

WBAI Treasurer's Report
July 10, 2024

The National Finance Committee (NFC) had been scheduled to meet on June 25, and July 9, 2024. The local Finance Committee met on June 19, 2024, and that meeting was held by teleconference.

The June 25, 2024, NFC meeting was cancelled because of, "Conflict with coordination of other committees." I do not know what other committees those would have been.

At the June 19, 2024, local Finance Committee meeting the Executive Director's recently designated WBAI interim General Manager/interim Program Director did not attend, neither did any WBAI Management designated by the Executive Director as being on "Administrative Leave." The committee was very concerned about what was going on with regard to WBAI. The committee voted to invite the interim General Manager/interim Program Director to come to an emergency local Finance Committee meeting on June 24, or June 26, at 7:00 PM (ET) and I was to tell him that we needed him to report to the committee on the station's finances and fund raising and the posting of donations. The committee also said that I was to provide him with samples of previous reports from the General Manager to the committee.

Only the June 26, 2024, local Finance Committee could be legally posted. I sent the interim General Manager/interim Program Director E-mails inviting him to attend that meeting and later I sent him samples of the kind of reports that the local Finance Committee has gotten in the past. Just before the start of the June 26, meeting the interim General Manager/interim Program Director sent me an E-mail that said, "I see Berthold is on the list of people in attendance. It would be improper for me to be on the call." In fact Berthold Reimers was not on the call early in that meeting, he only came on after the interim General Manager/interim Program Director's E-mail had been forwarded to the committee's mailing list. Mr. Reimers was listed as a member of the local Finance Committee on the membership list I'd sent out before the meeting. The interim General Manager/interim Program Director sent the committee a copy of an E-mail that he'd previously sent to the Staff regarding a number of topics. **(A copy of that E-mail is appended to this report.)**

In the absence of the interim General Manager/interim Program Director at the June 26, 2024, local Finance Committee meeting the committee decided to have members send questions regarding the interim General Manager/interim Program Director's report to me and I was to compile them and send them to the interim General Manager/interim Program Director. I have done so.

The July 9, 2024, NFC meeting was cancelled with the following explanation, "The NFC meeting is cancelled due to the inability of our Houston station to participate as a result of extraordinary Hurricane damage."

Things are still in a very bad condition throughout Pacifica. There are still attempts being made to fundamentally change the bylaws in ways that seem calculated to guarantee that current

(MORE)

LSB majorities will become permanent. There is a financial crisis throughout all of Pacifica, and WBAI is reportedly raising less revenue than it had a couple of months ago and the station can only fall deeper into debt in that case. Things are more dire than they had been. There are questions about what the net revenue for WBAI will be from some fund raising efforts that are being much publicized. I am even more pessimistic about WBAI and Pacifica's future than I had been.

The next NFC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday July 23, 2024, at 8:30 PM (ET). The next local Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 17, 2024, at 7:00 PM (ET). These meetings will be held by teleconference.

R. Paul Martin
WBAI LSB Treasurer

APPENDIX

Subject: Re: Draft agenda for the June 26, 2024, WBAI local Finance Committee meeting.

Date: Wed, 26 Jun 2024 22:50:56 +0000

From: Robert Hennelly <rhennelly55@gmail.com>

To: R. Paul Martin <rpm@glib.com>, wbailsbfinancecommittee <wbailsbfinancecommittee@googlegroups.com>, WBAI General Manager <gm@wbai.org>

I see Berthold is on the list of people in attendance. It would be improper for me to be on the call. Here is my report I have already distributed. I wrote this to all of WBAI's paid and volunteer staff.

<http://www.avg.com/email-signature?utm_medium=email&utm_source=link&utm_campaign=sig-email&utm_content=webmail>

Morning,

I first want to thank all of you who have taken the FCC compliance course. I look forward to our virtual Thursday meeting and our ongoing effort to support our Local Station Board Election which has a June 30[^] deadline to renew your membership to be eligible to vote for LSB members or run as a candidate. Details are on our website.

It's fundamental for us to get ourselves out of the cycle of merchandising, using the revenue float we realize to pay others bills and delaying, or not sending the premiums.

A detailed review of unfulfilled premiums comes in at around \$120,000 with the oldest unfulfilled pledge 1,136 days outstanding with the average age of outstanding premiums around 470 days.

Please keep in mind that the Federal Trade Commission requires that if no shipping time frame is mentioned, there's a 30 day window. If there is some representation made about timing, the seller must obtain the buyer's consent to a delay in shipping or refund the payment.

This chronic failure to follow FTC guidelines for years presents a significant legal and regulatory exposure for WBAI and Pacifica. Many programmers have complained to me about the reputational damage they've experienced as a consequence of this chronic failure. It's just unethical to string along so many listeners for so long.

While we are operating under the scrutiny of the FCC consent decree executed earlier this year, it's also prudent to make sure that the past premiums we are still obligated to send out do not include bootlegged or counterfeit matter that's violative of U.S. Copyright law which would open us up to potential civil and criminal penalties. My initial review indicates that much of what's been offered is original programming. In some cases there may have been permission granted by the creator but there's nothing on file to confirm that.

The perceived righteousness of a programmer's worldview doesn't trump abiding by the law that protects and sustains creative people with copyright protections.

The loss of the ACD call center back in May, for failure to pay the bill prior to my assuming this job, resulted in the stranding of the 212-209-2950 pledge line with ACD, which charges by the minute to handle ALL calls whether they are related to new pledges or resolving this backlog. Evidently, the forwarding of calls from the legacy 2950 number by ACD to our 212-209-2870 number is also problematic.

Studio lines are operational and messages do get retrieved off the office line. In the meantime we are not to reference the 212-209-2950 number.

I have sought out professional guidance on the phone issue and we will have to re-configure the phones ASAP. For now, we need to encourage people to donate online or mail their donations to 388 Atlantic Avenue.

I am aware that there's a significant number of listeners and potential donors who rely on the phone as a way to pledge.

We did not get in our current predicament overnight and it will take time to extricate ourselves from the six-figure level of debt that includes almost \$120,000 in transmitter rent going back several months. Earlier this month, I had a zoom meeting with Pacifica's ED Stephanie Wells and the Durst Organization. We got an additional 30 days to work out a long term strategy to get current.

I am working through several outstanding grievances with SAG-AFTRA and at least one

significant case where union work was covered by an individual who was not paid for months.

That's not acceptable.

Prior to assuming this interim position, I had secured close to \$20,000 in union support from 1199SEIU, 32BJ SEIU and CWA-NJ to support my Monday and Tuesday What's Going On so that I would not be sidelined by a merchandising infomercial. It's not clear if any of that was properly invoiced which I am in the process of resolving.

Separate and apart from my own show, over the last few weeks I initiated a fundraising effort in the labor movement on behalf of the Pacifica Radio Network for 2024 campaign coverage and sustaining sponsorships for WBAI which has resulted in multiple live and recorded sustaining sponsorship spots. That has yielded \$111,000 in invoices and some checks.

The donor unions to this larger institutional effort are the American Federation of Government Employees, Transport Workers of America, 32 BJ SEIU, 1199SEIU, United Steelworker Nurses Local 4-200, 32 BJ SEIU, DC 37 Local 3621, HPAE, New Jersey's largest healthcare union.

Several other proposals are pending.

I am under no illusion that my individual effort that has booked over \$130,000 in union support can carry the day, but I didn't have to mail out a premium.

It's my hope to work with each programmer that's taken the FCC course to try and develop a sustaining contributor base that complements and supports their work and will liberate them from the role of being a merchandiser for products and premiums that have proven to be so problematic.

Building out this alternative model of sustaining sponsorships will require creating a traffic schematic that documents the duration and frequency of when they are broadcast. There's also potential revenue to be realized when the live broadcast is remastered as a podcast.

Of course, we will do pledge drives-- but not in a way that punishes programmers and producers. We need to support producers and programmers to maintain their continuity of community interest, not sabotage it with last minute preemptions.

The program is the premium, and if it's not, we need to work together to make sure that it is. .

When you are in a hole, stop digging.

Bob Hennelly

Interim Program Director and General Manager

WBAI-Pacific Radio in NYC

To unsubscribe from this group and stop receiving emails from it,
send an email to staffannounce+unsubscribe@wbai.org
<<mailto:staffannounce+unsubscribe@wbai.org>>.

Bob Hennelly
@stucknation
Stucknation.com