

Maryland Public Broadcasting Commission
Meeting of May 25, 2021
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. Howard Rosen; Ms. Beth Suarez. Ms. Valerie Emrich was present to represent Dr. Karen Salmon, Maryland State Superintendent of Schools.*

The following members of the MPT management and staff also were in attendance: *MPT President and CEO Larry Unger, Mr. George Beneman, Ms. Colette Colclough, Mr. Andrew Levine, Mrs. Fran Minakowski, Ms. Kate Pearson, Ms. Betsy Peisach, Mr. Travis Mitchell, Ms. Suzie Schmidt, Ms. Suzanne Schwertman, Mr. Steven Schupak, Ms. Linda Taggart, and Mr. Tom Williams. Ms. Dionne Neblett was present to record the minutes. Mr. Rob Jefferson was present for IT services.*

Guests: *Ms. Sylvia Bugg and Elizabeth O'Neil of Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) were in attendance.*

The chairman called the meeting to order at 10:31 a.m.

He requested approval of the minutes. A motion to approve was made by Mr. Rosen and seconded by Ms. Hanson and unanimously approved. The chair called for the president's report.

President's report

MPT has earned 12 regional Emmy nominations, and winners will be named at ceremonies on June 26.

Today's meeting is important due to the presentation of the FY22 budget. The upcoming budget is unusual in that it represents a departure from the monetary strictures of previous years. The state appropriation increase and revenue gains from Development and other units account for the improved outlook. The FY22 budget provides for the filling of all vacant positions and the addition of several new positions. Some salaries will be adjusted to move closer to the local market mid-point for comparable jobs. Money will be added to the New Initiatives Fund. For the first time in more than a decade, the FY22 budget will include some dollars for institutional advertising.

The president welcomed Sylvia Bugg, PBS chief programming executive and general manager, General Audience Programming, who joined to speak of strategies used at PBS to bring content to its audiences nationwide. She pointed to efforts to address key issues -- the environment, democracy, social justice, health and wellness, and the arts. A new limited series, *The American Veteran*, will debut in the fall. A look at social justice issues will include examination of education. Health and wellness efforts will include looks at mental health and caregiving. The

arts focus will include presentation of some biographies of persons from the national arts arena. A new series, *The Universe*, will highlight science; and dramas will include two new seasons of *Call the Midwife*. She cited the two biographies from MPT on Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass coming onto the PBS schedule. Ms. Bugg shared a video highlighting the upcoming season.

Budget & Compensation Committee report

Richard Bodorff, committee chair, underscored the much improved financial outlook, particularly in light of the year-ago challenges and threats to MPT. Susanne Schwertman, chief financial officer, presented reports on revenues and expenses for FY21, pointing to the \$315,000 reduction in the state appropriation and the significant increases in membership revenue and the excellent revenue performance of the Maryland State Ad Agency. For FY22, Development's revenue will climb to a projected \$10.5 million, and the state appropriation will rise, so a modest addition to reserves is projected.

Colette Colclough, vice president, Human Resources, gave her report, pointing to the 133 filled posts from the authorized 145 positions. For FY22, it's recommended that compensation levels be adjusted to move closer to market mid-point. The recommendation is to increase the salary range by 2%, and that there be a 2% across-the-board increase for staff in the spring of 2022. Going forward, Human Resources suggests a new look at pay-for-performance opportunities, and it will report back to the commission on this. Another recommendation is the placing of employee salary data into the network's Workday program. If the commission approves the plan, a letter will be sent to the Maryland Department of Budget and Management for their review, outlining what the Commission has approved.

Mr. Bodorff made a motion to approve the FY22 budget, and Ms. Gardeniers seconded it. The budget was approved unanimously.

Video clips

Mr. Unger presented video clips for the commissioners, including a part of the *MotorWeek* 40th anniversary show and a segment from *Steven Raichlen's Project Fire*. Also seen was a portion of an interview with the Carlisle Group's David Rubenstein that will air on MPT and an excerpt from *Say His Name*. A clip from the upcoming Frederick Douglass documentary was also shown.

Adjournment

There being no old or new business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:41 a.m.