

WJFF Radio Catskill Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

May 19, 2025 at 6:00pm

Meeting Location: All remote

Board Members Present: Donald Almquist, Jeff Barnes, Dale Blagrove, Amy Brightfield, Katie Childs, Barb Demarest, Leif Johansen, Tanya Kalivas, Pete Madden, Ilya Marritz, Krissy Smith, Sally Stuart

Board Members absent: Gerard Finn, Jill Fruchter

Staff present: Mimi, Tim

Members of the Public present: Mary Ann Novak (to present the results of the audit)

Approved: 6/23/2025

A quorum being present, Sally called the meeting to order at 6:06pm.

Opening updates: Sally welcomed everyone and thanked everyone who organized (Jill, Leif) and came to the March retreat meeting at The Arnold House. With the future of public media funding still uncertain, the Sullivan County Democrats are having a support rally in support of *Protect My Public Media* at a location across the street from the station. We can attend as independent individuals but can't represent WJFF as we are a non-partisan organization.

June Board Meeting: This will take place Monday, June 23rd in person at the station. This is WJFF's annual meeting that has a lot of formality to it because of the way we do our elections. The meeting is held in two parts; the first part will be a regular board meeting which closes with the election of candidates to the board of trustees. The first half of the meeting with the 'old' board ends and the second half is the meeting of the new board. In the second half, officers are elected. Anyone is welcome to run for an officer position.

Audit: Mary Ann Novak gave an overview of the results of the audit. Sally thanked Tim, Mimi and the audit committee, chaired by Dale. Once the audit is finalized, it will be submitted to CPB before the due date of May 31st. Overall it was a clean audit and a very good year for the station. We had increases in salaries and benefits but also an increase in contributions, fundraising, underwriting, grants and net assets. The station received 23% of our revenue from the CPB. We plan to increase our private support should that public funding be taken away. The audit committee has reviewed the draft and voted to accept it.

MOTION to pass this draft of the audit. (Dale/Sally)

In Favor: Donald Almquist, Jeff Barnes, Dale Blagrove, Amy Brightfield, Katie Childs, Barb Demarest, Leif Johansen, Tanya Kalivas, Pete Madden, Ilya Marritz, Krissy Smith, Sally Stuart

Abstained: None

Opposed: None

Mary Ann left the meeting at 6:21.

This is the fourth year of MMQ doing our audit. Generally speaking good practice is to evaluate your audit firm every 4-5 years and get bids from companies. (Sally doesn't personally recommend this, as MMQ has done a great job for us. They are good to work with and it's an advantage to have auditors who are both local and experts in public media.)

MOTION to approve the portion of the minutes that accepted the 2024 audit (Sally/Dale)

In Favor: Donald Almquist, Jeff Barnes, Dale Blagrove, Amy Brightfield, Katie Childs, Barb Demarest, Leif Johansen, Tanya Kalivas, Pete Madden, Ilya Marritz, Krissy Smith, Sally Stuart

Abstained: None

Opposed: None

CAB Update: (LJ Ruell/Barb) We have two members of the CAB whose terms are expiring and eligible for a second three-year term: Samantha Mango and Aaron Hicklin. The CAB would like to approve them. (Members of the CAB serve three year terms.)

MOTION to appoint both of them for second terms (Sally/Barb)

(Note that longtime WJFF-er Dick Riseling is going to be ending his second term with CAB in June. We'll send him a letter of thanks on behalf of the board.)

Can/should the CAB have a more formal presence at WJFF events? How can CAB stay engaged with the community to support the station. (Many thanks to LJ who volunteers and tables for WJFF at events.) While the CAB operates independently of the Board of Trustees, Sally recommends finding a way for the board and the CAB to get together once a year.

Consent agenda & committee meeting minutes: 3.25.25 BOT Minutes, 4.9.25 Finance Committee Minutes, 4.24.25 Finance Committee Minutes, 3.03.25 Nom and Gov Committee Minutes, and 2.28.25 Executive Committee Minutes

MOTION to approve the consent agenda items (Amy/Sally)

In Favor: Donald Almquist, Jeff Barnes, Dale Blagrove, Amy Brightfield, Katie Childs, Barb Demarest, Leif Johansen, Tanya Kalivas, Pete Madden, Ilya Marritz, Krissy Smith, Sally Stuart

Abstained: None

Opposed: None

Staff report (Tim/Mimi)

Spring Fund drive started strong, then tariffs were announced and donations got quiet but ended strong.

- The note that Sally sent out was a very successful rallying cry.
- We surpassed our 60K goal; gifts were smaller but there were more of them.
- Sound supporters continue to grow and many are giving at a higher level.
- We did try to offer some additional premiums and perks but it didn't seem to move the needle. Bethel Woods tickets are the one premium that do best.
- The on-air challenges get the most response. People hearing their donations will be doubled (matched) and this incentivizes them to give.

Updates:

WJFF was accepted as a new member of Independent Non-profit News. We were able to demonstrate that we now produce enough original news content to be a member. Potential benefits of the membership include health insurance, libel Insurance and other support services we can tap into.

We also received a small grant from the American Press Institute as part of their Influencer Learning Cohort. This involves engaging local influencers to create content about WJFF. Mimi & Tim have been in conversation with three different influencers – Noah Kalina, Common Ground Bookstore, Mariel Fiori, La Voz.

Federal Funding:

- FEMA has issued a second stop work order. We have received no further advice. This may be related to the change in leadership in FEMA

It's a reimbursement grant, meaning we must spend our funds and then we request reimbursement. We've purchased the transmitter and gotten reimbursed for it but have not spent the money to have it installed and get it up and running. (That's part of the

second stop work order.) It's about 10k in labor and 5 k in secondary equipment to make the transmitter operational. Sally recommends that we wait a month or two and see what happens. The FEMA also funds a generator which we haven't purchased.

- Hudson Valley Gives is coming up. There are a few moments during the day where there are matching donations; that's when it benefits us most to donate. Mimi will share the specific times.

Programming Updates (Tim)

Kim is going to be the new host of Farm and Country. Thane is taking a ten week break from his jazz show. Overall, we need to recruit and train people in case long-time hosts want to take a break or eventually leave their shows.

We have fabulous new interns; one from SUNY New Paltz and three from NYU (from their masters in journalism program)

Potential federal defunding CPB

The current budget that is moving through Congress doesn't affect CPB pro or con. The best thing to do is for all of us to contact our members in Congress. We don't want to sound the alarm bell until the threat is real. There hasn't been an executive order yet. We will really need to rally support and funds when that happens. Strategically we sent out a postcard to all of our PA donors encouraging them to contact their Congressperson.

Finance report (Katie)

The final 2024 financial statements prepared by NETA and audited by MMQ were presented and reviewed. As of the close of the fiscal year, the station reported a 15% increase in revenue and 6% increase in operating costs, with a \$44k net surplus.

It was noted that the mortgage rate is 7.25%, and that the station has the option to revisit this rate in June of 2026.

Tim, Mimi and Katie have been working on the application for libel insurance coverage. Additionally, Katie is working on a Hold Harmless and Indemnity clause for non-employee contributors. She will work on this with Tanya and present to the Board for approval.

Personnel Committee update (Jeff)

The committee has completed Tim's review and is setting up a date to meet with him. The plan is to formalize the review process for all the staff members.

Nom and Gov update (Pete)

We are ready to move forward on the three new board member candidates. Pete spoke to Josh Fine about holding his application until next year and he agreed.

Strategic Plan update (Leif)

The community survey is going out at the end of this month. This year we're surveying both listeners and non-listeners. Hoping that pushing it later will help capture summer residents.

MOTION at 7:39 move into closed session to discuss confidential financial matter.
(Sally/Katie)

Mimi left the meeting.

MOTION TO Exit closed session at 8:00 (Sally/Katie)

Thank you to Krissy for her contributions to the board!

MOTION to adjourn at at 8:01 (Sally/everyone)