

Minutes of Meeting #474

Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Commission
Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Center
1800 N 33rd St.
Lincoln, NE
March 23, 2023

Present: Commissioner Dorothy Anderson
Commissioner Nick Baxter (Chair)
Commissioner Darrin Good
Commissioner Patricia Kircher
Commissioner Heath Mello
Commissioner Dan O'Neill
Commissioner Clay Smith

Absent: Commissioner Deborah Frison
Commissioner Marilyn Hadley
Commissioner Paul Turman
Commissioner Courtney Wittstruck

Advance notice of the public meeting was sent to Nebraska news media by means of a news release forwarded from the Commission office with Agenda posted on the state and Nebraska Public Media websites.

Chair Nick Baxter called the meeting #474 to order at 10:33 a.m.

Following the call of the roll, it was determined that a duly constituted quorum of Commissioners were present.

The Chair called for public comment. There were none.

CONSENT AGENDA

The Chair requested approval of the minutes of meeting #473 as held on December 8, 2022. It was moved by Commissioner Mello and seconded by Commissioner Smith to approve the minutes from meeting #473. Voting aye: Commissioner Anderson, Baxter, Good, Kircher, Mello, O'Neill, Smith.

Opposed: None.

COMMISSION ADMINISTRATIVE AGENDA

2nd Quarter Budget Report

Chief Financial Officer, Randy Hansen presented the 2nd Quarter Budget Report. The 2nd Quarter Budget report was moved by Commissioner Good and seconded by Commissioner Smith to approve. Voting aye:

Anderson, Baxter, Good, Kircher, Mello, O'Neill, Smith. Opposed: None. The Finance Committee met prior to the full Commission meeting to review the report in greater detail.

COMMISSION INFORMATION AGENDA

General Manager's Report

General Manager Mark Leonard presented the report:

- APTS Summit Washington, D.C. 2023
 - Foundation board member Ann Finkner and Commission member Dorothy Anderson joined Molly Delaney, Cameron Risher and Mark Leonard, attended the annual "Public Media Summit" in Washington February 29th to March 3rd. The first two days were educational sessions in preparation for our meetings with our delegation on Wednesday.
 - We took to the Hill Wednesday morning beginning with the Nebraska Breakfast where we had an informal chat with Senator Fisher before breakfast started. Our meetings throughout the day included face to face meetings with Representatives Bacon and Flood, and Senator Ricketts. The meeting with Representative Flood was schedule for 30 minutes, but went at least 45 due to the Congressman's interest in details of our funding, background on CPB, and public media's role in emergency alerting. Dorothy Anderson was a rock star throughout the visit. And Ann Finkner provided excellent navigation as we raced from meeting to meeting.
- State and Federal Funding
 - Mark Leonard provided testimony to the Appropriations Committee on February 14th regarding our funding requests. There was one question related to our tower lighting, which was answered. Patiently awaiting a finalized budget to know where we stand.
 - The pitch to our federal delegation was to support a \$575 million dollar request for FY 2026, a \$40 million dollar increase over our FY 2024 approved funding. We also requested level funding for Ready to Learn at \$31 million dollars, \$60 million dollars for Interconnection, and \$56 million for Public Safety Alerting infrastructure. The three pillars of our request are our work in Education, Civic Leadership, and Public Safety.
- CPB Resolution of Inspector General report
 - We were able to resolve all of the issues that were flagged by the Inspector General's report, including both the overstatement of NFFS and the open meeting notification requirement for discussion of any Nebraska Public Media business at the University's Board of Regents meetings. Thank you Heath Mello for helping us reach a successful resolution.
- Chief Operating Officer Position
 - Michael Winkle filled this role for years until his retirement 3 years ago. During Covid the loss of this position was not fully apparent. With our ongoing return to normal work activity it has become increasingly clear to me that the position is essential to our ability to fulfill the ambitions we established in the new Strategic Plan. The re-establishment of this position will allow the CEO to allocate more time to external relations for Nebraska Pubic Media, with the COO focusing primarily on operational and strategic internal issues.

- Strategic Plan
 - We have completed and finalized the Goals and Objectives of the Nebraska Public Media's Strategic Plan for 2023-2026.
 - Goal #1: Be an Employer of Choice.
 - **Objective 1:** In FY24, develop a leadership-training program within each unit (Finance, Administration, Content, Development, Technology and Labs) and applicable sub-units to create a pipeline of future leaders to ensure business continuity.
 - **Objective 2:** By the end of Q3 FY24, create and implement an effective performance management program that includes identifying and documenting professional development plans for staff to complete within each evaluation year.
 - **Objective 3:** By the end of FY23, complete the equity study with the Wilson Group to understand the external market for compensation and use the data gathered to develop a salary structure that reflects the market where we compete for, attract and retain talent. Develop a salary structure to request support from the State and University, as applicable.
 - **Objective 4:** In FY24, review current recruitment practices and identify initiatives to improve reaching qualified candidates and supporting efforts to increase diversity within the organization.
 - **Objective 5:** Beginning in FY24, create and begin implementing a plan to enhance the physical environment throughout the building, including décor, representing the work of Nebraska Public Media, PBS and NPR.
 - **Objective 6:** In FY24, identify initiatives that will contribute to increasing employee engagement through recognition, communications and celebration of successes.
 - Goal #2: Increase service, reach, and awareness of Nebraska Public Media in Omaha.
 - **Objective 1:** Pursue options for expanding FM radio service creating a plan to contract with a broker in Q1 FY24.
 - **Objective 2:** Pursue strategic partnerships to increase services to new audiences and to reveal opportunities for expansion in Q2 FY24 and ongoing.
 - **Objective 3:** Create a marketing plan to increase spending on targeted promotion in Omaha by 25 percent over the next three years, starting in FY24 and over the following three years.
 - Goal #3: Create compelling content for digital and broadcast distribution with an emphasis on reaching new audiences.
 - **Objective 1:** Beginning in FY24, explore opportunities and challenges presented by social media platforms, existing and emerging.
 - **Objective 2:** Greenlight the next podcast series by Q4 FY23 to attract 30 percent more listeners than previous podcast projects.

- **Objective 3:** In FY24, build a digital content pipeline to increase digital content output by 20 percent and audience reach by 20 percent annually, continuously replenishing the ideas and projects.
 - **Objective 4:** In FY24, build a broadcast content pipeline to create a predictable, sustainable and rolling multi-year television and radio broadcast plan of ideas and approved projects.
 - **Objective 5:** In Q1 & Q2 FY24, create a studio production pipeline including at least two new series with one launching in FY25 and one in FY26.
- Goal #4: Become a data-informed culture.
 - **Objective 1:** Create one unified definition of what it means to be data-informed by FY24
 - **Objective 2:** At the beginning of each fiscal year, develop at most three to four research questions or hypotheses to pursue. Projects that answer these research questions or explore hypotheses will support our strategic planning initiatives
 - **Objective 3:** Develop at least one key performance indicator (KPI), determined by each unit/department in consultation with the Data Services department, that will be reported throughout the organization by the end of FY24.
 - **Objective 4:** Improve data literacy across the organization, so at the end of FY24, at least 15 percent of staff will participate in at least one training course focused on developing data literacy skills. Staff participation will increase by five percent annually by the end of FY27 until at least 30 percent of staff participate in at least one data-focused training each year.
 - **Objective 5:** Develop one comprehensive plan to explore and implement opportunities to use different data sources (e.g., datacasting, ATSC 3.0, OTT or web distribution) for instant feedback loops to help inform decisions by FY27.
 - Goal #5: Foster a climate of learning.
 - **Objective 1:** Starting in FY24, plan a minimum of 12 opportunities annually using public media resources.
 - **Objective 2:** Increase overall engagement with the network’s learning resources by 10 percent annually.
 - **Objective 3:** Starting in FY24, create two to three new classroom media collections annually for the next three years.
 - Goal #6: Use technology to enhance and expand our services.
 - **Objective 1:** Complete Noncommercial Educational (NCE) FM radio station build-outs by FY25.
 - **Objective 2:** Commit to radio regionalizing and infrastructure rebuilding.
 - By FY24, refresh the emergency alert system (EAS) to comply with the latest FCC requirements, including building Emergency Alert Notification (EAN) redundancy and addition for the TV chain (required by state EAS plan).

- By FY26, refresh radio studios and infrastructure.
- **Objective 3:** Work with UNL to pursue national and other grants/projects. Continue to work with state agencies (e.g., state government entities, Office of the Chief Information Officer or Nebraska Department of Education) to explore opportunities in rural broadband connectivity.
- **Objective 4:** Build a robust ITS infrastructure that supports our mission and vision by FY27.
- **Objective 5:** Implement Media Over Managed IP Project, Remote Production Truck & Facility Routing by the end of FY26.
- **Objective 6:** Continue infrastructure refresh strategy toward ATSC 3.0 implementation by FY27
- **Objective 7:** Starting in FY24, explore opportunities to increase the discoverability of our content across all platforms.
- **Objective 8:** Starting in FY23, improve content accessibility and availability.
- **Objective 9:** Continue the long-term infrastructure refresh plan.
- Goal #7: Enhance financial sustainability
 - **Objective 1:** Expand planned giving marketing and communications by FY26.
 - **Objective 2:** Build membership to 32,000 by the end of Q4 FY27.
 - **Objective 3:** Reach \$6.5 million in combined membership and major giving revenue by the end of FY27.
 - **Objective 4:** Cultivate new clients to represent a 10 percent increase in the number of overall Corporate Support accounts.
 - **Objective 5:** Meet or exceed 85 percent client renewal rate for Corporate Support annually.
 - **Objective 6:** Secure \$25,000 in new Corporate Support digital revenue by the end of FY25, with 10 percent growth each year.
 - **Objective 7:** Develop a culture of philanthropy by recognizing donors as partners starting in FY24.
 - **Objective 8:** Explore non-traditional sources of revenue starting in FY24.
- These were shared with staff last week at our All Staff meeting where we took questions. Final revisions and edits are being completed on the Strategies and Tactics, which should be ready for distribution in early April.

Education Update

Chief Strategic Officer, Molly Delaney presented the report:

- Ready to Learn
 - Education staff are in the process of assessing community assets and needs (using the CANA tool) in our selected Learning Neighborhood site, Fremont, NE. We have met with partners including Nebraska Department of Education’s Community Learning Centers, Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), Fremont Family

Coalition (United Way), and Fremont Chamber of Commerce. We continue to work with partners to plan a Learning Neighborhood proposal (phase II of the Ready To Learn grant) to be submitted in late May, 2023.

- Little Free Library
 - We continue to share free print resources to children and adults to support literacy in our own neighborhood. In just over 5 months in operation we have added over 600 items to our library, the majority supporting print literacy for children in early childhood, elementary, and middle grades.
- On the Road
 - Community engagement is leading the latest iteration of our popular *On the Road* series, in collaboration with the education team. We will visit northeast Nebraska for a three-day tour with events in five communities, highlighting our locally-produced content and connecting with kids and families.
 - Planned events include:
 - Free screening of “Classic Car Love Stories” at the Quasar Drive-In in Valley
 - *What If...* live event and panel discussion event at the Columbus Innovation Center
 - *Friday LIVE* from Wayne State College
 - PBS KIDS events with Daniel Tiger in Columbus, Fremont, Wayne, and Omaha
 - Public Media trivia night at the West Point Brewing Co.
 - Town Talks in Fremont, Columbus, and Wayne
 - For complete details, visit NebraskaPublicMedia.org/ontheroad.

Engineering Report

Chief Technology Officer, Ling Ling Sun submitted the report:

- PBS Satellite Migration
 - Project PBS is currently executing a long-planned migration of its satellite service from AMC-21 to Galaxy-16, which involves dual operations between March 31, 2023, and May 31, 2023. The target date for the new satellite service to commence is May 31, 2023, which is also the date when the old satellite service will cease. The dual operation period provides member stations with enough time to reprogram their satellite receivers and relocate their satellite receiving Vertex dish. In light of the migration of PBS' linear satellite feed that transmits WARN alert messages, all stations are mandated to retune their WARN system satellite receivers to the new Galaxy-16 satellite service, starting from March 1 and no later than May 31, 2023.
- PBS DDMS
 - We have accomplished a crucial milestone in the PBS satellite migration project by performing thorough testing and reengineering of the PBS & NETV Teleports associated with the DDMS. These efforts have enabled us to facilitate dual up-linking at the DDMS site to support the PBS system transition to the new Galaxy-16 satellite before March 1, 2023. In addition, we have revamped the Mosaic panel to facilitate the monitoring and control of both uplinks simultaneously. These enhancements have equipped DDMS to support PBS MCPC (Multi-Channel per Carrier) service.
- New FCC EAS regulations

- The FCC implemented new EAS regulations in November 2022, stipulating that all EAS Participants must transmit EAS messages in an IP-based format, wherever feasible, from December 12, 2023 onwards. Moreover, the current technical terminology employed for the national alert originator code, national test code, and national emergency code must be replaced with plain language versions. To comply with these updated regulations and FCC rulemaking on EAS cybersecurity, our SAGE ENDEC devices will necessitate a firmware update, and we are presently collaborating with the manufacturer to ensure the update is executed before the deadline.

Content-Television and Radio

Chief Content Officer, Nancy Finken presented the report:

- In February, we welcomed Jay Omar as news director. Jay's background includes commercial television, digital, and print journalism. His most recent position was assistant news director at 10/11 Television in Lincoln.
- Senior News Producer Bill Kelly will be inducted into the Nebraska Broadcasters Hall of Fame in August. Late last year, Bill was inducted into the Omaha Press Club Hall of Fame. We are grateful to have a journalist of Bill's caliber on our team!
- Our new *Morning Edition* host/reporter is Dale Johnson, formerly of KFOR in Lincoln. Dale brings more than three decades of on air hosting and reporting to the position and we are thrilled to add him to our newsroom.
- *NSAA High School Championships* in wrestling, bowling, and swimming and diving have kept our sports producers and crew busy this winter along with broadcasts of a few *Nebraska Women's basketball* games.
- The new season of *Nebraska Stories* began in mid-February taking viewers to the Sandhills for the Open Road Challenge near Arnold and to South Omaha for a look at the fascinating history of the area and its history as the nation's largest livestock market.
- *Stories from the Stage*, a series broadcast on World and NE-PBS features storytellers explaining their inspiration and craft with tales of love and loss, adventure, triumph, and surprise.

Labs

Chief Innovation Officer, Chad Davis presented the report:

Projects Currently in R&D include:

- Virtual Capitol upgrade
 - Evolving the Virtual Capitol experience from a virtual tour to a first-person explorer experience
 - Potential release: 2025

Projects in Production include:

- Expedition Nebraska – collaboration with the University of Nebraska State Museum to launch virtual exhibits that can be viewed via the web, mobile devices and VR headsets as first-person explorer experiences
 - Cross-platform accessibility features released in June
 - Improved sound design released in July
 - Version for Meta Quest 2 headset released in September
 - Version for PICO Neo 3 headset released in October
 - Phase II in development now for 2023 production kickoff
- The American Homestead Experience – a spatial media collaboration with Homestead National Historical Park to recreate an 1870s Nebraska homestead as a platform for information about American homesteading and reflection on the impacts homesteading had on the culture of the Great Plains
 - Anticipated launch of web browser experience in summer 2024
- Menominee Homecoming (w.t.)
 - Presenting a Native American tribe in a modern light, while exploring traditions and culture via a game designed for web browser and mobile app
 - This is a co-production with PBS Wisconsin
 - Potential release: 2025

Administrative

Chief Administrative Officer, Julie Thomsen presented the report:

- An All Staff meeting was held on March 15th. The agenda included presentation of the annual A. James Ebel employee of the year award and discussion of the Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives.
- Compliance - The annual EEO Reports were completed and filed with the FCC prior to the February 23, 2023 deadline. Those reports are located on the Nebraska Public Media website- [Financials/Public File | Nebraska Public Media](#)
- Station Activity Survey (SAS) annual information was submitted as required by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. This information is collected from public broadcasting stations about their operations so that CPB can: provide detailed information about public broadcasting to Congress the FCC and the public, help stations and other public broadcasting organizations with planning and evaluation, study and anticipate industry-wide trends and monitor the results of stations' equal employment opportunity practices. The data helps CPB calculate the next fiscal year's Community Service Grants for grantees.
- Recruitment/Staffing - Nebraska Public Media participated in the Nebraska Broadcasters Association EEO Scholarship Program. Participation includes a financial contribution that supports two \$2000 scholarships to support students interested in pursuing a career in broadcasting, airing promotional materials, and station participation in the selection of the scholarship winners. Nebraska Public Media's participation in this program allows a full EEO credit as listed by the FCC.
- Nebraska Public Media Human Resources and Content staff will participate in the Public Media Virtual Career Fair March 29th. This is an affordable and effective way to recruit new staff and potentially build the pipeline of diverse talent for future positions.

- The Nebraska Public Media Human Resources team is experiencing positive results within the last 4 months in successfully filling several positions across the organization in News, Broadcast Production, Engineering and Development. We believe some of the success is due to a general change in the labor market as well as recruitment tactics that have shortened the time between application to interview.

ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

Then next Commission meeting is June 22, 2023.

There being no further business, Meeting #474 was adjourned at 12:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Leonard". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mark Leonard