

Maryland Public Broadcasting Commission
Meeting of March 22, 2022
Via Zoom

Minutes

Present: *Mr. Edward Kaplan, chair; Mr. Richard Bodorff, vice chair; Dr. Debra Bright; Ms. Shelly Gardeniers; Ms. Rebecca Hanson; Mr. Irwin Kramer; Mr. Bruce Wahl; Ms. Ellie Wang.*

The following members of the MPT management staff also were in attendance. *MPT President and CEO Larry Unger, Mr. George Beneman, Ms. Colette Colclough, Ms. Nancy Guyther. Mr. Andrew Levine, Mrs. Fran Minakowski, Mr. Travis Mitchell, Ms. Betsy Peisach, Ms. Krista Repass, Mr. Brandon Ruth, Mr. Steven Schupak, Ms. Suzanne Schwertman, Ms. Linda Taggart, and Mr. Tom Williams. Ms. Lisa Pino was present to record the minutes. Mr. Rob Jefferson was present for IT services.*

The chair called the meeting to order at 10:31 a.m. He requested approval of the minutes of the January 25, 2022, meeting. A motion was made and seconded, and the minutes were approved unanimously as submitted.

President's report

Mr. Unger announced the passing of Pat Goss, respected automotive expert who appeared on *MotorWeek* for 41 years. Regarding federal funding for public broadcasting, there has been an approved increase of \$50 million, the largest in decades. Pat Butler and the entire APTS team deserve a great deal of credit for this increase. The omnibus appropriations package includes \$40 million to establish a Next Generation Warning System to support the public broadcasting infrastructure that transmits emergency alerts and warnings. The funding package provides an increase to Ready To Learn and interconnection funding. MPT's current CPB Community Service Grant should increase by about 10%.

The return-to-office plan is scheduled to begin on April 4. Although there have been difficulties filling open positions, a number of new employees have been hired. Invitations for the Irene and Edward H. Kaplan Production Studio ceremonies will be delivered on Monday. The ribbon cutting ceremonies will be held on April 28. The 2022 PBS Annual Meeting to be held in May will be virtual. MPT submitted 43 regional Emmy entries; the nominations will be announced on May 19. The Women's Leadership Forum begins on Thursday. *Chesapeake Bay Week* programming is scheduled to air April 17 – April 23.

Commissioners viewed a *Direct Connection* segment featuring the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) basketball tournament and clips from *Becoming Frederick Douglass*, and *Harriet Tubman: Visions of Freedom*.

Education update

Ms. Betsy Peisach delivered an update on MPT's Education Division. The division provides professional learning for child care providers and teachers and creates digital learning resources

for students. Families and child care providers are encouraged to support early learning with healthy media habits and PBS Kids content. Essential partners in MPT's Pre-Kindergarten – 12 programs include Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Maryland State Library, PBS Kids, Benjamin Tasker Middle School, Maryland Humanities, FableVision, Library of Congress, PBS Learning Media, Ready at Five and Judy Centers.

The Education Division initiatives are funded through multi-year grants and other philanthropic support. There are currently 17 credit-bearing, MPT-developed courses for teachers, childcare providers and students. A robust website for the Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass films is in development.

Due to the pandemic, there is a fresh realization that high-quality virtual learning is needed. Teachers enjoy the flexibility of earning continuing professional development credits online. MPT provided virtual learning to approximately 1,200 online educators who received 40,230 hours of learning, earning 2,682 credits annually. MPT received a 98% satisfaction rate from educators.

MPT's education division is developing a series of full year student courses and credit-bearing teacher professional development courses in several academic areas. MPT's instructional design and production team is actively developing seven student courses, six robust teacher modules and two professional development courses. The courses will be offered by MSDE following completion.

Ms. Krista Repass, managing director, Early Childhood Services, discussed early learning emphasis on media literacy as reflected in MPT's strategic plan. Eighty early childhood educators piloted a media literacy hybrid learning course that consisted of both online and virtual workshops. Participants received digital and print materials to sustain learning and engagement. A final evaluation report will be delivered in June to determine next steps and new course content. In 2021, more than 350 early childhood educators received continuing education training hours through Early Learning Social. Approximately 100 educators have participated in 2022 with a goal to reach 500 teachers by the end of the year.

Maryland State Ad Agency update

Mr. Steven Schupak, station manager, gave an update on the Maryland State Ad Agency (MSAA). Agency billings grew 91.4% from FY21 to FY22. Since its inception, the agency has posted a total gross revenue of \$25 million. Many media platforms are used for ads including: TV, radio, over-the-top services, digital audio services, digital ad services, social media advertising, geo-targeted mobile, movie theatres, billboards, mass transit ads, convenience store media and gas pump ads. There are currently 13 active client campaigns.

MPT continues to help save lives after work with the Maryland Department of Health showed a historic drop in Maryland opioid deaths. Campaigns are delivered on time and on budget, and expectations have been exceeded. The agency is mission-driven, and adds extra value to all of the campaigns.

The chairman offered his thanks and gratitude for Mr. Schupak's work with MSAA while also keeping up with his station manager responsibilities. He asked if there were any questions about MSAA and there were no questions.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Justice update

Dr. Debra Bright, committee co-chair, stated the MPT External Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Justice Advisory Council met on January 31. The meeting focused on finalizing the group's charter. Accordingly, a vote was held at the January meeting and the charter was approved as presented. A discussion was held about the need to expand the council, and suggestions were given to increase the number of members on the council. MPT will continue to recruit external advisory council members.

Ms. Colette Colclough stated that the advisory council plans to focus on the Hispanic community, Americans with disabilities including those with hearing impairments, and salaries and positions. Mr. Travis Mitchell added the Tubman/Douglass films are a major part of the PBS DEI&J initiative, and MPT is poised to continue to work with PBS on efforts to foster unity through dialogue as more diverse national and regional programs are forthcoming. The next advisory council meeting will be held on April 21.

Mr. Kaplan asked if MPT could be helpful in providing programming regarding the war in Ukraine. Mr. Mitchell offered that MPT is fast-tracking and curating programming focusing on current events in Ukraine. The Public Affairs team is developing a deep dive program that include people from the Ukraine community in the Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia areas.

Old/new business

There being no old or new business, the chair asked for a motion for adjournment. A motion was made and seconded, and the meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.