

**Vermont Public Television
Community Council Meeting
April 11th, 2014
Vermont Public Television Studios
Colchester, VT**

Members present: Alisha Sawyer (chair), Steve Alexander (vice chair), Toby Knox, Leon Walls, Offie Wortham, Olga Peters, Jerry Aldredge, Trish Sears (by phone)

Members unable to attend: Jane Birnn, Bill Holiday, Ryan Doyle

Staff Present: Charlie Smith, Chuck Pizer, George Hauenstein, Joe Merone, Kelly Luoma, Rob Cunningham, Andrea Rosencrantz

VPT Board: Pam Mackenzie, Board chair

MINUTES

CHAIR'S REMARKS/COUNCIL BUSINESS

Alisha Sawyer called the meeting to order at 12:30. She welcomed Pam Mackenzie, chair of the VPT Board of Directors, and Charlie Smith, Interim President & CEO. Introductions were made.

Pam Mackenzie thanked the council for their work. The Community Council is very important for VPT in getting around the state into various communities. The station could not do what it does without the council members. Pam noted that VPT and John King have parted ways and thanked him for his service to VPT and to national boards. Pam stated that VPT is fortunate to have Charlie Smith to lead in the interim. The CPB complaint continues to be a focus. The current funding has been protected. The Inspector General Office is reviewing the complaint as well, VPT has not yet received word of their findings. A search committee is being formed to search for a new President and CEO. The committee will be chaired by Board member Lisa Ventriss. Any ideas for potential volunteers on that committee please let Chuck know. Pam added that now is the time for the station to move forward, and looks to the council for input and guidance.

Charlie Smith added that VPT is an incredibly important organization to the state and he is grateful the Board reached out to him to help out on the interim basis. He sees a lot of good things happening and the station. The balance sheet is strong. He also appreciates the council's efforts.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL IN THE COMMUNITY

Jerry Aldredge has held screenings with Head start. In March, 93 kids attended a Cat In the Hat screening. Other Head Start programs want to join in. Sid the Science Kid will be screened in April. Independent Lens continues. Jerry noted his appreciation for VPT programming.

Steve Alexander stated that VPT donated a DVD player to the Bixby Library to make holding screenings easier at the library. There were 3 screenings on Monday evenings.

Leon Walls stated he had worked with Chuck in bringing a screening of American Promise to the UVM campus. 75 students attended, and there was an engaging discussion after the screening.

Offie Wortham was involved in screenings and discussions at Johnson State College around American Promise and Mohammed Ali.

Alisha Sawyer was involved in a screening/discussion of Brooklyn Castle at St. Albans City School. She was very proud of her community school in the implementation of the screening and discussion.

STAFF UPDATES

Kelly Luoma stated that the Brit Com teas have been successful so far this year. There is a sense of pride in members connecting with VPT. These teas are an incredible way to connect with the community. There will be a soft roll out the second HD channel. The first promotable series will be – The Vermont Movie: Freedom and Unity. Having this second service will allow for greater flexibility in scheduling various programs. This channel will be available over the air. Comcast has agreed to air the channel. Glenn Dudley is working with the other cable companies to get coverage. The PBS kids schedule will be changing. PBS is looking at ways to get the content to where the kids are. There will also be a push on Veteran programming. Ken Burns is working on a documentary of the Vietnam War. There will also be programming on veterans from Iraq/Afghanistan. These programs will create great opportunities for engagement.

Joe Merone stated the 12th Season of Outdoor Journal ran since the last meeting. Out & About will premiere on April 22nd. This season showcases thematic shows. The Poetry Out Loud finals were held at the studio. An hour long program will air on World. VPT webcast a screening and discussion with Ken Burns around The Address. This can also be seen on vpt.org. Makers will be coming back. Any suggestions for Vermont makers can be sent to Joe or Chuck.

George Hauenstein noted the success of the Britcom teas. These are a nice way to connect with viewers. The State of the Station event will be held at the end of April. An invitation was included in the council packet. June 22nd will be Vermont PBS day at Leunigs. 10% of proceeds will go to VPT. As for fundraising, a new approach was tried in March with fund your favorites – emphasizing on a mission approach to fundraising.

Rob Cunningham, Director of Finance, stated that the balance sheet is strong. The station is financially strong.

Chuck Pizer went over some engagement activities. VPT held a roundtable with Senator Sanders with high school students. Screenings of American Promise has led to wonderful discussions. Brooklyn Castle has also been screened around the state. The PBS Kids writers contest drew 150 entries. 12 winners were selected. There will be an awards party in May. The 150th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act will be in October. Any ideas on engagement can be sent to Chuck. Additionally, Chuck has been building partnerships with the Agency of Education to promote PBS learning initiatives.

OTHER BUSINESS

Steve Alexander encouraged council members to think of their contacts for new recruits to the Council. Chuck added that VPT is looking for active and engaged members for the Council that care about Vermont PBS. Toby suggested looking at the Brit Com tea attendees for engaged, dedicated viewers.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Nora Jacobsen, the project director of The Vermont Movie, reviewed the film. This is a collaborative project spanning 9 hours. She was thrilled when she heard from Kelly Luoma that it would be aired on VPT. She added that there is also a competition for teenagers to create film on what Vermont means to them. This is a partnership with the Agency of Education and the Dept. of Libraries. She hope that they could also be shown on VPT.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:30.