WHRO CAB Meeting 12-13-22
Meeting Notes by Felicia Mebane

Attendance
CAB Members
Jason Baskerville, Rowena Finn, Denise Fisher, Meghan Higgins, Thomas Isenhour, Benjamin Lynerd, Felicia Mebane, Robert Rhodes, Stephanie Robinson, Alison Schoew, Al Schweizer II, Lacy Shirey, Peg Snowden Volk, Hoda Zaki and Charlotte Zito (Chair)

WHRO Staff
Chris Gunnufsen, Nancy Rogan, Mechelle Hankerson, Lou Hansen, Chris Tyree

Welcome / Chair's Comments

Charlotte welcomed everyone to the meeting, including Daryl Burke - a community member who asked to attend the meeting.

Charlotte encouraged CAB members to continue to volunteer for activities that support WHRO and the local communities, including the pledge drives. In recognition of service and as an incentive to meet volunteer service hour requirements for the Board, Charlotte circulated an attendance board created by Denise.

Finally, Charlotte reminded the Board of the benefits of having being a Sustaining Member.

Ice Breaker

Inspired by WHRO's unique links to education, including as part of its mission, all meeting attendees briefly talked about someone who had an important role in their education.

Consent Agenda

The Board unanimously approved minutes from the August 2022 meeting, with Al making the initial motion and Hoda seconding. Charlotte thanked Felicia for taking great notes.

Facility Update

Chris Gunnufsen
Shared updates on facilities, including the following:

- The final updates from this last round are nearly complete.
- WHRO is adding another channel on February 1, 2023: FNX ???.
- A study of air quality in the building that was prompted by an employee complaint yield favorable results. The air handling system is effective, and the air quality in the building is high.

Current Community Trends/Issues

Mechelle Hankerson

Mechelle continues to build the news team. Two positions will open in the first quarter of 2023, and another position may be filled soon. Focus areas for new staff will include audience engagement and the military. Mechelle also talked about lessons learned from coverage of a recent shooting in Chesepeake. She and her team chose to provide a particular type of local coverage the night of the shooting and the next day. Ryan, one of the WHRO reporters, lives in the area and was on the scene very quickly. The WHRO focus was on minimizing negative impacts on the victims' families and acknowledging the impact on WHRO staff. WHRO provided access to a licensed trauma counselor to their reporters and staff. Mechelle and CAB members thanked the news team and expressed their support for how they provided coverage.

Virginia Center for Investigative Journalism (VCIJ)
Louis Hansen provided updates from VCIJ, including:

- VCIJ received a grant from ProPublica that supports non-profit journalism. The funding is being used for projects that focus on how Virginia property law has disrupted African American communities and follow ups on what has changed (or not) since mass shootings at UVA and Virginia Tech and the violence in Charlottesville.
- Chris is working on a series about railroad towns, including their history, how they have changed and their current level of vitality.
- They are also producing Virginia Voices by showcasing first person accounts of people in the news. The goal is to center voices that are not typically features, such as high school students or people in prison during the pandemic.
- Their overarching goal is to help restore trust in the news and to be part of a larger discussion about democracy and the role of news organizations.

The CAB noted several issues and trends for consideration by WHRO journalists and producers, including the following:

- A shooting in Greenbrier Mall two days ago prompted discussion about how WHRO's coverage and community engagement could have some role in supporting high school students who may not be receiving the updates and information that they want or need in these crisis situations.
- The discussion about engaging high school students around recent shootings included the following insights and suggestions:
    - One lesson learned from recent WHRO/WTKR town hall sessions, is that one challenge for engaging with high school students as part of news coverage is having an effective hook. Another challenge is how to effectively engage with them and their parents.
    - Constructive, semi-formal partnerships between WHRO and high schools may help open the lines of communication and feature high school students' voices directly. For example, WHRO could support high school newspapers, including featuring their coverage or sponsoring an annual symposium for the region (with students and educators). An ongoing relationship could also inspire students to be Tidewater journalists later in their careers.
    - One challenge for high school engagement is having the staff to set up internships, mentoring or a symposium.
    - Another opportunity may be to create a student advisory board for WHRO.
    - The CAB noted several existing mechanisms or programs that may help offset the need for staff time and make the desired connections with students, including the High School Visual Production Academy and the restart of WHRO facility tours.

    - An advisory board of media instructors or professors in journalism programs may also be beneficial.
    - It was noted that WHRO's education department continues to offer curriculum for students at different levels, e.g., on media literacy.
- Mechelle hinted at a new partnership with HBCUs that would connect WHRO with college students.
- Louis noted that education is one of the pillars of VCIJ's mission and is represented, in part, by education experts on their advisory board. Again, they, too want to showcase more younger voices, including having them speak to their peers.
- Initiatives will depend on the availability of staffing and funding.
- Hoda invited everyone to attend an upcoming ARTS exhibit.
- The need for news coverage of elections that is not about the "horse race," current analysis of "inside scoops" was noted. The challenge is to decide on the hook or lane for that. Would it be voter guides? Countering misinformation? Interviews with local candidates?

Station Update

Nancy invited everyone to attend the screening of "All Creatures Great and Small" on January 5, 2023. She also noted a local need for veterinary technicians.

Nancy reminded the CAB of recent initiatives focused on women developing skills in trade-related careers. She also noted a series of events focused on the offshore wind farms being developed by the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Other Business

Charlotte ended the meeting by thanking everyone in attendance, including Darryl as a guest. She also wished everyone a happy holiday season.

2023 CAB Meetings

- March 14
- June 13
- August (new member meet & greet)
- September 12
- December 12