

Summary Minutes

WFCR Advisory Committee

May 24, 2005, 7:30-9:30am

Lord Jeffrey Inn

Amherst, MA

The meeting convened at 7:45 a.m. Present were Sharon Fross, Jenny Kallick, Sara Lawrence, Jim Miller, Martin Miller, Lorna Peterson, Michael Rathke (WFCR Program Director), Karen Smith Emerson

Unable to attend: John Higginson, David Epstein, Patricia Wright, Michael Harrison

Jenny called the meeting to order.

Minutes from November 2004 meeting were approved.

Jenny began the meeting by welcoming Michael Rathke as the new Program Director.

Sharon reported on building site news. The university has been approached by a developer who owns 100 University Drive regarding whether the university would like to lease the building. Leasing this space would be an option for WFCR and other units in Outreach. Moving to an existing building would be less expensive than building a new facility from the ground up, thereby allowing WFCR to devote more funds to program development. The university is close to deciding whether to lease this building.

Martin added that the capital campaign to move into 100 University Drive would have a goal of \$3-3.5 million, which Martin predicted we could raise in approx. 24 months. This compares with having to raise \$5-5.5 million if we were to build a brand new facility.

Lorna asked what a long term lease commitment would be. Sharon replied 10-20 years. Lorna then asked whether we could obtain a longer lease than that range, and Sharon replied that it's an option we must look into.

Sara asked if we could still have naming opportunities for this building, and Martin replied that the owner is amenable to naming opportunities.

Jim asked what the square footage would be, and Martin replied roughly 15,700, comparable to the original design for a new building. Sara asked what our current square footage is, and Martin replied approx. 4,000.

Sara asked if parking would be available, and Martin replied that there would be plenty of free parking at 100 University Drive.

Sharon mentioned that the owner of 100 University Drive wants to lease to one tenant because he wants stability. He doesn't want to rent to several different tenants because he wants to avoid turnover. Sharon also mentioned that we would be able to lease at a reasonable price since the owner bought the building out from a bankrupt business and didn't have to pay a lot of money for it.

Karen asked about room for a performance space at 100 University Drive, and Martin replied that all of the elements of the original design, including a performance space, and a media education lab would be implemented in this space.

Jim asked about transportation for students, since this site is located off campus. Martin replied that there is a bus stop right in front of the building.

Sharon said the university is interested in 100 University Drive because the university is in need of swing space while construction is happening on campus. The swing space would be located on the first floor and WFCR would be located on the second floor.

Karen asked whether we could switch to a different kind of capital campaign mid-stream. Martin replied that we would go back to all the donors who have contributed so far to build a new facility to see if they will continue to honor their pledges to the capital campaign for renovating an existing facility. Martin foresees that most of the donors would remain committed.

Martin added that some of the capital funds have already been spent on digital conversion and staffing, but not a lot of the funds have been spent so far.

Sara said that she thought a compelling donor benefit would be that we would be able to move into an existing facility sooner, and for a lot less money than it would take to build a new facility, and that people might be encouraged to contribute earlier if we told them that construction couldn't begin until we had raised 50% of the needed funds. Martin said that he is projecting that we could move into 100 University Drive in 2008.

Lorna asked if there would be any additional costs other than the lease fee. Martin said all costs would be built in to the lease fee. There would be no additional UMass costs to WFCR.

Lorna said that she thinks this is a much more secure proposal than past proposals, since other units of Outreach would be leasing space in addition to WFCR.

Jenny asked who else has to approve this proposal, and added that she thinks it's crucial that this plan is firm after past disappointments. Sharon replied that she doesn't think there would be a lot of layers to go through for approval, and that this proposal is much less complicated than if it would be for building a new facility.

Sharon said one benefit of this option would be that we would be able to house several units of Outreach in the same facility, which will help keep Outreach more top of mind with the university.

Lorna said that she thinks the lease has to be long term, no less than 20 years.

Jim wondered if there would be a downside to have a longer term lease because it might hinder future growth and expansion. Lorna said that a capital campaign would have to be for a long term project. Martin added that a variety of possible future options, including having an additional station and webcasting, have been included in these plans.

Martin said that for this plan to work, the university will be asked to re-instate direct financial support to WFCR. Martin added that he has having discussions with Sharon regarding this topic.

Lorna reported that she told the presidents of the other colleges about the change in plans (that WFCR would be moving into an existing building rather than building a new facility). She said most of the presidents wondered if this wasn't a better idea in the first place. She added that the presidents wondered if they should commit less money because the overall cost would be less. Lorna said she replied that their commitment (\$300,000) should remain at that figure. Since this conversation took place in a social setting, Lorna said she thinks we'll need to formally go back to the presidents again in the fall to ensure they'll remain fully committed. Hampshire College, with their President leaving, has yet make a financial commitment.

Martin presented the FY'05 revenue and expense projections. Martin said we are on target to meet our projections for both revenue and expenses at the end of the current fiscal year. Martin also presented a copy of a memo he's drafted to the five college presidents regarding initiatives WFCR is taking to strengthen its relationships with the colleges.

Martin read a memo he had received from the university, announcing that WFCR has been relieved of almost all university overhead, resulting in a savings of \$100,000 in FY'06.

★ Martin provided an update regarding his communications with Jonathan Klate regarding his concerns about our programming. Martin said that he, Michael, Jill, and perhaps one other staff member will meet with Klate and several others at the station in July. Martin invited advisory committee members to attend this meeting if they were interested. Lorna said she thought it would be good if several members of the advisory committee could be in attendance. Jim asked if this meeting could potentially do more harm than good if Klate is upset that programming changes won't happen as a result of this conversation. Martin replied that he thinks it's a good idea to meet with Klate so that we can at least say that we've been willing to have a dialogue with him.

Martin announced Jill Kaufman's appointment as News Director, and said that she's off to a great start and that WFCR is very fortunate to have her on our staff.

Martin announced that the WACE purchase is officially dead, but that the Berkshire translator process is moving forward, with equipment purchases to begin in July.

Lorna expressed concerns that the Northampton-based WAMC underwriting rep. was the featured speaker at a recent Amherst Chamber of Commerce event, touting the virtues of purchasing underwriting on WAMC. Lorna suggested that WFCR should try get on the agenda for a future Amherst Chamber event. Martin said he would pursue this and other chambers too.

Martin passed around articles regarding various topics for the committee members to review.

Martin announced that we will put a second HD stream on the air in September. Michael presented the schedule for WFCR 88.5-2, and talked about some ideas for program changes to WFCR 88.5-1 that might be implemented in January 2006.

Martin presented certificates of appreciation to Gregory Prince (in absentia) for his support of WFCR as President of Hampshire College, and to Jenny Kallick for her six years of service on the WFCR Advisory Committee.

Martin mentioned that in addition to Jenny, John Higginson from UMass, and community member, David Epstein, would need to have their places filled. He said he would work on this first and then move forward with the initiatives outlined in the memo to the Five College Presidents.

Jenny motioned to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Jim.

Meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Rathke