

Okemo Valley TV

Monthly Board Meeting

Tuesday, Feb. 9, 2023, at 5:30 PM

Okemo Valley TV, 37C Main St., Ludlow, VT and Zoom

Minutes

Present: Noah Schmidt, Newton Rose, Pat Moore, Patrick Cody, Executive Director, Okemo Valley TV

Zoom: Robert Greenawalt, Wendell Perkins, Lisa Hamm-Greenawalt, George O. Thomson

Absent: John Cama, Zachary McNaughton

Guest: Becky Wynne

I. Call Regular Meeting to Order / Review Agenda. Noah called the regular meeting to order at 5:33 PM. Patrick indicated the need for an executive discussion to discuss personnel.

II. Communications/Public Comments. No public comments. There was a response from VTel via the Public Utility Communication. Patrick will provide the communication to the board via email. They advised Patrick we need to have a representative/intervener to this commission for the six stations in their service area. Patrick has acted as the point person so will continue.

III. Review & Approve Meeting Minutes. Lisa made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 19, 2023 board meeting. Bob seconded the motion which was approved.

IV. Community Engagement – Discussion with Becky Wynne Re: fundraising and community engagement (30 minutes).

Patrick introduced Becky Wynne who has been doing volunteer work at the station and has produced some shows. She has a background and experience with marketing and fund raising (30 years) and is willing to help as she can.

She was in the studio finishing a parental testimonial with Rebekah and saw some of the software. She thinks there are lots of stories to tell in the community i.e. elementary school, the senior center and the ESB school. She really likes applied training and has brought kids to the studio to learn and thinks there are great possibilities there.

She has looked at the bylaws and the strategic plan so therefore has an understanding of some of the needs. She knows we are looking to complete the build out and work on community engagement. She stressed that there are lots of social media connections to build communications. We should be using the school and local papers and all the social sites we can..

She reinforced that marketing requires a strategic plan before launching a marketing plan. It should drive the organization.

She sees three potential areas for development to raise money.

She suggested a 3- 5 year period to raise \$250,000 – \$400,000 to finish the building.

Suggestions on how to go about this:

1. Partner with another organization (BRIC) to share things that we do not have... refer out to them and they refer back in thus maximizing the reach.
2. Co-work space... OVTV could build out a co-work space adjacent to OVTV and make sure people know that they can use the facilities. We might try and find a way to build out where they can have a virtual space here.
3. Private citizen and donors. We might look at the donor list and determine how long they been regular donors. We need to look at the data and determine how can we satisfy/serve what they are looking for. Make sure everyone has access and a voice. People who believe in what OVTV stands for are going to keep the organization going. Look for someone who is a regular donor and ask them to do a match and use that to fund raise.
4. Grant writing is a low hanging fruit for the station. There are lots of requirements for grants.

We might consider different levels of giving. We could partner fund, possibly with ESBR. In this manner both organizations get visibility, coverage and funds.

Wendy said she also has experience with writing and might be able at some level to assist us.

She suggests we should to fill out what we already have.

“Community Engagement” needs to be included in the Strategic Plan. We need to cultivate regular donors and then get some businesses underwriters.

Community Engagement marketing plan should be attached to the strategic plan. Community awareness is also crucial. She feels few people know that OVTV exists and what it has available. There should be a high priority to reeducate the community as to who we are. It is hard to get people/businesses to give money when they do not know who we are.

Noah asked what is feasible and practical for a small board. He acknowledged that awareness and getting folks involved is so important. Once that is done, fundraising should come later and would be easier. He stressed we need to be strategic in how we present ourselves to the community. They need to know what is in it for them and why they would want to get involved.

Wendy stressed, “If don’t talk about how to keep the doors open and the lights on now, then you will not be here.”

Wendell indicated that 2 % of our budget comes from membership and underwriting. He asked how that compares to other stations in the area. Patrick said every organization a bit different. Rutland is much larger than us and the Springfield station is much smaller than ours. Both

Rutland and Spfld. get more money from franchise money than we do, but our money from underwriting and donations is greater. Everyone understands in the future the franchise money will decrease, but it appears to be very slow so no one is really concerned yet. The state provided some money this past year and there are some allies in the legislature working on a plan so we can expect some state appropriations. We also received some COVID money which puts us in a better financial position than ever. The urgency to find other funding sources is not there. No station has done much to cultivate them.

Lisa and Becky will get together when Lisa is back in town to discuss possibilities further. We need to keep this conversation going.

“If we are looking for funders for next year and grants now is the time.” Wendy felt we should focus on who is here and what are they doing.

Pat suggested we test the studio for ACX.

V. VTel Certificate of Public Good Renewal Proceedings (15 minutes). VTel has had the same Certificate of Public Good license for cable TV for 11 years. It is time for it to be renewed! Patrick was appointed by VAN to represent the organization in the public hearing meetings as VAN felt there was no one other better qualified. VTel does not have to contract with us. They could provide the service another way and Patrick explained the process, although it is not likely. He is encouraging each board member to submit comments on the web for the public hearing. He will send out some talking points for us to use and explain the process for submitting a letter as it is not intuitive. VTel does not service the town on Ludlow (TDS does) so for board members living in Ludlow who write a letter, they need to indicate they are writing on behalf of OVTV.

VI. Director’s Report (15 minutes). Report coming soon via email.

He highlighted the following::

The franchise fees from Comcast are steady but the fees from VTel continues to decline. We are not sure why. The fact that people are streaming might be one reason.

Patrick said he has someone interested in the part time job which was posted who has some great experience. He will be talking again with this person and is hopeful.

There is some media public benefit funding being discussed in the legislature. They are looking at probable ways to fund this. One way to generate money is through a pole tax. If the legislature does come up with a plan, we would be eligible for some funds.

Jake DeArruda, who was just on the show Jeopardy and who once lived in Mt. Holly and attended Black River School has agreed to do a long-distance show hosted by Gary Blodgett and Pat Pullinen.

Gary Blodgett and Pat Pullinen have prepared a show on the EBR.

Tess Buss does regular shows about what happening in the legislature.

The planning commission is Woodstock wants us to record their meetings, but there is some resistance. Patrick is proposing we do basic recordings in Reading and then bring the program to SAPA so they can air the programming and we can split the proceeds from the Comcast. Some individual in Reading can simply do the recordings and send them to us to edit and get ready for distribution. We might go on site once a month to do selectboard meetings. Comcast cannot designate us but SAPA could contract with us. At the moment there is no Executive Director at SAPA so we would have to work with their board. Time might be right to have conversations about shared resources with SAPA since they are having staffing issues.

Patrick talked briefly about a new web possibility.

Noah moved to go into executive session to talk about personnel at 7:03. Wendell provided a second. The board came out of executive session at 7:10. There was no action taken after coming out of the executive session.

The Zoom connection was lost so the meeting ended at 7:13.

VII. Financial Report: (10 minutes)

VIII. Committee To Do Lists.

XI. Other Business -Strategic Plan Work

X. Confirm Next Meeting Date. If we continue to meet the second Tuesday of the month, the next meeting will be held on Mar. 9, 2023, at 5:30 PM.

XI. Adjourn..