering Report

AGM – Engineering Ling Ling Sun presented the Engineering Department’s report. She reported the EAS Test that was conducted on September 27, 2017 was successful. All test related filing were submitted on time.

Sun said her team is conducting research on power increases within the system. They completed filings as of December 1 on five transmitters.

The Legislature authorized a camera purchase for the Capital Streaming Project, which was received on December 5.

A power crew was on site working on the Falls City transmitter on November 22. The new channel was completely operational on December 1.

#### NET Broadcast Production, Radio & Television Programming

AGM – Content Nancy Finken presented the Broadcast Content and Programming Report. She reported that the sports team has been very busy with football championships, volleyball championships, swimming and diving coverage, and Big Red Wrap Up.

A new program is being added to the lineup on Sunday mornings called “Biz Kids.” The program teaches financial literacy for youth. There are online resources for teachers and others, as well. A clip of the program was shown.

Nebraska Stories new season premieres in January. The second season of Speaking of Nebraska launches in mid-February.

Editing for “Follow the Water” is in full swing, with a completion date of June, 2018. A clip was shown.

#### NET Digital & Multimedia Report

AGM – Digital & Multimedia Chad Davis gave the Digital & Multimedia Report. He reported the Eclipse 360 coverage topped out at 1.5 million views.

His team is working on refining workloads and honing their craft. Editing used to take weeks, however a recent editing task took only two days.

His team will be rolling out an Alexa skill by the end of the week. They rolled out Apple CarPlay on IOS this week. Next week will be the last airing of the Plains Story Podcast for a while. They will be taking a break to re-tool and try out other podcast ideas.

Mark Leonard asked Davis to speak about the Denton seminarians' project featuring Gregorian chants during Vespers. This was done in conjunction with NET News for a piece to air on the PBS Newshour. Leonard said NET is on the cutting edge of these new technologies for storytelling.

**ADDITIONAL BUSINESS**

Review Proposed 2018 Meeting Dates

The meeting dates of February 15, 2018, June 29, 2018, August 23, 2018 and December 6, 2018 were proposed and reviewed.

Next meeting is February 15, 2018.

There being no further business, Meeting #457 was adjourned at 11:53 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Leonard