

Siskiyou Media Council Minutes
Board of Directors
Regular Meeting Minutes for 11/12/2020
SMC Studio, 616 S. Weed Blvd, Suite C, Weed 9:00 AM

I. Call to order by Pres. Richard Dinges. at 9:00 am

II. Roll Call and Approval of the Agenda -

Board Present: President Richard Dinges, Director Rennie Cleland, Director Anna Guzman, Director Jeremiah LaRue

Staff Present: Executive Director Paris Petrick, Studio Director John Tomlinson, Technical Adviser Dave McAdams

III. Approval of the Agenda:

IV. Approval of the minutes: Continued to the next meeting.

V. Public Comments:

VI. Financial Reports: Continued to the next meeting.

VII. Executive Director Report: ED Petrick reported that the transition into the position of Executive Director began in late October and continued into November. Her first day in the office was November 1st, which she spent creating a schedule and getting her bearings. She hopes to transition bookkeeping duties away from President Dinges to Director Guzman, and beginning meeting with Director Guzman monthly for bookkeeping. ED Petrick hoped the first such meeting would occur in December. ED Petrick and PD Sullivan collaborated on the Madrone Hospice project for a smooth transition, with ED Petrick completing the final negotiations. ED Petrick believes the transition was pretty seamless. The previous week, SMC filmed many things, including the Madrone Hospice project. PD Sullivan assumed editing duties and would deliver the first cut one week before the December 4th broadcast date. TA McAdams was handling the YouTube premiere, SD Tomlinson would live stream to Facebook, and PD Sullivan would program the video the broadcast on the channels, all simultaneously. TA McAdams visited to help SD Tomlinson with some technical issues that producer Therese Swenson had voiced concerns about. While TA McAdams was visiting, he also helped record Read Across Siskiyou for First Five and the SCRC. The project involved 12 readers, all of whom rotated through the studio while maintaining COVID safety measures. The response has been very positive, resulting in promises of additional support for SMC. ED Petrick thanked Director LaRue for joining in, which the clients were ecstatic about. ED Petrick and TA McAdams also completed an on-location PSA shoot for Youth Empowerment Siskiyou the previous week, which ED Petrick had completed editing for premiere during the SMC's annual North State Giving Tuesday telethon. ED Petrick felt that the Youth Empowerment Siskiyou connection was particularly valuable, and the amount they paid was incredibly generous. The contract also included a masquerade ball in April, 2021. SD Tomlinson had a successful shoot with former SMC ED Audra Beylik to create a North State Giving Tuesday announcement PSA for the SMC to broadcast ahead of the event on December 1st. Beylik reported that it went very well. In October, ED Petrick contacted non-profits who had participated in the prior year's NSGT event to invite them to submit videos for SMC's telethon broadcast. Many had already submitted videos, which ED Petrick was organizing for broadcast. After today's meeting, ED Petrick would also be shooting an SMC promo for NSGT with Shareen Strauss. ED Petrick announced that the SMC's news broadcast would have two official anchors: Director LaRue (who would report on official announcements appropriate for a county sheriff), and Shareen Strauss, who is already known as the "news lady" of Siskiyou County. ED Petrick was hoping the first episode would be ready before Christmas (either Friday the 11th or Friday the 18th). Now that she has stepped back into the role of Executive Director, ED Petrick pledged her dedication to bringing the SMC to a place of consistent quality and sustainability. She would also commit to recruiting additional sponsors, and, with the help of Siskiyou Works, volunteers. ED Petrick also stressed the need for more board members to spread around responsibility and eliminate the several "single-point failures" in which the SMC currently operates. ED Petrick stated that no one

person should be the only person who knows how to complete a certain task. In order to hit the ground running when the pandemic resolves, ED Petrick requested that each member who regularly performs a specialized task prepare written or videotaped instructions for those tasks. ED Petrick also requested that board members familiarize themselves with the duties and responsibilities of the board members, which are in a handbook at the office. ED Petrick proposed an “SMC Day” after social distancing has ended, at which time everyone would gather over lunch to learn more about their duties and the functioning of the organization. She believed this could inspire SMC members and shine a light on discrepancies that can then be tackled as a team. After that, SMC could host “Producer Day” to meet and train potential producers.

VIII. Program Director Report: Due to illness, PD Sullivan was not present.

IX. Studio Director Report: SD Tomlinson reported closure of the studio in response to the rising number of COVID-19 cases in Siskiyou County. The new equipment, he added, was not everything he had hoped for. While it did result in fewer glitches and a more polished final product, the new switcher was not able to handle all of the tasks required, resulting in the need to continue to rely on software rather than a pure hardware setup, as hoped. SD Tomlinson also noted a large gap in religious programming, and proposed that SMC team up with local churches to broadcast their Sunday services. ED Petrick suggested that they become nonprofit members of the SMC. SD Tomlinson saw this as a way to draw hundreds more viewers who would not normally watch SMC’s channels, and perhaps also raise funds during NSGT. He asked for help from board members to connect with the local religious community. President Dinges asked if it would be possible to create a commercial to request support “from individuals like you” (in the style of PBS). President Dinges asked if it would be possible to rebroadcast programs from elsewhere, which SMC had done in the past. ED Petrick said that we could, but she would prefer to focus on local productions and supported SD Tomlinson’s proposals regarding religious broadcasts.

X. News Director Report:

XI. OLD BUSINESS

A. Discussion: New Studio and Equipment – ED Petrick described the final floor plan of the revised studio, and TA McAdams added to SD Tomlinson’s earlier comments that the new equipment solved the previous technical issues and was working with SD Tomlinson on additional improvements that could be made to the equipment’s configuration. He also believed the new equipment was going to excel at live, field broadcasting. President Dinges thanked the staff for their excellent work on the new studio.

B. Discussion: Mt. Shasta, Weed, Dunsmuir, Yreka Contracts – President Dinges reported that Dunsmuir wanted to transition to a monthly invoice cycle. President Dinges stated that he had completed the new contract for Mt. Shasta, and would probably have the contract for Weed ready in the next day or two. He also found the existing agreements, which he would soon go over with ED Petrick before getting them out to the cities that need them. President Dinges wrote the new contracts to automatically renew unless the cities cancel them. There were already resolutions in place to accept these contracts, and President Dinges did not want that to change. The contract with Yreka, President Dinges said, is already set up to renew automatically, and they have continued to pay despite declining the SMC’s services during the pandemic. TA McAdams added that he had looked at a 2012 newspaper article that mentioned that Yreka and Northland Cable had a contract allowing them to store data at two different locations, and wondered if there were still some archival material at one of these locations. President Dinges said he would check with former ED Greg Messer and Northland Cable about this.

C. Discussion: PEG Funding Sources – TA McAdams explained that PEG (Public Education and Government) broadcasting is funded in part by cable companies, which are required to pay a franchising fee to each city it broadcasts in. The maximum fee is 5% of total gross revenue and is controlled by the city franchise authority, who decides where the money goes. That money can only be spent in one of three categories: public access, education, or government. TA McAdams recommended that SMC research where these funds go and who the local franchise authority is. TA McAdams had read that local governments were known for improperly using those funds, in some cases resulting in lawsuits. ED Petrick said that Dunsmuir, Mt. Shasta, Weed,

Yreka and Siskiyou County all receive franchise fees and used to contribute funds to SMC. Therefor, she said, there probably is a franchise/PEG line item in the budgets for each them, and they may have been required to contribute funds to SMC in the past. Director Cleland said he met with Vince Reinig told him in a meeting that SMC should be receiving franchise funds paid by his business, and President Dinges discovered that most of the cities have been putting franchise fees into the general fund, which is not allowed. TA McAdams works with another public access station that is also dealing with a local government that is not contributing the required funding. However, TA McAdams stressed that it depends on how the line items are set up. If they are “franchise fees”, then that money does not have to go to public access television. If the line items are “PEG”, then that money must legally be spent on PEG. ED Petrick cautioned the SMC to do more research before they “poke the bear”. In other words, before antagonizing the local governments, be sure that they are, in fact, misappropriating PEG funds. TA McAdams suggested further discussions with Vince Reinig since he is the most knowledgeable in this area. ED Petrick requested that TA Petrick continue his research and discover how local governments are disbursing franchise funds.

D. Discussion and Possible Action: FBI Report – TA McAdams reported that the FBI has become interested in the report he filed regarding the ransomware issue with one of the SMC’s hard drives. The FBI followed up and revealed that they are very interested in pursuing action against the group responsible, as there are many other claims against them. Should they ever take this group to court, SMC could be part of the suit and possibly receive restitution. Special Agent Ewing of the Redding FBI field office requested information about our losses: equipment lost, purchases spent attempting to prevent future incursions, process changes, specialists hired, etc. TA McAdams estimated that we had well over 300 shows on those drives, with an estimated cost of \$300 each on average, for a total of \$90,000. TA McAdams reported the loss of three infected hard drives containing television archives stretching back to the 1980s, and added the costs of purchasing new hard drives (which would need to be looked up in QuickBooks), the purchase of a more robust anti-virus software, and compensation for Steve Leonardi for his attempted salvage work. President Dinges would check the books to confirm. The FBI would like to have the hard drives for evidence, and said there is a possibility that the data will be recovered. The FBI also wishes to have the original ransom emails for evidence, which President Dinges believed were being held by former ED Bruce Deutsch. ED Petrick thought that 300 shows was a low estimate, because she knew that 200 shows were being produced per year at one point, but TA McAdams thought 300 was a fair estimate for the shows contained on the hard drives, although there was some debate on whether \$300 per show was high enough. SD Tomlinson believed many of those episodes were “priceless”.

XII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion and Action: Election of Officers and Confirmation of Executive Director – President Dinges asked to move forward with the confirmation of ED Petrick but move the election of officers back owing to the busy schedule of the current officers. President Dinges suggested that the board revisit the officers until August 2021, and prepare a contract for ED Petrick. ED Petrick was adamant that she remain a volunteer and that the SMC avoid hiring regular employees and only pay staff for special productions, as she was not comfortable receiving regular payment until the organization is more financially secure. TA McAdams suggested that ED Petrick’s contract state that the matter of payment be revisited should the SMC reach certain income milestones. President Dinges said he would need to ask the attorney about that because state laws had changed so much. ED Petrick requested that an appointment be made for President Dinges and herself to meet with the attorney, which Director Cleland agreed sounded like a good idea.

B. Discussion and Possible Action: Studio Plan/RE: Clint – President Dinges advised the board that the SMC’s landlord, Clint, had informed President Dinges that the suite across the hall was going to become available. For another \$550 a month, they could use the suite across the hall for offices and a green room, and the existing space could become a dedicated studio space. Directors Cleland and LaRue thought it was worth exploring, but doubted the SMC could afford it. ED Petrick opposed it, believing that the additional overhead and two-year contract would not benefit the SMC. President Dinges disagreed, believing that it was worth pursuing. SD Tomlinson agreed it would be better, but was not sustainable financially. ED Petrick made clear

that most public access television stations do not pay rent, because they are on a college campus or a municipal building. The SMC's position is already an unusually high amount of overhead for a public access station, putting them in the position where they cannot support a staff, which is not sustainable. ED Petrick did not believe it was smart to increase the size of the space when the SMC cannot afford to pay its staff. However, it was agreed to further explore the possibility that President Dinges could negotiate reduced rent and paying month-by-month.

XIII. Calendar: Discussion and set dates on Google Calendar – Technical Advisor McAdams shared a Google calendar for the SMC. He has already put the Next Board Meeting into the calendar: December 10th, 9:00 AM, TBA location (Zoom or office).

XIV. Round Table Discussion for next Agenda: ED Petrick asked that the board please get the word out about North State Giving Tuesday. Early donations were open. TA McAdams suggested a mass email with links soliciting donations that everyone could forward to the community. ED Petrick also mentioned that Shareen Strauss has a wealthy relative who was seriously considering purchasing the Weed Palace Theater to rent to the SMC.

XV. Meeting was called to Adjourn by Board Pres. Dinges.

Adjourn time 10:04AM

Respectfully Submitted by

Elijah Sullivan

Program Director/Acting Recording Secretary

Next SMC Board Meeting: December 10th, 2020