



WMUK FAC Approved Minutes

Date: Wednesday, October 25, 2017
Place: Richmond Center for the Visual Arts
Conference Room, #R2305
Western Michigan University

WMUK Friends Advisory Committee (FAC)

Present - Jim VanderRoest (JVR), Rob Oakleaf (RO), Marti Fritz (MF), Ben Maxey (BM), Jon VanderMeer (JVM)

Absent – Ying Zeng (YZ), Miguel Ramirez (MR)

WMUK Staff

Stephen Williams (SW)
Joan Amos (Secretary)

Guest

Tom Livingston (TL)- Strategic Plan Consultant from Livingston Associates

Minutes for Wednesday, October 25, 2017 meeting:

I. Welcome

II. Call to Order by Chair, Jim VanderRoest

- a. Meeting called to order at 5:10 pm. Quorum present.

III. Comments from the Public (5 minutes)

- a. No comments submitted

IV. Introduction of Tom Livingston, Strategic Plan Consultant

- a. Stephen Williams introduced Tom, gave bio and background information and experience
- i. Described process and that Tom's name was the one that kept coming up when searching for a consultant.
 - ii. 3 phase plan, we are currently working on the assessment phase.
 1. Tom has met with staff, university stake holders and is meeting with FAC.
 2. Hoping to receive frank feedback and direction.
 - a. We need a radical look at who we are—community, format and how we continue to grow.
- b. TL: As Stephen mentioned, I have managed stations for 20 years. I have experience with executive searches, serving as interim GM, assessments and strategic plans for approximately 60 stations similar in size to WMUK.
- i. Requested FAC members introduce themselves

- ii. Purpose of the first phase is to gather information- situational analysis, assessment report and come out with 3-4 strategic initiatives.
- iii. FAC members answer question of what is important to them:
 - 1. RO: Since election I have turned off the national coverage, I like local content, no other local media in Kalamazoo
 - 2. BM: Community aspect, moved to podcast, need to look at how people are getting the information- using more platforms.
 - 3. JVM: I teach audio production. WMUK struggles because of where we are geographically we get pushed from all sides, such as from 104.1- how do we compete?
 - 4. MF- Dislike national news issues, likes local music- has paid for advertising through work about community events KPL and Bach Fest. No other local media—local focus is critical- struggle with audience issues- fear that public radio may have to change and may not be what is wanted
 - 5. JVR: volunteered since 1982
 - a. Local is best- moving away from it (classical-local) HD-2
 - b. No reason to compete with WUOM- all News/Talk not our niche
 - c. Hard classical- Performance Today, opera, symphony- fine with diversity
 - d. Doesn't understand people wanting station to change for them—he doesn't like news so he simply turns it off and then tunes in for classical
 - e. Local news is top flight, but played at wrong times- example is WestSouthwest played at 9:30 when everyone is already at work.
 - f. Tell our story—locally owned, unlike WKZO
 - g. Feel like we are going the easy route
- iv. TL: Response to FAC member comments
 - 1. Gave audience growth history
 - 2. Drive- too early, station loyalty is low- more you listen the more likely you are to give
 - 3. Too many format changes throughout the day can lead to audience drop off
 - 4. Looks like we leak audiences to WUOM, not necessarily the case
 - 5. Be great local news, local institution- this can be expensive- WMUK does produce a lot of local content already
 - 6. Money is concerning- for years public radio has been over dependent on small gifts- need to re-focus on major donors as well
 - 7. Staff has been open
 - a. Community engagement kept coming up
- v. Question: Is where we are sustainable?
 - 1. TL: Podcasts provide hope for Public Radio- but for local content it can be hard to get traction
 - 2. Possibility of listening sessions in the community
 - 3. BM: diversity of the station- some of both (classical and news)- sell better, not change much
 - 4. How do we grow out of WIDR? Awareness, community engagement
 - 5. TL- Mission decision- better promotion
 - a. Strategy for news coverage- content verticals- what areas are we going to own?
 - b. Promotion- our own air

- c. Brand- locally owned and operated media
- vi. TL: We basically have 3 choices:
 - 1. Stay where we are- more local
 - 2. All News
 - 3. Go all classical
- vii. FAC members respond with their choice:
 - 1. JVR: stay where we are/more local- lot more local, get rid of some of the one hour/week shows or the different half hour programs at 9:30
 - 2. MF: Stay where we are/more local- likes music and ME, ATC (national news low), variety
 - 3. JYM: Hybrid- analysis on what's more sustainable
 - 4. BM: Do no harm
 - 5. RO: local- dropping some NPR, locally owned news—loves idea of volunteer producers
 - 6. SW: Loyalty- coherent audience- genre switch at midday
 - a. Would prefer 2 stations, one for each- move things around a bit
 - b. RO: HD- other channel?
 - c. TL: use a translator, buy a station signal
 - 7. JYM: what is the time frame?
 - a. TL: make changes soon to format- looking at a few months
 - 8. JVR: I and I- how do we differentiate from 104.I if we do that
 - a. SW: community engagement- beef up WSW to more days a week
 - b. TL: 104.I has 1 reporter in area up in GR, we have 4 here in Kalamazoo- local air, local service
 - 9. JVR: Previous news director new everything about town—investigative journalism- journalism interns
 - a. RO: Problem is that interns don't have the relationships to get interviews
 - b. SW: opportunities for investigative journalism- dealing with some FOIA requests right now- room for growth
 - 10. MF: An endowed position for news?

V. Future Meetings

- i. Counting this as 2nd meeting for the year
- ii. Try to plan next meeting around the time Tom comes back with assessment for follow-up.

VI. Adjourn

- a. **Meeting adjourned just after 7 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by Joan Amos.