Minutes of Meeting #459
Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Commission
Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Center
1800 N 33rd St.
Lincoln, NE
June 29, 2018

PRESENT:            Commissioner Fred Ohles (Chair)
Commissioner Patricia Kircher
Commissioner Nick Baxter
Commissioner Matt Blomstedt
Commissioner Marilyn Hadley
Commissioner Rod Markin (by telephone)
Commissioner Darlene Starman

ABSENT:             Commissioner Stan Carpenter
Commissioner Lisa May
Commissioner Randy Schmailzl
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 call the meeting #459 to order at 10:31 a.m.

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

The Chair called for public comment. There were none.

CONSENT AGENDA
The Chair requested approval of the minutes of meeting #458 as held on February 15, 2018. It was moved to approve the minutes of meeting #457 as presented. Voting aye: Commissioner Ohles, Kircher, Baxter, Blomstedt, Hadley, Markin. Opposed: None. Abstain: Commissioner Starman.

COMMISSION ADMINISTRATIVE AGENDA
3rd Quarter Budget Report and FY 2019 Operating Budget Report
AGM-Administration & Finance Randy Hansen presented the 3rd quarter budget report ending March 31, 2018. It was moved by Commissioner Hadley and seconded by Commissioner Starman to approve the 3rd Quarter Budget Report. Roll call was recorded as follows: Aye Ohles, Kircher, Baxter, Blomstedt, Hadley, Markin, Starman. Opposed: None. The Finance Committee met prior to the meeting to review the report in greater detail.
AGM-Administration & Finance Randy Hansen presented the FY 2019 Operating Budget Report. It was moved by Commissioner Hadley and seconded by Commissioner Blomstedt to approve the FY 2019 Operating Budget. Roll call was recorded as follows: Aye Ohles, Kircher, Baxter, Blomstedt, Hadley, Markin, Starman. Opposed: None. The Finance Committee met prior to the meeting to review the report in greater detail.

**COMMISSION INFORMATION AGENDA**

**General Manager's Report**

**Funding Update**

Mark Leonard reported that the Senate Appropriations Committee marked up and approved the FY 2019 Labor HHS Education Bill which provides level funding of $445 million for CPB 2 year advance funding, as well as 20 million for interconnect funding. There is no information currently regarding the status of Ready to Learn Funding.

**Organizational Structure**

Debbie Hamlett has been supervising our Education department on an interim basis since last September, following the retirement of Gary Targoff. Following this assessment period, we have made this a permanent assignment, and are posting and recruiting for a Director of Education that will report to Debbie. We are specifically looking for someone with prior classroom teaching experience.

With Michael Winkle's planned retirement approaching, we have decided not to replace the position he currently holds, rather, assign his responsibilities to other members of the Leadership Team. Responsibility for Building Maintenance and Services has already been assigned to Randy Hansen. Starting in July, Production Services will begin reporting to Nancy Finken.

**System Trends**

Key areas of discussion from attending the Public Media Business Association and Organization of State Broadcast Executives are as follows:

- The growth in "skinny bundles" as television viewers look for cheaper subscription alternatives to cable or satellite subscriptions. The ability to secure digital streaming rights will be essential if PBS and PBS member stations are to be available on these services. Digital distribution and OTT are major disruptive forces for broadcasters-how we best capitalize on opportunities that they present.
- Increased competition for program acquisition. PBS total acquisition budget for content is $500 million per year, while competitors like Netflix and Amazon are spending billions on original production and acquisition this year-Netflix 6.0 billion, Amazon 4.5 billion. The drama category is most severely impacted so far.
- Consumer behavior is changing rapidly, as are the distribution platforms. Data is the new currency-how much can we learn about our consumers; how do we best meet their expectations and needs.
- Being able to meet the capital equipment replacement needs of our member stations is an increasingly large challenge. CPB is helping to fund and launch a shared purchasing process that may help get group discounts on equipment and software services for stations. As more details emerge we will explore whether this can be an option for NET within state purchasing rules and processes.
• ATSC 3.0 (Next Generation TV) research and planning continues. Michigan State University PBS station WKAR has been granted FCC authorization to launch an ATSC 3.0 experimental station and new media lab—the first among public broadcasters. There are commercial station experimental stations being built in Raleigh, NC, Dallas, TX and Cleveland, OH.

NET Education Update
AGM-Education Debbie Hamlett gave the education update. Debbie highlighted the On the Road with NET series. Over the course of 4 days, 5 nights and 538 miles Debbie and her team traveled to Broken Bow, McCook, Lexington and Kearney. NET hosted Town Talks in Broken Bow, McCook and Lexington. NET also hosted Kids Family events featuring Peg + Cat and hands on activities for the kids. Attendance for live taping of Backyard Farmer and the Follow the Water screening exceeded expectations. All events received free media coverage including 5 radio interviews, 8 daily newspapers and 21 weekly newspapers.

We were one of many booths at Oakdale STEAM night on April 12th at Oakdale Elementary in Omaha. We did chemistry with the kids by turning everyday household products into slime! This learning event was geared towards elementary Students. There were 100 families in attendance.

75 students attended STEAM Night Winnebago Public School on the Winnebago Reservation on May 15th. We conducted a chemistry experiment with the kids by turning everyday household products into slime!

We used engineering skills to make rockets that fly out of tape and straws, and catapults out of Popsicle sticks that shot mini basketballs. This learning event included students from elementary to High School.

Family & Community Learning with Ruff Ruffman is a series of four family engagement workshops where kids and grown-ups work together to explore different concepts in science inquiry and engineering design. Activity plans include short video clips, digital games and hands-on activities geared toward families with children ages 5-8. The workshops were held at the Do Space in Omaha June 4, 11, 18 and 25.

NET Engineering Report
AGM-Engineering Ling Ling Sun was not in attendance. She had a prior conference commitment. Ling Ling’s report highlighted these areas:

Terrestrial Circuit versus Over the Air Reliability
• Reliability comparison chart was presented for Terrestrial Circuit versus Over the Air reliability for statewide television broadcasting.

Radio MetaPub Project
• KUCV has been selected by NPR Public Radio Satellite System (PRSS) as a participant of their Tornado Alley Project. PRSS received contract from CPB to assist 30 stations between Aug 2017 and Jan 2019 to incorporate metadata in stations local emergency alerts ongoing. The project’s objective is to bring more and better emergency communications abilities to stations and audiences most in need. Test on KUCV was successful.
• The project scope has been expanded to state wide network. Testing metadata is in progress.
Government Services

- **Capital Equipment Refresh Project:**
  - Legislature appropriated fund for third phase equipment refresh for the project. Purchasing equipment and parts is underway.
  - Request to furnish Warner Chamber as hearing room was received in February. Purchasing equipment and part is underway.

Capital Equipment Purchase

- Purchasing equipment is ongoing from the previously identified 800K list. We conducted a Request for Information (RFI) on the NET Network Monitoring and Control System and have received eight industry responses. We are currently evaluating those responses.
- Request for Proposal (RFP) for the NET Network Monitoring and Control System has been submitted to State Purchasing for processing.
  - Pre-bid conference was held on April 19th.
  - RFP opening date was May 31st, have received four responses.
  - RFP evaluation has begun on June 11th. The evaluation period is June 5th - 22nd.

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

AGM-Broadcast Production and Programming Nancy Finken presented a clip and information regarding The Great American Read. In May, PBS launched “The Great American Read,” a series of television programs with extensive online resources and station engagement opportunities. This series is designed to spark conversation about the 100 books (chosen previously by national surveys) that will be narrowed to select America’s favorite book.

The 9th season of “Nebraska Stories” was outstanding in a number of ways. The program continues to perform very well on television and continues to reach large audiences online too. Favorite stories included: Homestead Monuments efforts to reclaim a homesteader’s tractor from the Alaska wilderness; a profile of a Nebraska native who is an icon in the world of high fashion; a segment on the solar eclipse that was created from media submitted by the public; and our piece on the Ken Burns quilt exhibit at the International Quilt Study Center. The social media response to our story on Ken Burns’ quilts went viral and presently has 1.9 million video views with a reach of over 3.5 million.

On Friday, June 8, a Nebraska production received the Sigma Delta Chi Award for Excellence in Journalism from the Society of Professional Journalists in Washington D.C. UNL Journalism Professor Barney McCoy produced, wrote and directed *Black Jack Pershing: Love and War*—one of only 5 documentaries to be honored that night at the National Press Club. Other winners in all fields included *The New Yorker*, *ABC News*, and the *Los Angeles Times*. NET Television worked with Barney on the scripting and finishing of the program which premiered on NET in November, 2017. Barney was kind enough to share the award with his collaborators, including Christine Lesiak, who joined him on stage to accept the award. The judges had great things to say about the program about the general who helped win WWI while hiding his anguish over the loss of his wife and daughters.
NET Emerging Media
AGM-Emerging Media Chad Davis highlighted that the 360 film *Total Eclipse of the Heartland* is one of 25 films accepted into the 2018 PBS Online Film Festival. This marks the first time PBS has accepted a 360 video into the festival.

The Nebraska Studies website recently received an overhaul. It was designed to be more user friendly for teachers and students in Nebraska classrooms. It now features a search bar along with easy to research timelines of Nebraska history.

Projects in production mode include *On the Table* (co-pro with NET News) which is a nationally targeted podcast about the Farm Bill and why it matters. From Seed to Harvest which is in post-production on the creation of agricultural learning objects for release in August 2018; precursor to an NET food initiative and Watershed, A 360-video series for PBS Digital about living/thinking at watershed scale.

NET Radio and News
Director of Radio Bill Anderson attended his first Commission meeting since joining staff at NET in April. Bill highlighted NET News was named Outstanding News Operation in the Associated Press Great Plains Broadcast competition that includes stations from Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota. All told, NET News came home with 11 awards, including eight first-place honors. NET also received accolades from the Midwest Broadcast Journalists Association.

NET Radio and other NPR member stations worked with Morning Edition to create a slightly new break structure that aims to capitalize on changing listener behaviors while making the show sound “less cluttered”. The changes are slight but will be implemented on or before August 6th. The new “clock” will better accommodate a show that has moved away from a heavy rotation of pre-recorded features to one that has more flexibility to cover breaking news and the news of the morning.

NET is also among the stations working with NPR on a new compact that will include new fee structures and improved digital infrastructures that will help member stations take advantage of NPR’s much larger audience footprint in the digital environment. The compact is also being created to provide more data to member stations and an opportunity to better monetize digital content. The funding model is a big part of the review as is content creation and back end infrastructure.

**ADDITIONAL BUSINESS**

The next meeting is August 23, 2018.

There being no further business, Meeting #459 was adjourned at 11:58 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Leonard