Minutes of Meeting #463
Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Commission
Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Center
1800 N 33rd St.
Lincoln, NE
August 22, 2019

Present: Commissioner Heath Mello
Commissioner Patricia Kircher(Chair)
Commissioner Nick Baxter
Commissioner Marilyn Hadley
Commissioner Matt Blomstedt
Commissioner Clay Smith
Commissioner Paul Turman
Commissioner Lisa May
Commissioner Greg Adams
Commissioner Dorothy Anderson

Absent: Commissioner Jacque Carter

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 Patty Kircher called the meeting #463 to order at 10:37 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.

New Commissioners Dorothy Anderson and Heath Mello were introduced.

**CONSENT AGENDA**
The Chair requested approval of the minutes of meeting #462 as held on February 21, 2019. There were two errors that were noticed by Commissioner Anderson. Both were spelling corrections. The corrections were made. It was moved by Commissioner Smith and seconded by Commissioner Blomstedt to approve the minutes from meeting #462. Voting aye: Commissioner Adams, Anderson, Baxter, Blomstedt, Hadley, Kircher, May, Mello, Smith, Turman. Opposed: None.

**COMMISSION ADMINISTRATIVE AGENDA**

4th Quarter Budget Report
AGM-Administration and Finance Randy Hansen presented the 4th Quarter Budget report ending June 30, 2019. It was moved by Commissioner Hadley and seconded by Commissioner May to approve the 4th Quarter Budget report. Roll call was recorded as follows: Voting aye: Commissioner Adams, Anderson, Baxter, Blomstedt, Hadley, Kircher, May, Mello, Smith, Turman. Opposed: None. The Finance Committee met prior to the full Commission meeting to review the report in greater detail.

FY2020 Operating Budget
AGM-Administration and Finance Randy Hansen presented the FY 2020 Operating Budget. It was moved by Commissioner Hadley and seconded by Commissioner May to approve the FY 2020 Operating Budget. Roll call was recorded as follows: Voting aye: Commissioner Adams, Anderson, Baxter, Blomstedt, Hadley, Kircher, May, Mello, Smith, Turman. Opposed: None. The Finance Committee met prior to the full Commission meeting to review the report in greater detail.

FY 2020 Television and Radio Capital Equipment List
AGM-Administration and Finance Randy Hansen presented the FY 2020 Television and Radio Capital Equipment List. It was moved by Commissioner Hadley and seconded by Commissioner May to approve the FY 2020 Television and Radio Capital Equipment List. Roll call was recorded as follows: Voting aye: Commissioner Adams, Anderson, Baxter, Blomstedt, Hadley, Kircher, May, Mello, Smith, Turman. Opposed: None. The Finance Committee met prior to the full Commission meeting to review the report in greater detail.

NET Diversity Statement
Director of Human Resources-Julie Thomsen presented the NET Diversity Statement. It was moved by Commissioner Hadley and seconded by Commissioner May to approve the NET Diversity Statement. Roll call was recorded as follows: Voting aye: Commissioner Adams, Anderson, Baxter, Blomstedt, Hadley, Kircher, May, Mello, Smith, Turman. Opposed: None.

COMMISSION INFORMATION AGENDA

NET Education Update
AGM – Development, Marketing and Education Debbie Hamlett was not present.

On The Road with NET: PBS KIDS Family Events – May 30-June 3
Families were invited to join NET in Chadron, Alliance, Gering, Sidney, and Ogallala for free screenings of Ready Jet Go!: One Small Step to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing. Kids also made space-related crafts and met Jet Propulsion, the main character from the series.
Chadron Public Library – 20 kids and caregivers
Alliance Public Library – 35, Gering Public Library – 75, Fox Theatre, Sidney – 50
Goodall City Library, Ogallala – 25

American Spring LIVE!
In preparation and promotion for a three-night NATURE broadcast exclusive, NET partnered with 6 statewide nature focused organizations. The lead partner was Omaha’s Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium
and Omaha STEM Ecosystem (OSE). Additional partners were *Homestead National Monument of America, Beyond School Bells, Ducks Unlimited, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute and Nebraska Game and Parks.*

The series aired three consecutive nights, Monday, April 29th- Wednesday, May 1st, 2019 on PBS. NET’s community engagement initiative for American Spring Live included 6 citizen science projects: Bird Cams, Celebrate Urban Birds, The Great Sunflower Project, Monarch Larva Monitoring Project, SciStarter, Track-a-Lilac. Through our lead partner, Omaha Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium, NET’s American Spring Live initiative connected with the Hispanic/Latino community. More than half (62%) of its zip codes residents identify as Hispanic/Latino.

**Stories from the Stage**

NET community engagement partnered with Impact Media Partners to promote and support the national public television series “Stories from the Stage”. Prior to the broadcast marathon on June 22nd and 23rd, 2019, NET promoted *Stories from The Stage* through the stations Facebook account. In addition, NET incorporated *Stories from the Stage* in their programming-related email blasts. NET community engagement also brought in their own partner, Goodall City Library. NET worked closely with Chelsea Foust by providing the links to the episodes to air in the library and posting notices of the June marathon on the Goodall City Libraries social media.

**NET Engineering Report**

AGM – Technology/CTO Ling Ling Sun presented the report:

**PBS DDMS**
- PBS team was on site July 8 – 19 upgrade WARN system in DDMS. This will be a test bed for Next-Gen WARN system.

**Network Operations and Distribution**
- PBS sIX Project: Traffic and NOC are fully utilizing the sIX transfer process to retrieve files for air. Work continues with vendors on communication response to ProTrack from ADC integration services.
- National EAS test scheduled for 1:20pm central time on August 7 went well on all NET network transmitters except KHNE due to tower lighting project. All required FCC filings are completed.
- An aging Cisco3700 router feeds our signal to transmitter sites was identified as the weakest link during recent outage troubleshooting. Working with OCIO to find solutions.

**Network Transmission**
- KXNE:
  - Roof replacement was officially completed on August 6, 2019.
- KHNE:
  - New KHNE TV Transmitter was installed and on the air on June 15, 2019.
  - Started Tower Lighting installation on July 30, 2019.
- TV translator refresh project:
  - Work is in progress with state purchasing on award TV translator best and final offer for displaced translators and translator refresh.
Other Projects and Initiatives

- NET Network Monitoring and Control System (NMCS) - Physical installation and integration for all major Transmitter sites are completed. Planned activities focus on GUI configuration, feature development and implementation. Sites acceptance have been scheduled for mid-September. Project will then move on to Satellite Teleport and Facilities. We are targeting 1st phase completion by the end of calendar year 2019.

NET Broadcast Production and Programming

AGM – Broadcast Production and Programming Nancy Finken presented the report:

NET’s local production pipeline has been full of new projects that were broadcast this spring and summer:

- **Nebraska Pathbreakers**, portraits of extraordinary Nebraska women.
- **Final Cut: Filmmakers Showcase** tells the story of Omaha’s Film Streams independent film competition with filmmaker interviews and full-length clips from some of the winning films.
- **Savor: Nebraska Craft Wine** examines the history of winemaking in Nebraska, the people and places that are part of this budding industry.
- **Savor: Nebraska Craft Beer** taps into Nebraska’s growing community of local craft brewers.
- **What If...** Good ideas start with a simple phrase, “what if we tried this.” What If explores innovation and creativity in Nebraska. Included in this project are **Innovator Insights**, a series of short videos featuring creators and innovators from diverse backgrounds and are in the PBS Learning Media library as a resource for teachers, students, and parents who are exploring career options.
- **Jam**, intimate interviews and stellar performances by Nebraska’s established and emerging musical artists. PBS NewsHour has accepted a segment on Andrea von Kampen from **Jam** for broadcast on the NewsHour and for their online arts site called Canvas.
- **Small Town Cops** from NET News, this documentary reports on the changing role of police work in Nebraska’s small towns and rural areas.

NET Sports Highlights

August 27 **Big Red Wrap-Up** welcomes new host Mike’l Severe who takes the seat vacated by Kevin Kugler whose national broadcast schedule became too busy to do the weekly show. Mike’l has worked as a sports and news reporter in New Orleans, Albuquerque, and Omaha where he hosts the Omaha World Herald’s “The Bottom Line.”

NET Audience Report
Audience measurement is one way NET monitors its service to Nebraska. We subscribe to Nielsen, an audience measurement company and to TRAC Media, a third party vendor that helps us to interpret and analyze the Nielsen data. In our most recent report, May 2019, NET’s whole day (Monday-Sunday 5am to 5am) cumulative audience was up 85% over May 2018 reaching nearly 410,000 viewers each week. There are a number of factors that contribute to a change in audience including a rise or decline in households using television, our content/programming, competition from other channels, a change in measurement methodology, etc.

NET’s Top 10 Most-Watch Programs in May include a mix of PBS programs, NET acquisitions, and NET local programs.

1. College baseball from NET on Saturday afternoon
2. Antiques Roadshow from PBS Monday evenings
3. Backyard Farmer, co-production NET and University of Nebraska Extension on Thursday evenings
4. College baseball from NET on a Friday evening
5. Kingdoms of the Sky from PBS on Tuesday evening
6. Nebraska Stories from NET on Thursday evenings
7. Speaking of Nebraska from NET on Friday evenings
8. Call the Midwife from PBS on Sunday evenings
9. Father Brown, an NET acquisition on Saturday evenings
10. Nature from PBS on Wednesday evenings

NET News and Radio
Director of Radio Bill Anderson presented the report:

**Nielsen Spring 2019 Diary Ratings for Lincoln in the category of Monday-Sunday 6am-Midnight:**

- Our Weekly Cume is down from recent books; down about 5-thousand and is currently 27,900. To explain, a listener may listen multiple times (called “occasions”) but only gets counted once as it relates to the Cume.
- Our Average Quarter Hour is 2,000. So in any 15-minute interval our average audience size is 2,000.
- Our share of the audience (which is the percentage of people tuned into NET Radio in Lincoln among those who have radios on) is 7.5.
- Our Cume, as I said is down, but our Time Spent Listening by the average listener is an impressive 9:00 (hours) a week which bumps up the aforementioned share category.

**Our Market Ranks compared to the other 26-stations in the Lincoln Diary Market:**

- Average Time Spent Listening weekly- #1 9:00
- Average Share- #2 (Contemporary Hits KFRX is #1) 7.5
- Average Quarter Hour- #2 (Again, KFRX is #1) 2,000

**Radio News, podcasting and musical highlights:**
• Flood recovery coverage is ongoing. Senior Producer Bill Kelly has been doing some heavy lifting as he contributes to both radio and television. Allison Mollenkamp has been doing most of the stories on radio. Feature length reports appear on local inserts in Morning Edition and All Things Considered. Bill has made guest appearances on Speaking of Nebraska and is working on a documentary for NET Television called “And the Floods Came- Nebraska 2019”. It is gratifying to see this important work appearing on multiple platforms. NET Flood recovery coverage has also found a national audience as our news reporters have appeared on Morning Edition, All Things Considered, Here & Now, On Point and the PBS NewsHour. NET coverage has also been a part of Up First, NPR’s early-morning ten-minute podcast. Special series coverage from NET News includes a focus on mental health issues.

• Friday LIVE was a part of the Spring NET Road Tour of the Panhandle. The program originated at venues in Alliance and Lewellen. Each program showcased talent from those areas including musicians, visual artists and a cowboy poet. The shows were well-received by two full houses.

• We are delighted that the radio/emerging media collaboration “On the Table” has won a number of awards including the national award presented by our peers at Public Radio News Directors Incorporated. It is also a finalist for recognition by the national Marconi Radio Awards.

NET Emerging Media
AGM – Emerging Media Chad Davis was not present:

In addition to the updates below, work by the Emerging Media department earned two Heartland regional Emmy Awards: one for our 360°-video Under the Milky Way, and one for our digital short Return of the American Bison. Additionally, our 2018 podcast collaboration with News, On the Table, is a finalist for a NAB Marconi Radio Award. Work by the Emerging Media department also contributed to awards from the Nebraska Broadcasters Association, the Midwest Broadcast Journalists Association and the Public Media Journalists Association.

Under the Milky Way was also featured in the July 2019 PBS Online Film Festival. This is the second time NET has been accepted into the festival and the second time PBS has accepted a 360°-video into the festival (we were the first in 2018 with Total Eclipse of the Heartland).

Projects Currently in R&D include:

• Trade (w.t.) – a podcast/360°-video combo exploring how the act of trade touches every American
• Meridian (w.t.) – a podcast/360°-video combo about how changing climate is impacting the great plains

Projects in Production include:

• Watershed
  o A 16-part 360°-video series for PBS Digital about living/thinking at watershed scale
  o Releasing now - September 2019: pbs.org/Watershed
• PlainStory season 2, “The Sound of Home”
  o Podcast series exploring on the diversity of Lincoln through the indigenous music traditions that have accompanied immigrants and refugees over the years
  o Launches September 2019

Recently Completed Projects Include
• Spring Live Nebraska (w.t.)
  o Mini-doc for the national Spring Live production effort by PBS

**General Manager’s Report**
General Manager Mark Leonard presented the report:

- The purpose and timing of each Commission meeting is very specific. They correspond with the necessary review and approval of financial reports, operating budgets, legislative budget requests for operational and capital funding, and audit reviews. It is important to have a quorum for these meetings in order to have a timely review and approval of items. Nebraska’s Open Meetings Act will not allow us to have members participate telephonically. We do have the capability of holding our February meeting at remote sites but that requires us to make all those sites available and open to the public.
- UNL staffing changes: Interim University President Susan Fritz and Interim Executive Vice Chancellor Richard Moberly. We don’t see any disruption to NET as a result of these opening.
- Update on STELAR legislation: Satellite Television Extension and Localism Act Reauthorization. It allows Satellite companies to substitute distant television stations into homes instead of the local broadcast stations that serve the region. Nebraska is one of 12 states that are affected by the current legislation, with satellite viewers in western Nebraska seeing the broadcast of the Denver PBS station instead of NET. The reauthorization is under current review by Congress, and we(and the commercial television broadcaster of Nebraska) urge our representative to let it lapse.
- The Compliance update was given by Nikki Sinclair, Executive Assistant.
  o NET retained a former CPB lawyer named Bob Winteringham to audit our NET compliance procedures. He found that most of NET’s practices are generally compliant with CPB General Provisions. He had some recommendations that NET has started to implement.
    ▪ An Open Meetings Act policy has been completed and is on file at NET.
    ▪ An updated Diversity Statement has been completed and has been approved by the Commission during the August 22, 2019 meeting.
    ▪ A policy regarding how personal donor information is handled and secured in relation to nonaffiliated third parties is in draft form with Debbie Hamlett and Bob Winteringham currently working on edits.
    ▪ Randy Hansen and the accounting department will improve and enhance their documentation regarding CSG Funds and NFF’s on NET’s AFR in tandem with the next cycle of CPB filings which runs from November 2019- January 2020.
    ▪ Written procedure regarding the public’s ability to review the statistics of the composition of NET’s workforce will be implemented soon.
    ▪ Adopting further written policies and procedures regarding risk management and internal financial controls will be implemented soon.
    ▪ The goal of NET is to have all the recommendations completed by the end of the 2019 year.
- Harassment Prevention Training update was given by Julie Thomsen, Director of Human Resources.
  o CPB requires Harassment Prevention Training is completed every year by all employees, officers and interns to ensure compliance for NET’s FY 2020 CSG Harassment Prevention Certification.
- This includes the NET Commission and Foundation board members.
- NET utilizes the online training platform provided by CPB.

- Deficit funding will be requested for the KMNE lighting system. The updated technology was installed in 1987 by Flash Technology and was an early adaption of a dual lighting system. The bulbs have a limited life span and the electronic units on the tower have leaks and are failing. Parts and experienced personnel to maintain the system have been reduced essentially to zero. Flash Technology no longer supports the system and they recommend immediate replacement. Since many of the tower lighting systems are 40 plus years old they are slated to be replaced with the new Dialight LED obstruction lighting system.
  - The expectation that the current system can be maintained until the older systems are replaced is unrealistic and needs to be addressed as soon as possible. Though expectations are our lighting systems are designed to last for many years being an early adopter has had its shortcomings. The situation can be remedied with replacement of the new Dialight system currently being deployed across NET towers at a cost of $270,000.

**ADDITIONAL BUSINESS**

Then next Commission meeting is December 6, 2019.

There being no further business, Meeting #463 was adjourned at 11:51 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Leonard