KUTE Inc.

KSUT Board of Directors

Meeting Minutes for Wednesday, October 9, 2024

Present: Tami Graham – Executive Director, Wade Griffth – President, Kirsten Langmade – Vice Chair, Mike May – Treasurer, Robert Ortiz – Secretary, Susan Kerns. Gary Skiba and Eddie Box Jr, (via zoom)
Absent: Mikki Naranjo

1. **Call to Order: 5:31 pm**
2. **Approval of Meeting Agenda:** Motioned to approve by Gary; Seconded by Robert; Unanimously approved.
3. **Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes (September 11th, 2024):** Motioned to approve as amended by Susan; Seconded by Kirsten; Unanimously approved.
4. **Executive Director Report**
   a. Development
   b. Tribal Radio
   c. Four Corners Public Radio
   d. Tribal Media Center

Reports presented by Tami Graham.

KSUT still has a balance of $377K to the Tribe. Tami, and Robb Brantley (KSUT business manager), met with Christine Hudgens, CFO of the Southern Ute Tribe), to discuss where KSUT are, update about festivals not doing as well as we planned. Meeting Oct. 28 with Liz Perry, CEO Crow Canyon Archeological Center, to help with financial turnaround. Tami, Liz and her CFO, and Rob will meet, roughing out a financial turnaround plan.
Liz will be offering free Consulting.
Wade: Will draft a thank you letter to Liz for her generosity.
Tami: Plan, by mid-November, to submit packet to Tribal Council, working with Christine. Early Dec. meeting in front of Council. Tribal Elections happen Nov. 1. New Tribal Council may not be seated until Jan. Christine "heartened" by KSUT working on a serious long-term plan with how we want to move forward on how to get out of debt, to ask to continue extending no interest, with hopes of no interest on debt.
Wade: Who initiated the meeting?
Tami: Christine had initiated the meeting via email. Tami informed she had met with Rob and Liz, and wanted to set a meeting as well.
Wade: Vibe Check?
Tami: Concerned but supportive. We have capacity to raise money. We have a good rapport. She may take some heat from Tribal Council. Serious, but supportive of our plan. Knows of the Employee Retention Tax (ERT) Credit money. Also let her know of the commitment with Alpine bank, with our renewed line of credit. The agreement with Alpine, they would get the first $100K of the ERT money. We do get a good chunk of the CPB Grant, around $230-$250K end of the year, we get 2/3 of that in November, we could make a significant paydown in November.
Good to have the meeting and be in clear communication with her (Christine).

Turnaround Plan: Reached out to Wade and Mike to lay out where we're at and working on the turnaround plan. (See turn-around plan attachment) Sent out Template, and Slides with narrative on how to come out of debt. Communicating with Board, staff, donors and media, about the silent phases of the campaign initially. Potentially a more public campaign in the future. Metrics and accountability, benchmarks for the next three years. A good model, from the hour and hour meeting with Liz.

Wade: Corrective actions. Two ways out of a "jam like this" bring in more, or spend less. In this case, cut. Other than staff most of the cost are fixed, unless you cut out programming. Programming is our profit center.
Tami: No, protect your mission.
WG: First item, Reducing Operating Costs, while still retaining ability to develop our mission and programs. We (BOD) can support you (Tami) in that, we want to. Create apprehension having to think about what would we cut or where would we cut. "Appreciate the pro-active steps."
(See year 1, expenses.)

Tami: Intention in the November meeting. To have an early report out with plan, get BOD input and feedback. Work on finalizing, how we will be operating and make adjustments as needed. This will be our big focus for the BOD, myself, Robb and Chris (Aaland) as Development Director for the next couple years. Christine acknowledged how important KSUT is to the Tribe, because of Tribal Radio primarily and how important we are to the region.

Kirsten: As a Board, encouraging in assistance with developing a Strategic Vision. Include on Agenda, to work with KSUT and as BOD revitalize a strategic plan.
Wade: How does a Strategic plan relate to a Turn-around plan? Are they the same thing, do they work in tandem?
Tami: Turn-around plan would be a key component of a new Strategic Plan. "Capacity," the turn-around plan is our strategic plan for the next couple years. Increase revenue, decrease costs. Refocus on our mission, core mission.
Wade: Comments or Questions on Director Report?
Susan: Eager to see what comes out of the meeting, will help set the direction for the Strategic Plan as well.
Tami: Talking with Liz, we are good friends. Giving her the lay of the land, and how we got here, Operational spending and income are pretty strong, take out the events, big piece elements and we talk about in the plan and the narrative and the story we tell about it.
Gary: In the past, did the festivals, particularly the Four Corners Folk Festival (FCFF), did we make a profit? What's the difference? I realize there's a big reduction in festival attendance.
Tami: Did not have either festival in 2020, both festivals were cancelled. June festival cancelled in 2021. We had the festival, produced it four times now. We made money the first two years. Last year, we lost about $7K, and this year. There's a downward trend. A combination of expense to produce, the downward trend. Competition with other festivals. Trend of festivals all over the country being cancelled. Cultural trend of people not going to festivals like they used to.
Tami: I did have a conversation with Mark Katz, and he asked me to talk directly to Briggen (Wrinkle) with the Community Foundation, she manages of Katz family funds. Working on a formal proposal to send him. I did float the notion of an Equivalent Ask, equivalent to what was given during the Capital Campaign of $250K. Briggen said, "I know he will not consider that kind of giving, but may consider the $100K range." I have to develop a strategy in supporting us with what we didn't make this year in the festival and event at Durango Mesa, because we really didn't elevate the profile of Durango Mesa. Mark is the Foundation President of Durango Mesa.
Kirsten: With the listener survey, what we are providing to the community and what the community wants from KSUT and how they listen. Wonder, would it be a good idea to put a survey for the festival? Guage what we can do better, or what the community wants in the festival arena.
Tami: I don't see a scenario where we produce that festival next year. Take a year off, re-evaluate, I can't see us spending the money that we don't have to risk that festival again. There may be some fall out from that, but in in two years from now a year off producing it, a different weekend, or maybe not at all.
Kirsten: We addressed in the last meeting, passing it on? Is that a possibility?
Tami: How do we make the argument for a festival that losses a good chunk of money.
Wade: The fallout you get, the person could give us the $100K to underwrite it, to de-risk the festival. Sustaining it for a year, then the conversations that generates. Conversations that need to happen with the people who care the most and have the most money. We are looking for a $100K donor each year to underwrite the festival.

Tami: If we are fundraising at that level, it should be going to operations.
Wade: Agree with you, the money needs to go to the station.
Kirsten: Instead of pausing it all together, limiting it to just a one-day concert? Would it be worth it?
Tami: On Reservoir Hill – still have all the fencing, all the porta-pottys, still have the stage, would still have the similar cost, but only one day to make, or lose money. Do a one-off, partner with the City of Durango, or something like that.
Kirsten: Does it need to be restructured?
Wade: Restructuring? Are we just continuing the risk financially, a down-side risk? When there are "Mega Trends" you are going against, so much bigger than us, it doesn't seem like we are going to win.
Susan: Would Mark feel like he's throwing good money, going into something not making money?
Wade: We are not in a position to take a financial risk. Non-profits are very risk adverse. I'm proud the station is trying new things. Sometime they just don't work out.
Tami: Briggen had similar feedback, "It all makes sense, taking on the festivals, it was our mission." We made good decisions based what we knew at the moment. We just have to re-evaluate we are working hard on the budget. Where are we going to cut next year, without compromising the mission of the organization. That will be an ongoing conversation with the Board. Plug in our numbers, which we get at the end of the year, to our budget planning see where that goes.

Rocky Mountain Conference: RIMCore Conference. Opening night at KSUT Station. Bowling competion between stations. Music provided by Clark's band, "Community Pancake." KSUT staff will be presenting, Jessica will be presenting a session on Business Partnerships. Jonathan presenting on memberships. Colton will be presenting a session on Tribal Media Center.

Other reports:
Tami: KSUT has been having issues with Solar Flares. Bleeps out signal, sent out all member contact email about it.
Gary: Weakstone Console. Compensation for faulty product?
Tami: The CPU on Weakstone consoles, has admitted is a faulty feature of these consoles, we are outside of warranty. Rob Rawls has contacted them. We are ordering backup CPU's. Replaced on the two-air studio boards, but we have our production studios.
Tami: Kirsten is no longer doing a Blend shift.
Kirsten: Specialty show, as a volunteer with Native contemporary music. With half an hour of Native Contemporary music, then go into the regular Blend. Haven't spoken to Sheila and Ken, we can talk about the new program after I get situated. Being on social media, when I play contemporary Indigenous artists, I'll share that on Instagram, tag them, and they'll reach out.

Susan: Development question? Why is the unpaid amount so high on sustainers?
Tami: Pledges haven't been processed yet. We get about $16K month from sustainers. Will talk to Chris about it.
Also the number shows a shortfall under #3, total short of goal of $91K. Reduced the projection to FY24 to $475K instead of $530K.
Wade: How many sustainers are there?
Tami: About 1200. Anonymous donor giving us $3000. To push the goal of 150 new sustainers.
Kirsten: Major donors event in the Spring? Intimate concert, some event? Want to do something amazing for the community.
Tami: A major donor event is in the plan for FY25. Defining Major donors $5k/year. With 40-50 major donors.
Susan: Sustainers – one more push, with a premium donation.
Tami: One-day drive! Holiday mailer, like most non-profits at end of the year. With a letter to all listening donors.
Wade: Very low risk. Very little cost.
Susan: On the ERT audit. Did staffing change? Why did they audit the quarters, instead of the one we paid.

Tami: More of the inquiry with Bennet's office. And with some much fraud with the program that we popped up on their radar, and got audited. They've never worked with a filer with tribal affiliation.
Wade: There may be a Federal law, how they evaluate that's connected with Tribal law.

5. Committee Reports: None.

6. Open Board Seat:
Susan: Open House for tribal members, let's not lose sight of that. Closer to the holidays, after the fund drive. Interest in Board positions.
Wade: Would it be inappropriate when meeting with Tribal Council, and to ask Tribal Council to ask for their source of help, we want their voice.
Robert: Probably not, we are meeting with Tribal Council for a specific reason, and it might deflect why we are there.

Tami: Also with the Conference: Eddie Box Jr., will be do the welcome and blessing, Southern Ute singers will sing. Invite to Chairman Baker, awaiting reply to that. Good opportunity for the (Southern Ute) Drum to cover the event.
Wade: Keeping eyes on Open House.
Tami: Reminder, Pledge Drive next week. Big push, fun time to be at the station.
Wade: Raise my sustaining gift. Challenge people to do the same thing, while on the air. Ask the Board members to do the same.
Tami: On the KSUT home page. Story by Adam Burke, that aired on Weekend Edition nationally, on the decommission of the Four Corners coal power plant.

7. Next board meeting: Wednesday, November, 13, 2024 at 5:30 p.m.

8. Adjourn: Motioned to adjourn by Kirsten; Seconded by Gary; Unanimously approved. Adjourned at 6:34 p.m.