



WJFF Radio Catskill Board of Trustees

Meeting Minutes for January 26th, 2026 at 6:00pm

Online meeting

Board Members Present: Don Almquist, Jeff Barnes, Dale Blagrove, Amy Brightfield, Katie Childs, Barb Demarest, Jill Fruchter, Matthew Goldman, Brett Hogencamp, Tanya Kalivas, Leif Johansen, Pete Madden, Ilya Marritz, Elizabeth Hope Williams

Staff Present: Tim Bruno, Mimi Bradley

Board Members Absent: none

A quorum being present, Pete called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm.

Pete welcomed everyone to the first meeting of 2026 and with all the bleak and disturbing news, he wanted to acknowledge it and open the meeting with some words of hope and inspiration in these times. He had shared an audio clip, brought to his attention by Don (who heard it on Radio Catskill), from Mirta Ojito, who was on Latino USA and said: "Are we as journalists, under more scrutiny? Now, absolutely we are. But if you've always done the same thing and you continue to do it right, I have faith that it will be okay. We've lost some of the trust that people had in media, and part of my current obsession and my thought is how do we retain what we have and how do we get it back? And the only way that I can think of is by doing our very best every day to continue to report the way we always have, to keep calm and to be as truthful and balance and fair as we know how to be." She ended with "I am very conscious that what we're doing every day it's leaving a mark in history, and that people will come back years from now to our reports and tell stories from our work today." Pete wanted to share this as a reminder of how the work we are doing in local journalism, demanding truth and accountability, is so vitally important and powerful for the present and the future. He thanked everyone for all their work and contributions.

MOTION to approve the Minutes in the consent agenda of the following meetings (Almquist/Johansen):

- 12/08/25 BOT Minutes
- 12/11/25 Finance Committee Minutes
- 12/15/25 Strategic Planning Committee Minutes

- 1/13/26 Outreach Committee Minutes
- 1/15/26 Executive Committee Minutes
- 1/21/26 Finance Committee Minutes

IN FAVOR: Don Almquist, Jeff Barnes, Dale Blagrove, Amy Brightfield, Katie Childs, Barb Demarest, Jill Fruchter, Matthew Goldman, Brett Hogencamp, Tanya Kalivas, Leif Johansen, Pete Madden, Ilya Marritz, Elizabeth Hope Williams

OPPOSED: none

Katie gave the Treasurer's Report with the final 2025 numbers to the board. Having the final numbers much earlier than last year, we are already set for the audit. In terms of revenue, we set a new record in 2025 of \$886,000 in operating revenue, mostly due to membership. We had 21% growth from 2024, while we were looking at a severe deficit, which is quite remarkable. We made \$181,000 in fund drives, a 14% increase from 2024. Sound Supporters are up 16% and our Year End Appeal was up 26%. Total membership revenue amounted to \$440,000 for the year. Our fundraising cost (mailing, donor management system, etc) is only 3% of what we bring in for membership revenue, so that is an amazing job on a shoestring budget. Our events were 95% profitable, up from 74% in 2024, owing much to eliminating the Awards Gala.

Our operating expenses were up 13.6%, 61% of that being payroll/contractors. We were over budget on payroll by 18%. We all need to be mindful of overages, as we are working on a shoestring budget, we need to address these things as a board, and document and plan for them. We reviewed our depreciation schedule and asset list, and identified assets that are no longer operable or in use, which incurred a one time loss of \$28,000 on the asset list. We had \$66,000 in depreciation on assets in 2025.

We had an operating surplus of \$169,000, which is a reason to celebrate. Katie thanked the staff's incredible work, the Public Media Bridge Fund, and our community for this success.

We budgeted for \$675,000 in revenue in 2026, so we have less of a buffer for overages, so we need to be vigilant with expenses, also we need to monitor membership and be responsive to revise the budget.

Barb mentioned for context that 5 years ago, our entire budget was around what our membership numbers were in 2025, so we've basically doubled it.

Pete reiterated that he is excited where we are, we are in pretty good shape going into 2026, despite facing some very serious challenges.

Tim opened the Staff Report by quoting an article in the NYT about KCAW which was on the verge of closing, saying it is had a huge success story, and we are so grateful, but the future is unclear.

Mimi updated the board on fundraising. The Year End Appeal exceeded the budget by \$22,000, from the continued support of the community. There were more gifts than last year. Newsmatch has approved us for additional matching funds in 2026. We were selected for the Center for Community News Faculty Champions program by the University of Vermont. We were also selected as part of Newmark J-Corp 2026 and will receive half the salary of a paid summer intern from CUNY Sullivan.

Mimi had new grantee meeting today for The Public Media Bridge Fund and they told her about how the grant is going to work and our responsibilities, that it is a combination of funding and coaching. They will give us suggestions on achieving greater sustainability and will assign us a professional coach to work with us. Press Forward is also doing this as part of the grant, so we will have two coaches this year. PMB is specifically looking at stations that partner/merge with other stations. We are eligible for continued funding if there is another grants program.

Tim said that through the Google News Initiative, we received access to the AP newsroom, so we can publish stories and photos for free, which expands our content opportunities.

We have a new award-winning volunteer who is offered to help us with our website. He will be working on the current site for the next couple of weeks, then will be working on a development plan for a new website with a planned launch in Q3. Tim also updated the board on the Radio Catskill app; he has met with the developer and shared a preliminary look at the app, which is anticipated to launch in Q2.

Leif updated the board with the Strategic Plan updates. He thanked everyone for their feedback and comments to make a comprehensive, clean, and concise document as possible and then reviewed the plan with the board commenting on local news and journalism, our expanding newsroom, community engagement, and financial stability. Next steps, we want to make sure we are listening to our community and volunteers can share their feedback on the Strategic Plan. They will post a Google form to gather feedback and have a press release, put it in the newsletter, and share with the CAB to get the word out. Then, the committee will meet to review and see if anything should be incorporated into the final Plan. Barb said she would share it with the CAB at their meeting later this week. Tim is going to put it in the newsletter. We will close feedback on March 1st, before the next full board meeting. The strategic committee will continue to meet going forward and analyze how things progress.

Pete updated the board regarding Nom and Gov, that at the last executive committee meeting, the committee voted to change the bylaws to reassign the responsibility for insurance from the Finance Committee to the Audit and Personnel committees. Ilya said Nom and Gov have not yet met this year, but the thinking is that this will be a more equitable distribution of responsibilities. They are scheduling a meeting in the next month of so. Also, Ilya noted that there are a number of board members cycling out, so they are going to review the board's needs and asked everyone to think of potential new board members.

Jill gave the board updates from Outreach. She discussed the upcoming volunteer/sound supporter events coming up: Sing Song Blue movie night, Open Mic at the Catskill Brewery. She asked the board to reach out to people to attend the events.

Barb mentioned that the CAB meeting is coming up this Thursday.

MOTION to enter a closed session discuss a confidential matter – (Madden/Childs) at 7:04pm

IN FAVOR: Don Almquist, Jeff Barnes, Dale Blagrove, Amy Brightfield, Katie Childs, Barb Demarest, Jill Fruchter, Matthew Goldman, Brett Hogencamp, Tanya Kalivas, Leif Johansen, Pete Madden, Ilya Marritz, Elizabeth Hope Williams

OPPOSED: none

MOTION to exit a closed session discuss a confidential matter (Madden/Fruchter) at 7:17pm

IN FAVOR: Don Almquist, Jeff Barnes, Dale Blagrove, Amy Brightfield, Katie Childs, Barb Demarest, Jill Fruchter, Matthew Goldman, Brett Hogencamp, Tanya Kalivas, Leif Johansen, Pete Madden, Ilya Marritz, Elizabeth Hope Williams

OPPOSED: none

Tim made a shout out to the team for the extra work they put in for storm coverage; keeping the community informed. We had over a thousand page views on our webpage.

MOTION to adjourn at 7:19pm

Submitted by Donald Almquist