

## **Okemo Valley TV Board Meeting**

**Thursday, March 25 2021 at 5:30PM held via Zoom**

**Present:** John Cama, Wil Harris, Sharon Huntley, Pat Moore, Don Richardson, Noah Schmidt, George O. Thomson, Patrick Cody, Executive Director, Okemo Valley TV

**I. Call to Order/ Review Agenda** – The meeting was called to order by President Noah at 5:34.

**II. Communications/Public Comments** – The station has been receiving many positive Comments from parents and friends of the GMUHS BB team. They are very appreciative of the livestream so they can watch BB games virtually. There were over 800 views for the last semifinal game.

**III. Review Meeting Minutes – February 24, 2020-** Pat made a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of November 24 as printed. Don provided a second. The motion was approved unanimously.

### **IV. Director Report: (15 minutes)**

Patrick sent out his report prior to the meeting. He talked about the purchase of new equipment and upgrades. The internet has been greatly improved with high speed through VTel. It has been great and will give us new opportunities. The streaming quality is much improved from what we had. We needed to purchase some new production equipment to support streaming which included a monitor and a couple converters to record SDI. The new streaming equipment is much better. We used to get internet service through Comcast as part of our contract, but as a result of the settlement, we lost the complementary service but got a lot more in the contract. We have been paying for internet service to Comcast since January at a rate of \$125/mo. Our cost has doubled to \$250 with VTel but it is much faster and better.

Patrick reported that the screen of the MacBook Pro that is used a great deal fell out of the case, hit concrete and was damaged. The estimate to get the screen repaired is \$750 and we have a \$500 deductible. He is waiting to see what the adjuster says to see if it should be repaired or replaced.

There has been an uptick in production. The studio continues to be open only on a one-on-one basis. Fred and Eric are still working from home but Patrick has been coming into the station regularly. Sarah comes into the station from time to time and all the protocols of the state are being followed. He is wondering when we might reopen again to the public. Fred is the only one who has had the vaccine and may continue to work from home.

There was a brief discussion on the legislative talking points for the Vermont Access Network. Patrick provided a copy of the PEG Study Preliminary Talking Points of Feb 15. The issues are complex but good news came out of the study and the report is supportive of our position. It appears that something positive may come about probably not this legislative session but the process has started. A possible new revenue source referenced in the report is a pole fee.

Now that a settlement was reached between VAN and Comcast our individual contract will be renegotiated. As an outcome of the settlement, there is a boiler plate contract for all stations which includes a provision for high-definition channels. We will be given the opportunity to request high definition once we receive the contract and sign it which will probably take a while.

**V. Financial Report (10 minutes)** – A copy was sent to everyone. The third quarter is ending next week. We are on track with income and expenditures. The bank balances are at the bottom of the report. Since we have a positive balance and more than we need to maintain in our checking account, Patrick is looking for recommendations as to what to do with the funds. Some of the reason for this position is the receipt of COVID money. He is suggesting that we move some of the money into an account that can earn us a bit of interest. Patrick and John will talk about options within the next couple of weeks. At the present time, all of our banking is done through Peoples Bank which has been bought out by another bank and fees have increased slightly. He wonders if we may want to consider another option and has obtained some information on some other options which he will share with the Finance Committee. Patrick will send the profit and loss report to the board at the close of the third quarter.

**VI. Membership Drive & Business Underwriting (20 minutes)** - Sharon, Patrick and Noah met to revamp some of the materials for underwriting. Sharon has prepared a draft of a trifold which was shared. There was a discussion of possible partnering with other stations to bundle underwriting for everyone. This would provide a wider area of coverage which might be appealing to bigger businesses. The rates on the draft brochure are what we are presently offering. There are some more involved and appealing programs being considered... “Regional Reach” involving collaboration with other stations and “Targeted Buys” and “On the Town Features.” Many businesses in town are small but we might get larger businesses to underwrite if there was a larger audience (Regional Reach). Patrick confirmed when he has conversations with directors of other regional stations, the common theme is underwriting. We would not have to compete with anyone if we did this. Patrick has not had any specific conversations with other stations as of this time, but once the brochure is refined, we can approach them.

“Targeted Buys” would allow a business to sponsor a specific event or series of events, i.e., ball games, summer concerts, etc.

“On the Town” - Rachael Hyjek may be willing to do some programming highlighting businesses around town. It might be called “Talk of the Town with Rachael H”. The show would be of interest to everyone, highlighting something the business does. We might consider doing a test pilot to show businesses in the area what this might look like. If we try to be more creative, we might appeal to more advertisers.

An E-blast appeal was prepared and shared. The draft email will go out to all members of the board for comment before it is sent out.

Sharon has talked to the publisher of the Vermont Journal about the possibility of advertising weekly Okemo Valley TV programs. She asked Patrick to get something to Shawntae and she will put a sample together and then provide some ad options for size and price. She is thinking a small spot with possibly three bullets. Sharon said Patrick does not have to think about it too much and can send her sentences. Sharon said if he sends the ideas, the publisher can do the bullets for the ad. There was some discussion on Wendy possibly doing this but Patrick did not think that was an option at the present time. Patrick will initiate this by sending Shawntae information about three shows.

Although we have not done any solicitation yet, we have two underwriters who came to us without being approached. It certainly would be nice to add more. Board members should think of others that we might possibly bring on.

**VII. Short Term Goals: Outreach Priorities & To Do List (10 minutes)** – We need to finalize the underwriting brochure and we also need to work on membership drive. Board members were encouraged to send any names to Sharon that they might have for the E blast. Sharon will send out the membership brochure for the board to review prior to disseminating it to the community. We have recently had more visibility with the hybrid meetings and the live streaming so we might be in a position to get more people to take out a membership.

Noah asked about possibly having handouts available at meetings we are recording inviting people to become members. Patrick indicated that this is possible but it takes more time and those doing the recording of the event really have plenty to do without adding this on to their list. Noah also asked if it was possible do have something at the beginning or ending of shows or recordings inviting people to become members. Patrick said it was possible but it would take time to put something together. It could be done if we have more underwriters, so we could pay someone to do this. The board discussed figuring out a way to have a promotion on line. There are some that run on the TV but it would be better if we could have them included on our programs.

**VIII. Other Business** – Elections are coming up. We need to start thinking about this and we also need to work on a proposed budget. The annual meeting needs to happen before June 30. George is the only one who has a term expiring. The committee consists of Sharon and John. Noah said he would talk with John about this as Sharon already has a lot on her plate. Patrick asked if we want to expand the board but still keep an odd number which is easier on voting. The committee needs to recruit and cultivate applicants. There needs to be an internal discussion of the committee to discuss board size before seeking nominations. Patrick said we are obligated to post the opportunity for interested persons to run for the Board in the local paper, on the website and on the bulletin board.

To do list:

Underwriting Brochure needs to be completed

The Membership e-blast needs to go out and then Board members encourage people to sign up.

Patrick needs to get the weekly program ideas to the Vermont Journal

Finance Committee Mtg set for Tuesday, April 30, 3 pm with John, Noah and Patrick

**IX. Confirm next meeting date (s)** – The next regular board meeting will be Wednesday, April 24 at 5:30. George will be out of town so someone else will need to take the minutes. There will be an earlier meeting of the Marketing Committee April 21 at 5:30 pm.

**X. Adjourn** - Sharon made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by John. The motion was approved by all and the meeting concluded at 6:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

George O. Thomson  
Secretary