

WTVP Community Broadcasting Advisory Council

Tuesday, April 13, 2010, noon at the WTVP offices

In attendance: Adam Sloan, Linda Zears, Norma Rossi, Carole Hill, Cynthia Kennedy, Sandy Anton, Sally Hanley, Mary Jo Lewellen, Steve Tarter, Linda Miller and Chet Tomczyk

Chairman Adam Sloan commented on the community advisory bylaws (copies of which were distributed at the meeting). Noting that attendance is required of members in order to stay on the committee and that membership should reflect the ethnicity of the community, Sloan said that diversity on the board "was not so great in that regard."

"One of the first challenges for a member of this board is to get someone in here who's not you -- who's young and/or a member of an ethnic group," he said. "(Advisory) members need to be aware of what the station does, its needs and programming," said Sloan.

Sandy Anton asked if WTVP had a strategic plan. Station manager Chet Tomczyk said a new plan would be forthcoming in September.

Tomczyk said one of the concerns he has with strategic plans is the amount of change that has occurred in the TV industry. "Seven years ago, we built a state-of-the-art building. We've replaced some equipment twice since then. 'Man plans; God laughs,'" he said. Tomczyk also spoke about "mission drift," referring to institutions being unable to do what they set out to do because of a lack of funds.

Tomczyk reminded the board of the annual 47 Auction (April 22-25). "It's a very major part of the fundraising we do here," he said, adding that the auction helps generate local money along with memberships and community productions that comprise about 70 percent of the station's revenue. The other 30 percent comes from grants (22 percent from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting), he said. As to the station's financial situation, "Things are not rosy but we're getting along," said Tomczyk. "What's threatening us right now is (the loss of) a \$157,000 grant, already approved by the Illinois Arts Council," he said. If that grant fails to materialize, like many bills owed by the state, the station will have to look at cuts, said Tomczyk.

"'At Issue' (WTVP's community affairs program) will wrap up at the end of this month. I wish we could continue with it longer. That's one of the services that reflects the needs of the community," he said. Linda Miller noted that Ken Burns would be bringing a follow-up to his successful program on baseball history. "It's called 'The Tenth Inning' and is coming in September. We're planning some collaborations with the Peoria Chiefs. We'll broadcast a Chiefs game live in July," she said.

Other projects include a philosophy project with a Notre Dame High School teacher, a program with the Peoria County Health Department, said Miller. District 150 Scholars Cup is returning to WTVP, she said.

Other WTVP projects include a program on architectural treasures in central Illinois and a show on "Boxcar people," workers that migrated here from Mexico who lived in boxcars, said Miller. It's been two and a half years since WTVP went through a financial crisis that threatened to close the station's doors. Now Tomczyk said that he's noticed "a different feeling in this building, a rejuvenated feeling. There's not as many people as there used to be but they look forward to coming to work," he said.

Another budgetary measure is reflected in the fact that the station's printed schedule -- normally delivered monthly -- will combine June and July together, said Miller. Sloan suggested that a greater effort be made to push people to the Internet for program information. Miller noted that it was difficult acquiring advance information from PBS. Norma Rossi said that organizations are facing the same problem in communicating with members, adding that, for the present, a printed guide is still necessary. Sally Hanley said people still appreciate getting a printed schedule. Mary Jo Lewellen noted that it could be construed as a negative, as a takeaway, if the schedule wasn't offered. "Perhaps an opt-out option might be better," she said.

The next meeting date was set for July 13.