

**MINUTES**  
**SPECIAL TELEPHONIC PUBLIC SESSION**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING**  
**WASHINGTON, D.C.**  
**Thursday, July 24, 2025**

**Call to Order**

Chair Calvert called to order the public session of the Board of Directors at 2:02 pm ET on Thursday, July 24, 2025. The following directors participated virtually:

Ruby Calvert, Chair;  
Diane Kaplan;  
Liz Sembler; and  
Tom Rothman.

The following officers and staff also participated:

Patricia Harrison, President and Chief Executive Officer;  
Kathy Merritt, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer;  
Daryl Mintz, Executive Vice President, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer;  
Deb Sanchez, Executive Vice President, Government and External Affairs and Acting Corporate Secretary;  
Evan Slavitt, Executive Vice President, General Counsel;  
Deborah Carr, Senior Vice President, Operations and Strategy;  
Kathryn Washington, Senior Vice President, Television Content;  
Stephen Wolfe, Chief Technology Officer and Senior Vice President, IT;  
Donna Joe, Vice President and Deputy General Counsel; and  
Katherine Donohue, Board Affairs Manager.

The following guests also participated:

Teresa Safon, consultant;  
Patrick Potter, Partner, Pillsbury Law; and  
Jerald Jacobs, Partner, Pillsbury Law.

**Adoption of Agenda and Determination of Closed Status**

Chair Calvert called for a motion to adopt the agenda and close the meeting for agenda items 4 to 8. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the agenda was unanimously adopted as presented.

**Invitation to Disclose Conflicts of Interest**

In accordance with the CPB Code of Ethics for Directors, Chair Calvert invited directors to disclose possible conflicts of interest regarding the meeting agenda. There were none.

**Approval of Minutes**

Chair Calvert called for a motion to approve the minutes of the June 10, 2025 meeting. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

### **Chair and Director's Remarks**

Chair Calvert's remarks as delivered:

*"A sincere welcome to my fellow board members, CPB management and staff, special invited guests and members of the public who are joining us for this meeting.*

*First, I want to start by saying, never in 57 years of operations has CPB, and our public media system, been so maligned and attacked. In the middle of it all, the Capitol Fourth concert which originated here in Washington, DC, and has been funded by CPB for decades, was such an incredible success, airing live across our nation on public television, simulcast on public radio, and seen on military bases overseas giving us all an opportunity to stand tall together, and to be proud of our heritage, our country, and public media. It was a healing and unifying experience.*

*Yet, a short 14 days later, Congress renewed the assault on public media and passed President Trump's rescissions package which eliminates funding for CPB and public media for FY 2026 and 2027. Several Senators defended public media and said in their statements this rescission wasn't about the money, because CPB's share of the federal budget is less than one- one hundredth of one percent of the total budget. But it passed anyway, narrowly, and we are now faced with very hard decisions.*

*Despite this outcome, I want to acknowledge and express my heartfelt gratitude to my fellow directors, the dedicated CPB staff who worked tirelessly behind the scenes for weeks, and all the staff at all of our local public media stations, as well as the American people, who spoke up in support of our system and its proven benefits to our nation. We are also grateful to those members of Congress who also stood tall and made every effort to amend and deter this vote, your efforts on behalf of public media were tremendously appreciated.*

*I have seen public media from several sides now – with 30+ years at a station, 6 years on the PBS Board, and finally, now the past 7 years on the CPB Board, including the last 10 months as Board Chair. This service to CPB has been not only rewarding, but eye-opening, and has made me realize how indispensable CPB is to our system. It binds us together, makes us accountable, creates efficiencies in operations, ensures fairness in distribution of grants, and most importantly, was designed to shield public stations from undue influence and interference, and yes, that is in the organizational statute.*

*In 1967, when Congress passed the Public Broadcasting Act, they were careful to include this language, that CPB should be created "as a private corporation to facilitate the development of public telecommunications and to afford maximum protection from extraneous interference and control". There it is in the statute and is one of our most critical responsibilities, and this Board will continue to strongly affirm the independence of CPB as an institution and shield, but as we are all aware at this point, that mission is being tested every day.*

*We are at a point of inflection, and rather than dismantling public media, it has been our view that Congress should work with us and public media stations to maintain funding, implement thoughtful improvements and strengthen public media for future generations. I am endlessly optimistic that this can still happen. But if we can't stop the train, many stations in small communities and rural areas will go dark over the next six months, and the loss could be*

*consequential, without their alerting systems at work, and with the loss of educational opportunity, news, and information, across our nation.*

*I thank you again for your diligent and resolute support of public media, and I invite other directors to make remarks, then we will hear from our CPB Chief Executive Officer Pat Harrison.”*

Ms. Kaplan’s remarks as delivered:

*“Thank you, Madam Chair. My beloved State of Alaska is in mourning. During the Senate deliberation of the Rescission bill there was a 7.2 earthquake in Sandpoint, Alaska, in the Aleutians, followed by a tsunami warning. The southeast coast of Alaska was part of that tsunami warning where 2 million people, residents and tourists from all over the world and all over America were visiting this summer.*

*I saw a post on social media from somewhere in the US saying that the station in Sandpoint didn't really give the alert. It was a commercial station who sent it out. Well, guess what? There is no commercial station in Sandpoint. There's only one station in Sandpoint; KSDP, supported 90% by the corporation for public broadcasting*

*In Seattle last week KUOW radio raised 1.5 million dollars in 10 hours from their listeners who are concerned about the CPB cuts. That's wonderful. Guess what? There are 25 other stations people in Seattle can listen to, but they choose to listen to KUOW because there's something they're getting there that they can't get anywhere else. Fair news, local information, local goings on and a lot of culture and community life in their community that they can't get on any other station. In Sitka, Alaska, the same day they also went on the air for 24 hours to raise money for their listeners because of the CPB cuts. They raised \$28,000. That's more than \$3 for every man, woman, and child in Sitka.*

*That's the problem. The local small radio stations do not have the opportunities that there are in other places. There are no corporations to raise money from. There are no wealthy individuals to raise money from. This is emergency time in my state, because right now, if KSDP were to go off the air, there would be no information coming from that community about an earthquake or a tsunami telling people where to go for safety or even telling them when the tsunami warning was lifted.*

*This is not a frill, and this is not a joke, and this is not time for political rhetoric. These are real people. They're Americans. They live in places to bring the fish and the tourism and the timber and the gold and the silver and the zinc and the other products, the oil that our country needs. They live in a very, very challenging environment in many cases, but they perform a service for our economy to make Americans whole by providing the raw materials, the fish, and so on. The trees that our country depends on. They deserve better than this in these communities.*

*I want to say I am so grateful for our President, Pat Harrison and her team for fighting the good fight, and we will continue. I want to say thank you to my fellow CPB board members. We have not only been chastised, but we’ve also been sued. And then, just last week, 3 of us were personally sued for serving in a public service role on a board where we were nominated by the*

*President of the United States and confirmed unanimously by the Senate of the United States. Now we are being sued for continuing to serve on this board. It's not right and I want to tip my hat to the station managers, the producers who have worked so hard to see this outcome not occur. You are the real heroes here. We're the funding source. You do the hard work every day as a public service to America, and I honor you. Thank you, Madam. Chair."*

Ms. Sembler's remarks as delivered:

*"I'll just add that I thank you both because you both spoke so eloquently, and I really appreciate how you phrased your comments. I would just highlight and underscore and boldface the thank you, and the gratitude to our staff. The work that they're doing now is so difficult, and I just want them to know that I'm appreciative for one and support them, and I'm here to assist in any way that I can. But the other comments about the communities, about the stations, about the people that work at those stations, and about the importance that we have in our country. I couldn't agree more and thank you for saying it so beautifully, Diane and Ruby."*

### **President's Remarks**

Remarks as delivered:

*"Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you for your leadership, and Diane Kaplan, that was so eloquent. And I hope that those who are listening – the press, general managers, the general public – can understand that even though we're the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, we're a corporation that really cares deeply, and we're connected to the success of public media for future generations. And you can tell what kind of board we have by the statements they just made.*

*I really don't like saying this because it's something I haven't said in a great time except for highly personal things. But it is with really great sorrow for our country that I talk to you right now. An American institution, public media, that has enhanced our civil society, our democracy, supported the well-being of Americans for decades, one that is supported by a majority of the American voters – Republicans, Democrats, Independents – is being dismantled, despite the extraordinary efforts made by public media's general managers, all the people that Ruby mentioned, and Diane, board members, volunteer supporters, who called, they emailed, they met with their representatives to share what public media means to them. And we've received so many of these letters, handwritten from families, from children. It's really heartbreaking.*

*I do want to thank the leadership of APTS and PBS and the staff at NPR and PBS, and APTS, and the many members of Congress and their tireless staff, who really showed steadfast support for public media, including the bipartisan Public Broadcasting Caucus led by Congressmen Mark Amodei, Dan Goldman, as well as Brian Fitzpatrick of Pennsylvania, Nicole Malliotakis and Mike Turner of Ohio, who opposed the rescission.*

*But mostly, I want to thank Senators Collins and Murkowski. It's a lonely thing, what Tom said to me: 'Success has many parents and failure is an orphan.'*

*We were so proud to see Senator Collins and Senator Murkowski stand there, despite threats, despite a lot of challenges we don't even know about, advocating on behalf of their constituents*

*who rely on and value public media station services and recognize that these funding cuts will hurt rural stations first and foremost. Diane put a face on all those people who are going to be hurt.*

*For nearly 60 years, CPB has supported public media with a single goal: to serve the American people in ways that have enriched their lives. We share data, research, and real stories with Congress that prove the measurable impact of the work that all of these general managers, all of these content providers were doing, including Ready To Learn, American Graduate, FRONTLINE, which helps Americans better understand the world around them but still applying the gold standard for editorial integrity and transparency. Local news coverage, agricultural reports, weather conditions, market updates, decision making in rural communities and on and on, public media's emergency alert systems. CPB's investments in local stations, which deliver unique, tangible benefits to the communities they serve, and they uphold the American values that shape the nation's future.*

*The values stem from Mister Rogers: help people. Help people beyond your neighbors. 'Look at everyone as a neighbor' sounds so simplistic and naive right now, but it's the core of who we are as a people, if that's who we want to be as a people.*

*The fact is that poll after poll, and one that even CPB had done, really shows strong bipartisan support for federal funding for public media. And people value this service that is local, noncommercial, and trustworthy, especially in a time and an era dominated by misinformation and social media algorithms. If I were a parent of young kids today, I don't know what I'd do. The things that are coming over through social media are destructive and dangerous.*

*We provided a safe place for them, not just in terms of learning, but feeling good about themselves, getting stronger, and learning to love learning and education. How could anybody think that's wrong? Why would anybody want Ready To Learn to go away? I wish I could get my head around this. It doesn't make sense. I think things need to change, but you don't end something that's successful and that's desired by the entire populace because you're angry at one thing or another. It's not a legitimate reason to shut down everything.*

*There are people who are really responding to the desire to have news that's not biased. Fair story choices are a reasonable conversation. In fact, one of our polls showed that people support public media overwhelmingly, and they would like perhaps an ombudsman or a Blue Ribbon Commission, reasonable things to fix it, to improve it. It's what we've done for 60 years.*

*I may point out that the BBC is celebrating over 102 years of continuous service, and the British people have to pay a tax on each household to get this. They value it so much they pay the tax, probably complaining a lot, but they pay it. They couldn't imagine letting go of the BBC. Japan has the same situation, 100 years. We are going to end public media after 60 years in the United States of America? It's unfathomable.*

*Despite the fact that we have really strong support, Congress voted to eliminate CPB's advance appropriation. By how much, by what kind of margin? 100%? No. 95%? No. 75, 50, 40? 2 votes. Two votes and we are dismantled. Does that seem democratic? I don't know.*

*I think though, that if we look at it a little deeply without the emotion I'm expressing right now, I would say that the narrowness of that vote reflects how conflicted many members were.*

*Many of them did express their support for local stations, but they failed to recognize that CPB is the foundation, the linchpin of the entire system. Oh, and by the way, now what happens? We defunded CPB. Now what happens? And that's the question everybody is asking.*

*Because without CPB, I would think you would want an orderly, accountable distribution of funds that prevents waste and inefficiency. Without CPB, rural and smaller stations, those least able to replace federal support would be at immediate risk. Since its founding, we have faithfully carried out our mission as steward of the federal investment in public media. I cannot say enough about the people I work with and this board. That's their agenda, really, to leave public media better than we found it.*

*It strengthened the public media system. We've delivered benefits for the American people.*

*As an independent, nonprofit corporation chartered by Congress, Ruby's words should be really emblazoned in gold or bronze over our doors. CPB has served as a vital firewall between federal funding and the editorial decisions behind the content Americans rely on each day and so much more. We've distributed more than 70% of our funding to more than 1,500 locally owned public radio and television stations, and we've also strengthened public media's continuous evolution and innovation in digital content distribution, advancing a system that is always reflective of and responsive to our shareholders, the American people.*

*I don't know what else to say about our board and our chair and our incredible, incredible staff. And I can tell you we have kept members of Congress informed. They have all the data, they have all the proof points, all the research, all the polling. We continue to prove how public media upholds the highest standards of trust and continuously works to maintain that trust.*

*Everybody wants to know what's going to happen next.*

*The same commitment that we have brought to all these years of service as CPB, we're going to bring to the next steps, which are some known and some unknown. Primarily, we're going to try to meet our remaining funding obligations to public media grantees while working to implement a winddown. Next week, we're going to be meeting with staff to discuss how these cuts impact CPB specifically.*

*We're pursuing two parallel strategies as we continue to do everything possible to secure annual appropriations for FY2026.*

*We're actively preparing for the possibility of closeout or transition funding should Congress not reverse course. It's very difficult: hope on the one side and acceptance on the other. It's a clash of where we really want to be.*

*To say we're entering a period of profound change for CPB and public media is really obvious, but it's going to take time to fully examine and meet in a fair way, the comprehensive impact eliminating federal funding that it will have, not only on public media – it's on the American*

*people, many of whom haven't followed this and will wonder what happened. Somebody's going to have to tell them what happened.*

*As we have further clarity, CPB is going to host webinars to share updates, answer questions about what lies ahead, including our investments and perhaps with the entire system. In the meantime, please contact me. You'll have my e-mail, or Deb Sanchez or Kathy Merritt, anybody who you see on this screen, Clayton Barsoum, Board members. If you need immediate answers, I don't know if we have them, but we'll try to get them.*

*I want to say something. This is my own little indulgence. Of course, we're going to work for all of you as long as we can, and I want to thank everybody. I arrived at CPB 20 years ago, and since that time, I've had the opportunity to work with just the absolute best, most mission-focused people I have ever met. And do you know what is interesting to me? I couldn't tell you, despite the strong personal relationships I have with many of you, which way you vote. It never, ever came up. All we talked about was how we could make things better.*

*We all hope, of course, for a positive outcome, but as my father used to tell me – I thought it was rather cruel when I was young: 'Hope is not a plan.'*

*If public media, though, stays united and it works together, you can arrive at the best achievable outcome. A small group of dedicated people who put mission ahead of self-interest can triumph. And I know Tom is going to kill me after I get through with this, but Tom, with apologies to Shakespeare and King Henry V, whose ragtag army was outnumbered by the French at the Battle of Agincourt, but won despite those odds, King Henry said, after winning the battle:*

*“And those now against us shall think themselves accursed they were not here.*

*And hold their honor cheap when any speaks.*

*That fought with us upon St. Crispin's Day.”*

*Aim for that win for public media.”*

Mr. Rothman expressed deep gratitude for Ms. Harrison's leadership and character. There were no other comments.

### **Executive Session**

Chair Calvert closed the meeting for executive session at 2:35 pm ET. The meeting adjourned in executive session.

*[The minutes for these discussions are contained in the executive session record of July 24, 2025.]*