LOUISIANA EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION AUTHORITY

FULL BOARD MEETING

June 13, 2024 ♦ 12:00 PM ♦ LPB Boardroom

7733 Perkins Road ♦ Baton Rouge, LA

**Members Present:** Sonny Cranch, Dan Hare, Dr. Laura Lindsay, Christopher Wegmann, David Tatman, Dr. Saundra McGuire, Ted Beasley, Elizabeth Crochet, Dr. Courtney Phillips, Sharon Reine, and Lance Harris.

**Via Teleconference:** Clarence “C.C” Copeland,Conrad Comeaux, Misty Wyble, William Bradford, and Erin Donelly

**Members Absent:**  Therese Nagem, Dr. Tina Holland, Tracie Woods, and Jeffery Thomas.

**Employees Present:** Terri Crockett, Kimberly Ducote, Kathy Scherer, Angela Bessix, Matt Tessier, Ben Johnson, Linda Midgett, and Nancy Tooraen.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chris Wegmann, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 12:00 PM.

**SWEARING IN OF NEW MEMBERS**: Matt Tessier swore in new board member Elizabeth Crochet.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**  Chris Wegmann, Chairman, asked for any public comment and there was none.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**: Dan Hare, Secretary, asked that the minutes from the LETA full board meeting of February 8, 2024, be approved. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Dr. Laura Lindsey and seconded by Dr. Saundra McGuire. With all in favor, the motion passed.

Dan Hare, Secretary, asked that the minutes from the LETA full board meeting of April 11, 2024, be approved. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Dr. Laura Lindsey and seconded by Sharon Reine. With all in favor, the motion passed.

**Production Department Update**: Linda Midgett, Executive Producer, presented updates on the following productions:

* *The Precipice*, directed by Ben Johnson and produced by Linda Midgett, won the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities award for Documentary Film of the Year and is being shopped for national distribution through American Public Television.
* *Ritual*, the PBS Digital series produced by LPB, starring Tank Ball, won the NAACP Image Award, a Webby Award, and the NAMIC Vision Award.
* *Capturing America: The Carol Highsmith Story* has almost completed filming and conversations are underway to get the film distributed nationally through PBS.

On the recommendation of the Chairman, the board moved to take the President’s Report out of order, given C.C Copeland’s travel time constraints.

**PRESIDENT’S REPORT:**

* C.C recapped a few pieces of legislation from the 2024 Legislative Session:
  + **SB 462 -** grants the governor the authority to select chairs for boards, commissions, and universities, including LETA.
  + **SB 497-** increases the number of members appointed by the governor to the Board of Ethics and allows for direct appointment of those members rather than via nomination process.
  + **SB 547 -** requires LETA to request funds for French Language educational programming in its annual budget request to the DOA.
* The FY 24-25 budget was approved with no major cuts with $2,799,000 in acquisitions and $600,395 in major repairs. Maintenance and repairs that were not funded include the parking lot, flooring, and the chiller.
* WLPB's new antenna has been installed, providing a larger coverage area.
* LPB has received its new fleet of 2024 Ford Explorers.
* Welcome to our newest staff members: Katie Stark, joining us as an Educational Service Specialist Tech, and Juliette Gregoire, taking on the role of Front Desk Receptionist.
* At the National Educational Telecommunications Association (NETA), C.C met with the Sr. VP of PBS Kids to discuss Ziggy’s Arts Adventure; C.C also met with MPT-Maryland Public TV about expanding our partnership with them to produce a $45,000 digital short for HBCU Week; C.C. also met with NETA administrators to discuss distributing Ziggy nationally.

The board returned to the Production Department update presented by Linda Midgett.

* Producers Ben Johnson and Avery White are working on a documentary on the effects of climate change.
* The Digital Production team is beginning work on a Zydeco documentary for LPB’s 50th Anniversary.
* News anchor Kara St. Cyr is leaving LPB for a job in San Francisco.

**READY TO LEARN STATE PROJECT COHORT B GRANT UPDATE:** Nancy Tooraen, head of Educational Services, gave an update on Ready to Learn. $12,000 has been granted to do project planning between April and September 2024. $85,000 has been granted to implement the project from October 2024 to September 2025. LPB was one of 14 stations to receive the grant and will work through the Louisiana Department of Health.

**LETA/ Foundation Financial reports:** David Tatman, Treasurer, presented the financial reports for LETA and the Foundation for Excellence in Louisiana Public Broadcasting. A motion to approve the LETA financials was made by David Tatman and was seconded by Dan Hare. With all in favor, the motion passed.

**Friends of LPB Report:** Terri Crockett, Friends of LPB (FLPB) Executive Director, gave the FLPB report on behalf of Therese Nagem, FLPB Chair:

* Legends - This year’s gala was another record-breaking year. FLPB raised over $360,000 between sponsorships and auctions. Sponsorship/ticket revenue: $325,000 – 14% increase.
* PowerOn Raffle - Kicked off on June 1. The grand prize is a whole house 22kW Generac Generator donated by Optimize Generator People valued at over $13,000. Runs from June 1 – September 29. Current Revenue is $9,610.
* June Pledge Drive - On-air revenue is down 21%. Major donor renewals are up 19.8%. Raffle revenue is up 10%.

**DEPUTY DIRECTOR’S REPORT:** Matt Tessier, Deputy Director, reported on the following:

* LETA will be receiving $300,000 each for WYES and WLAE as a pass-through for appropriations to those two noncommercial educational stations.
* $250,000 in funding for French-language educational programming was added to HB1, the appropriations bill, to co-produce French programming with Tele-Louisiane for another season.
* HB 265 – would have prohibited state agencies from utilizing the word "free" to describe any service financed with public funds. The bill did not pass.
* Matt recapped the administrative rule promulgated by LETA to take advantage of electronic meeting capabilities in accordance with Act 393 of 2023. The rule will be final the next time the board meets.
* LETA partnered with the Louisiana Department of Education to provide resources to homeless children residing in homeless shelters across the state. Matt demonstrated the care bag that will be distributed to 750 children in homeless shelters. As part of this initiative, LPB’s Education Services team developed Family and Community Learning (FCL) modules to train homelessness liaisons at FCL training workshops. Nancy Tooraen demonstrated some of the resources that were developed for the workshop sessions.

**CHAIRMAN’S REPORT:**

* Chris Wegmann, Chairman, reminded the board there will be no meeting in July and the next full board meeting will be August 8, 2024, with an Executive and Finance Committee meeting on September 12, 2024.
* Irene Robinson, 5th Congressional District representative, has resigned from her position on the board.
* Chris Wegmann asked everyone who did not get a headshot to be prepared to take one at the next board meeting.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

There was no other business.

**Adjournment:** Chris Wegmann, Chairman, adjourned the meeting at 1:20 PM.

Minutes prepared by Angela Bessix and Matt Tessier