

**MINUTES  
PUBLIC SESSION  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING  
WASHINGTON, D.C.  
Wednesday, April 10 – Thursday, April 11, 2024**

**Call to Order**

Chair Ross called to order the public session of the Board of Directors at 11:08 am Eastern Time on Wednesday, April 10, 2024. The following directors participated:

Laura G. Ross, Chair;  
Ruby Calvert, Vice Chair;  
Miriam Hellreich;  
Diane Kaplan;  
Bruce M. Ramer (*virtually*);  
Tom Rothman; and  
Liz Sembler.

Kathy Im was absent.

The following officers and staff were also in attendance:

Patricia Harrison, President and Chief Executive Officer;  
Michael Levy, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer;  
Teresa Safon, Senior Vice President, Chief of Staff and Corporate Secretary;  
Evan Slavitt, Senior Vice President and General Counsel;  
West Smithers, Senior Vice President and General Counsel;  
Bill Tayman, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer;  
Anne Brachman, Senior Vice President, External Affairs;  
Stacey Decker, Senior Vice President, Innovation and System Strategies;  
Kathy Merritt, Senior Vice President, Radio, Journalism and CSG Services;  
Deb Sanchez, Senior Vice President, Educational Media and Learning Experiences;  
Kathryn Washington, Senior Vice President, Television Content;  
Stephen Wolfe, Chief Technology Officer, Senior Vice President, Information Technology;  
Kate Arno, Vice President, Community Service Grants and Station Initiatives;  
Deborah Carr, Vice President, Operations and Strategy;  
Brendan Daly, Vice President, External Affairs and Communications;  
Michael Fragale, Vice President and General Manager, Education Strategy and Content;  
Beth Jacobs, Vice President, Digital Strategy and Innovation;  
Joy Lin, Vice President, Journalism;  
Cheraine Stanford, Vice President, Television Content;  
Beth Walsh, Vice President, System Strategies;  
Jacquie Gales Webb, Vice President, Radio;  
Sarah Kildall, Board Affairs Manager; and  
Katherine Donohue, Executive Coordinator, Office of the Corporate Secretary.

The following guests were also in attendance:

Louise Dubé, CEO, iCivics;  
Joanna Kakissis, Ukraine Correspondent and Bureau Chief, NPR;

Eric Marrapodi, Vice President for News Programming, NPR (Day 2);  
 Sara Just, Senior Executive Producer, PBS NewsHour and Senior Vice President, WETA  
 (Day 2);  
 Steve Bass, President and CEO, Oregon Public Broadcasting (Day 2) *(virtually)*; and  
 Ken Doctor, CEO, Lookout Local, Inc. (Day 2) *(virtually)*.

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

Chair Ross called for a motion to adopt the revised meeting agenda and close the meeting for agenda items 7 through 12. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the agenda was adopted unanimously as presented.

### **Invitation to Disclose Conflicts of Interest**

In accordance with the CPB Code of Ethics for Directors, Chair Ross invited directors to disclose possible conflicts of interest regarding the meeting agenda. Ms. Sembler reported on her previous service on the foundation board of the Poynter Institute. There were no other disclosures.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Chair Ross called for a motion to approve the minutes of the public sessions of the February 13, 2024, meeting. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the minutes were approved as presented. *(7 in favor, 1 absent)*

### **Chair and Directors' Remarks**

Chair Ross expressed appreciation to Mr. Tayman and Mr. Smithers for their years of service to CPB, and invited Ms. Sembler to present the resolution honoring Mr. Tayman.

#### *Resolution of Appreciation for Bill Tayman*

Ms. Sembler expressed her personal thanks to Mr. Tayman, noting their long working relationship through the Audit and Finance Committee, and read aloud the resolution of appreciation.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the resolution was approved. *(7 in favor, 1 absent)*.

#### *Resolution of Appreciation for West Smithers*

Mr. Ramer offered personal remarks about Messrs. Tayman and Smithers' dedication, professionalism and contributions to CPB, and read aloud the resolution of appreciation honoring Mr. Smithers.

Chair Ross called for a motion to adopt the resolution of appreciation. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the resolution was approved. *(7 in favor, 1 absent)*

#### *Resolution of Condolence for Joyce Slocum*

Chair Ross read aloud the resolution of condolence for the family and colleagues of Joyce Slocum, chief administrative officer, general counsel, and interim CEO of NPR, and president and CEO of Texas Public Radio. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the resolution was approved. *(7 in favor, 1 absent)*

### *Resolution of Condolence for Ronald Bernstein*

Ms. Calvert read aloud the resolution of condolence for the family and colleagues of Ronald Bornstein, vice president of telecommunication at CPB, acting president of NPR, and a recipient of the Edward R. Murrow Award. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the resolution was approved. *(7 in favor, 1 absent)*

### **Interconnection Committee Chair Report**

Ms. Calvert reported that the Interconnection Committee met that morning. She reported that more updates would be provided during the executive session.

### **President's Report**

Ms. Harrison thanked Messrs. Tayman and Smithers for their leadership, friendship and guidance, advancing CPB and public media system through challenging times, economically and politically, including a global pandemic. Ms. Harrison reported that Mr. Stromann will serve as acting CFO while the search for a permanent CFO continues. This quarter, CPB also welcomed Mr. Slavitt to CPB as senior vice president and general counsel.

Ms. Harrison reported that on March 22, the House and Senate passed the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024, which provides \$535 million for CPB in FY 2026, upholding the two-year advance appropriation for public media. In addition, for FY 2024, the bill provided \$60 million for the public media interconnection system and digital infrastructure; \$31 million for the Ready To Learn program at the Department of Education; and \$40 million for the Next Generation Warning System grant program at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Ms. Harrison congratulated the producers of the CPB-funded FRONTLINE/Associated Press documentary, *20 Days in Mariupol*, which won the Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature Film. This is FRONTLINE's first Oscar win. It has brought global attention to public media's high-quality journalism.

Ms. Harrison reported that she, Ms. Safon, and Ms. Garfinkel visited Nashville Public Television (NPT) for a series of meetings hosted by its President and CEO Becky Magura, providing opportunities to interact with the NPT Board and the general managers of WTCI Chattanooga, WCTE Cookeville and WKNO Memphis.

Ms. Harrison reported on CPB's Civic Spark initiative. CPB is working with America250, a nonpartisan commission to commemorate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United States, as well as More Perfect, which works in partnership with presidential centers and other civic organizations, businesses, and foundations. Ms. Harrison reported that throughout the pandemic, most Americans went out of their way to help their neighbors and fellow Americans, contrary to the narrative on social media and cable news that Americans are more divided than ever. An overwhelming majority of Americans agree to our basic tenets of democracy and freedom of speech, press and the right to vote. CPB is working to continue this effort to improve the way Americans perceive one another.

### **Update on Civic Education and Engagement**

Deb Sanchez, senior vice president, Educational Media and Learning Experiences, noted trends about how past disinvestment in civic education has resulted in a lack of civics knowledge

among youth and how misinformation and harmful online content leave young people confused, unable to develop informed opinions, and decrease confidence in public and political institutions. She reported that there has been a renewed emphasis on civic education, and CPB is working in partnership with organizations like More Perfect and iCivics.

Ms. Sanchez reviewed CPB's investments in civic education for formal and informal educational settings. CPB's support for the GBH U.S. History collection on PBS LearningMedia has helped public media fill curriculum gaps in middle and high school U.S. history education, and a new Civics Collection will launch in fall 2024 to educate students about their constitutional rights and governmental policy issues. CPB's funding for children's content introduces important, age-appropriate civics-focused and public media content across social media and video platforms ensures access to learning about civics for general audiences. She shared two videos that showcase new children's content and demonstrate public media's commitment to reinforcing essential civic knowledge and skills.

### *iCivics*

Ms. Sanchez introduced Louise Dubé, CEO of iCivics, an organization that promotes civic learning and engagement nationwide. CPB recently sponsored iCivics' Civic Learning Week, which was held in March 2024. Ms. Dubé provided an overview of iCivics' history and mission. Founded by Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, iCivics seeks to educate Americans about their civic duties, free of charge and in a nonpartisan manner. Ms. Dubé spoke about the role of legislation at the state and federal level to improve access to civic education. An overwhelming majority of the public, on both sides of the aisle, believe that access to civic education and public media is vital to our democracy. Ms. Dubé thanked CPB and public media for supporting civic education.

Ms. Hellreich asked what the partnership between CPB and iCivics will mean for teachers in the classroom. Ms. Dubé responded that teachers will be able to educate their students about voting and their civic duties, and that this program can be expanded with additional funding to educate kids nationwide. Mr. Ramer urged that CPB do everything it can with its partners and on its own to support civic education. Ms. Sembler asked about the nonpartisan nature of iCivics. Ms. Dubé responded that iCivics has an independent review council to ensure that all content produced is nonpartisan and the team that creates content is careful to cover a range of views, consulting with numerous sources and working to respect the diverse views of the nation. There were no further questions.

### *Civic Content and Engagement Initiative*

Anne Brachman, senior vice president, External Affairs, reported that CPB's partnerships with More Perfect and America 250 are distinct but share a goal in engaging Americans in our civil society in the lead-up to the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the nation. Ms. Brachman reported that CPB is developing a short-form, digital content and engagement initiative to support local public media stations in showcasing Americans making a difference for both their local communities and the nation. The "Civic Spark" initiative will provide local stations with opportunities to engage with new audiences through digital content. The initiative will include research and development and a CPB-funded pilot project led by a public media station.

## **Update from NPR on Ukraine Coverage**

Kathy Merritt, senior vice president, Radio, Journalism, and CSG Services, reported that since the Russian invasion of Ukraine in early 2022, CPB has provided significant support to public media's signature news programs FRONTLINE, PBS NewsHour, NPR's newsmagazines, and PRX's The World, for coverage of the war. CPB support to NPR alone has totaled \$3 million. These funds helped establish NPR's presence in Western Ukraine and a bureau in Kyiv. For the past 16 months, NPR's bureau in Kyiv has been critical to the network's ability to provide comprehensive reporting on the issues and events occurring in Ukraine and the surrounding region.

Ms. Merritt introduced Joanna Kakissis, NPR correspondent and Ukraine bureau chief, who thanked CPB for its support. Ms. Kakissis presented clips about the war's impact on various sectors of Ukraine's population, and reported on how NPR has worked to report on daily life in Ukraine today. Ms. Kakissis thanked her Ukrainian colleagues for their work as interpreters, translators, and researchers. Ms. Kakissis concluded her report by talking about what it is like to work and report in a war zone.

Mr. Rothman expressed admiration and support for Ms. Kakissis' work in Ukraine and asked about the level of domestic support for President Zelensky and Ukraine's long-term prospects if the United States ceases to fund the war effort. Ms. Kakissis answered that despite a drop in support due to the failure of the Ukrainian counteroffensive in 2023, the majority of Ukrainians still support President Zelensky. Discussion ensued regarding domestic Ukrainian politics and public opinion about negotiating peace with Russia.

Chair Ross and members of the Board thanked Ms. Kakissis for her update and insights. There were no further questions.

*The meeting adjourned for lunch at 1:23 pm Eastern Time.*

*The meeting adjourned in executive session.*

*[The minutes for these discussions are contained in the executive session record of April 10, 2024.]*

## **Public Session**

Public session resumed at 9:35 am Eastern Time on Thursday, April 11.

## **Digital Infrastructure Update**

### *Single Sign On*

Chair Ross introduced Ms. Jacobs, vice president, Digital Strategy and Innovation, to provide an update on Single-On (SSO), which allows users to log in to multiple services using one login ID. Ms. Jacobs reported that SSO was launched in February and is now available to 200 stations. She reported on the promotion and support of the launch, which included two educational webinars. She reported that 51 public media organizations have completed the Onboarding Interest Forms and two stations have launched SSO on their websites, with nine stations expecting to launch in April and May. A third cohort of eight stations are expected to launch SSO on their websites in May as well. Ms. Jacobs reported that 12.8 million unique public media users have created an SSO account or logged in using their SSO credentials. She reported that CPB management and PBS are discussing the next four-year phase of the SSO initiative.

### *Grove (Content Management System)*

Ms. Jacobs next reported on Grove, a content management system, where it is expected that 207 stations will be live on Grove when phase 1 concludes on May 31, which equals 73% of all NPR member stations who are eligible to migrate. Ms. Jacobs reported that NPR will also be migrating their newsroom at npr.org to Grove. She provided examples of new features and functionalities to expand the reach of and engagement with content. NPR will provide CPB management with a draft proposal for Grove phase 2, which will include ongoing support, as well as new product enhancements.

### **Journalism Updates**

#### *Election Coverage Update*

Ms. Merritt reported that public media has a station-based journalism workforce of more than 4,000, who work collaboratively with their counterparts at national public media news organizations, giving audiences a comprehensive picture of local, state, regional, national, and global issues and events. Ms. Merritt reported that CPB has invested significant funding amounts in support of election coverage. In the last national election in 2020, CPB grants totaled nearly \$8 million. In this election cycle, CPB has made \$6.7 million in grants to date – including \$1.5 million to the America Amplified project, which helps stations in all 50 states produce voter FAQs and voter guides. CPB also provided \$1.4 million to NPR, and is in discussions with the PBS NewsHour on a funding grant.

Ms. Merritt introduced Eric Marrapodi, vice president for news programming at NPR, and Sara Just, senior executive producer of PBS NewsHour, and a senior vice president at WETA. Mr. Marrapodi reported that NPR’s newsroom strategy this election cycle is “clarity, rigor, and creativity,” and has four main themes: the vote, the voters, the issues, and the records. Mr. Marrapodi reported on NPR’s coverage of the primaries and its plans for the remainder of the election cycle, including the Democratic and Republican National Conventions, and Election Night.

Ms. Sembler asked about NPR’s focus on clarity, rigor, and creativity, over objectivity, accuracy, and fairness. Mr. Marrapodi responded that objectivity and accuracy are the foundation of NPR’s reporting, and that clarity, rigor, and creativity build on that essential journalistic foundation. Chair Ross asked how NPR differentiates their reporting from other news sources. Mr. Marrapodi provided examples of how NPR’s reporting is different from “horserace” reporting. Ms. Kaplan asked Mr. Marrapodi for a comment on the essay by NPR business editor Uri Berliner that was recently published in Free Press. Mr. Marrapodi referred Ms. Kaplan to the statement issued by Edith Chapin, senior vice president and editor in chief at NPR. There were no further questions.

*Miriam Hellreich exited the meeting at 10:10 am Eastern Time.*

Ms. Just reported on the PBS NewsHour’s election coverage plans, which will focus on the voters and the mood of the country, specifically in the swing states. Ms. Just reported on what the NewsHour is doing to maintain their audience’s trust, as well as the importance of election integrity and combatting misinformation; the wording of headlines and captions, and which guests are invited on the show. The NewsHour’s reporting is aided by news reporting from their partners at local PBS stations, as well as NPR. The NewsHour has more time to work on their stories than many commercial news organizations do, which allows them to provide more context and factchecking. Ms. Just spoke about her team of reporters, highlighting the

NewsHour’s work with Student Reporting Labs, as well as NewsHour senior correspondent Judy Woodruff’s recent documentary series “America at a Crossroads.” Ms. Just reported that the NewsHour’s mission is to help their audience be informed voters. Ms. Just concluded her report.

Ms. Calvert asked Ms. Just about polling and the different issues that are important to different age groups. Ms. Just reported that trends in their digital reporting, which is most viewed by a younger audience, affect which stories they decide to feature on air, as it is important to the NewsHour to report on stories that appeal to a wide range of audiences. Chair Ross asked about future plans for “America at a Crossroads.” Ms. Just reported that there is going to be a one-hour primetime special, as well as a townhall meeting. Ms. Just also reported on a new project, “PBS News Weekly,” a 30-minute digital compilation of the week’s news stories. There were no further questions.

*Chair Ross called for a break at 10:36 am Eastern Time.*

*The meeting resumed at 10:48 am Eastern Time.*

*Update on “Lookout Eugene-Springfield Oregon”*

Ms. Merritt introduced Steve Bass, president and CEO of Oregon Public Broadcasting (OPB), and Ken Doctor, CEO of Lookout Local, Inc., to report on their digital-first collaboration to create a newsroom in the Eugene/Springfield urban area. The collaboration hopes to be a sustainable, replicable model that can be applied throughout the country. CPB plans to fund two reporters who would be on the payroll of OPB as well as embedded at Lookout Eugene-Springfield.

Mr. Bass reported on how the region around Eugene had become a news desert and the importance of meeting the community’s information needs. OPB and Lookout Eugene-Springfield are identifying areas of collaboration from editorial content to newsletter distribution. OPB is already a major contributor of content to Eugene’s newspaper.

Mr. Doctor reported on the steps they are taking to build Lookout Eugene-Springfield, including raising \$4 million, partnering with the University of Oregon’s School of Journalism and Communications, and hiring staff. The goal is to launch at the end of 2024 or the beginning of 2025. Mr. Doctor reported on their revenue model, which includes membership, subscription fees, and a limited paywall; some stories have to be behind a paywall to encourage membership, but most stories and all the newsletters are free.

Mr. Rothman asked about their relationship with Google, to which Mr. Doctor replied that Google results in one third of their views. If Google decides to start publishing local news content, Lookout Eugene-Springfield will have an advantage by already having built strong local connections. Discussion ensued about competitors and raising public awareness. Ms. Sembler further asked about Lookout Santa Cruz’s practice of endorsing candidates, and whether Lookout Eugene-Springfield would do the same. Mr. Bass noted that while OPB and Lookout will collaborate in many areas, they will need to separate certain activities, such as political endorsements. Ms. Calvert asked about OPB’s coverage of state government, to which Mr. Bass responded that their state government team has grown to five people, and they share their content with their public media partners for free. There were no further questions.

**Future Agenda Items**

Chair Ross invited board members to share any suggestions for future agenda items, noting that she, Ms. Calvert, or Ms. Safon could also be contacted with suggestions after the board meeting.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 11:37 am Eastern Time.