

WBAI COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD

JANUARY 23,2013 MINUTES

MEETING HELD AT WBAI RADIO STATION-120 WALL STREET

Meeting began at 615 PM.

The first item of discussion was the question of the rent. How much is owed and what is the situation with Silverstein?

Several people present asked about this.

The answer was given by CAB members is that we understand the monthly rent to be roughly about 35-37 K. We understand that several months are owed. It is our understanding that several months of the transmitter rental is owed also. The total debt could range between 200-500 K...we do not know all the specific facts. We do know that the exit from 120 Wall Street is being set for the end of the month or into early February.Feb 15th exactly. We know that several offices are being moved and some have been already packed. But we also know that a tremendous amount of work lies ahead and the sooner it is gotten started the better.

One person said that the number of 15,000 members in the subscriber base has no credibility. Only a small % of people actually vote in the elections. One person pointed out that the turnout is even less than statistically the numbers are for off term primary elections in local races. This is unacceptable for an organization that prides itself on high political consciousness raising.

Another person pointed out that the station is simply not raising enough money in fundraisers. This can be explained for many reasons but reason that producers have a hard time in grasping is that their OWN programs may no longer be relevant. We have a huge audience we are reaching throughout the tri-states area and we are only getting .1% of them. The Sandy hurricane has probably reduced that number quite significantly.

One person said that the shows do not work together well as a team, they seem to all be off doing their own thing and then moving onto to another theme. That tends to break off listenership. Also, strict principle of forward promotion is not being enforced through out the grid. This loses potential audience because people tuning in and tuning out do not know what they are listening to.

Another person said again why are we paying so much for an antenna? Are there not alternatives? They need to be explored and weighed. Why cannot we get a repeater to broaden our signal to another 50 miles like happens at KPFA and KPFA?

One person felt that merging with CCNY would bring us new blood. Younger people should be encouraged to come in. We should cooperate with them. Another person said this is a crucial issue. Will the producers simply want to use labor to reinforce

their already inadequately listened to shows or will people mentor new people and encourage them to do shows themselves?

The issue of what OWS was doing was raised. Why do they have two shows and why are they allowed to dominate prime time spots. They are sloppy at doing radio and probably raise little money.

It was pointed out that WHCR has a 10,000 watt channel and WBAI has a 550,000 watts range...But the question of us moving and building in addition a low powered FM station in addition to the current one was raised. We need to broaden and multiply our reach and maybe we need to get other channels besides the one we have. This would allow us to recruit a whole new crew. A locally focused station just serving a series of neighborhood and drawing its strength from them would be to our advantage.

One person said Why cannot t Amy Good man use her vast network and plead for money for WBAI in this time of crisis. This was followed by another person saying that Kathy David should be fired, she is a waste of money and another person chimed in and said that Berthold should be replaced also.

Another person said we should skype more effectively. The networks do it and we should have the best Skype technology in master control for our broadcasts. Another person said we should explore all the local community access TV stations in all the boroughs and start developing locally focused shows that deal with local politics under our umbrella. If they are already functioned we should bring them in under our umbrella and ally with them.

One person stressed that people should be encouraged to use allied radio stations with production facilities in this new situation while we grapple with the new production limitations. We will lose production capacity in the new move and we need to be resourceful. This means new digital editing skills may need to be taught.

The issue of Palm cards was raised again. We need tangible old school PR techniques in action at this time.

One person felt that we do not advertise enough all the local committees that exist on the LSB. According to CPB guidelines these committees need to be advertised well in advance of their meetings. The LSB is not keeping up with these requirements in a timely manner.

Another person felt that they do not have an idea of the complexities of the factions involved locally and nationally throughout Pacifica. This person had been down to WPFW and was stunned by the bickering going on down there. How is a listener to figure all this out in an unbiased Fashion?

The bulk of the producers do not advertise on their shows the LSB meetings so how are we able to know what is going on. They simply are hiding the meeting from the public and this has to stop.

Another person felt that shows need also to be evaluated in a hard line fashion. How much \$\$ do you bring in and over how long a period of time? Another person said this is a touch subject but worth of debate because some shows are mission driven but do not raise much while others are more ambiguous and raise much money. Where is a fair middle ground?

One person offered the study by the CPB Office of the Inspector General for all to read that was issued in December of last year. This study was immediately copied and all present were given it to read. In addition, everybody present was given the actual Arbitron numbers and streaming data up to the summer of last year.

One person asked how the marathons were constructed/ How did they get the number of goals set at 750-1 million dollars? The best person to answer that is Berthold and we will get him in future meetings. Right now, the logistics of the move are paramount and that will consume everybody for the next few weeks.

But, everybody felt that was a reasonable issue to be explored and dealt with.

Another person felt that since most of our listeners are elderly.aroun 65.why are we not doing more shows on the e issues...why do we not focus more on housing and rental questions.

Another person felt we should devote an entire day of programming to the GUN issue and Mental illness issue. This should be explored in all its complexity and we should try to get through the elected officials posturing and bombast.

The final point made to everyone is that some on the CAB believe a major cause of the fall in audience is the programming. We simply are not doing enough to change programming and experiment with it. Current assumptions or sacred cows must be tossed because we need to get out audience back up and develop it even more. Sandy hit us hard and probably reduced our audience by 1/3 to 2/3 of .1%. This means that our cumes could be around 80,000-120,000 people. We should compare this to numbers given in 1990 when our audience was estimated at 164,000 before the Gulf War. This means that after 23 years of programming we have actually less people than we had in 1990...23 years ago. The amount of money needed right now to sustain the station is 250 K a month. This will be reduced by the move to 220K but the lack of audience that is related to a disinterest in programming means that we cannot sustain the fiscal costs with the current grid.

It is as simple as that.

