

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes December 20, 2006

The board of directors of Iowa Public Radio held its monthly meeting Dec. 25, 2006, in Des Moines. Attending were chair Art Neu, vice chair Kay Runge, and members Steve Carignan, Warren Madden and Steve Parrott. Also attending the meeting were IPR executive director Cindy Browne and members of the IPR senior management team Robin Fraser, Joan Kjaer, Wayne Jarvis, Todd Mundt and Don Wirth.

Neu called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Runge moved, Madden seconded approval of the minutes of the November meeting. Motion carried.

Financial report

Wirth said that the January financial reports would include the audits of the stations as well as a progress report on standardizing the formats of those audits in the future. He also noted that the management agreements being pursued with the state universities that hold the stations' licenses should include provisions for IPR to be operated from those stations' fundraising. Browne agreed, noting that IPR's budget is completely derived from the stations' funds.

News/information program changes

Browne and Mundt reported on the continuing efforts to make listeners and donors aware of the news and information programming changes to be implemented January 1. They were the guests on a Dec. 18 "Talk of Iowa" show, explaining the changes and responding to listener questions.

Communications plans also called for editorial board meetings with newspapers in Des Moines, Ames, Cedar Falls and Iowa City. Madden suggested that attempts be made to meet with editorial boards of newspapers outside of the stations' hometowns, including Fort Dodge and Ottumwa. Browne reminded the board that there is a plan to create regional advisory committees that will seek members from outside of the home communities for the stations.

Browne also noted that each station has appointed staff to the IPR listener response team who will be prepared to handle concerns and complaints that come in after the new programming is implemented. That effort will include a "care and feeding" program for the staff who respond to listeners, she noted. So far, there are more than 300 listener questions/concerns that need responses. Browne said that a much larger number can be expected following the first of the year programming changes.

IPR space needs

Browne led a discussion regarding the relocation of IPR offices and studio. The move appears to be necessary because of the possibility that the Pappajohn Higher Education Center, location of the current offices/studio, will be converted to an alternative high school for the Des Moines Public School District.

There was general agreement that Des Moines should be the location for IPR offices because it is Iowa's largest city and home of state government. Madden asked if consideration should be given to locating in on the city's west side instead of downtown. The Board of Regents offices are located in Urbandale, he noted.

However, Browne and Fraser argued in favor of downtown because it would be closer to the Statehouse, and it would better signal that IPR is part of the business community. Most community leaders and corporate interests that may become IPR supporters are located downtown.

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The board eventually reached a consensus for finding space downtown and asked Browne to interview brokers and then choose one to work with.

Management agreements

Wayne Reames of the Belin Law Firm joined the board via telephone to discuss the proposed management agreements with the state universities to operate the radio stations. Reames suggested that the IPR board had three options to consider: 1) cleaning up the current management agreements and approving them; 2) asking the Iowa legislature to spin-off IPR as a free-standing entity; and 3) forgoing non-profit status for IPR. It was the consensus of the IPR board to ask Reames to work with Board of Regents attorney Tom Evans to clean up the draft agreements and ask the university presidents and Regents to approve them. Copies of the agreements will be provided to each university's general counsel for review before being presented to the presidents.

Adjournment

Next meeting date was set for Jan. 31 at 1 p.m. in the Pappajohn Higher Education Center. Madden moved and Carignan seconded that the meeting be adjourned. Motion carried, and the meeting was adjourned at 2:20 p.m.